**'In a Father's Place': Anglo-Saxon Kingship and
Masculinity in the Long Tenth Century**

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Ryan T. Goodman

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

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Word Count: 89,695

List of Abbreviations

Primary Sources

ASC .... Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Cited by MS and *anno* from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*.

ASW .... Dorothy Whitelock, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930). Cited by number.

Bethurum .... Dorothy Bethurum, ed., *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957). Cited by homily and line number.

BL .... London, British Library MS

CCCC .... Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS

CH I, *CH* II .... *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies*, First or Second Series, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Malcolm Godden, EETS S.S. 16, 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). Cited by series and homily number.

CSEL .... Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

De XII .... Pseudo-Cyprian, *De XII abusiuis* ('The Twelve Abuses'); Aidan Breen, 'Towards a Critical Edition of *De XII Abusivis*: Introductory Essays with a Provisional Edition of the Text' (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1988)

DRC .... Sedulius Scottus, *De Rectoribus Christianis (On Christian Rulers)*, ed. and trans. by R. W. Dyson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010)

EER .... *Encomium Emmae Reginae* ('Encomium of Queen Emma'), ed. and trans. by Alistair Campbell, Camden Third Series LXXII (London: Royal Historical Society, 1949)

EHD I .... Dorothy Whitelock, ed. and trans., *English Historical Documents, Vol. 1: c. 500–1042* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955). Cited by document number.

GRA .... William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, 2 vol., ed. and trans. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thompson, and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998)

HE .... Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, *Storia degli Inglesi (Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum)*, trans. by Paolo Chiesa, 2 vol. (Milan: Fondazione Valla-Arnoldo Mondadori, 2009)

Hib .... *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, ed. by Herrmann Wasserschleben, *Die Irische Kanonensammlung*, 2. Auflage (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1885)

Liebermann, *Die Gesetze* .... Felix Liebermann, ed. and trans., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, Vol. 1 (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1903)

LS .... Ælfric, *Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 2 vol. (London: EETS, 1881–1900). Cited by Skeat chapter, and line number.

MGH .... Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Available online at <http://www.dmgh.de>. Cited by series and volume.

S .... Peter H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*: *An Annotated List and Bibliography*, updated and available online at <http://www.esawyer.org.uk>. Cited by charter number.

VÆdR .... *Vita Ædwardi Regis – The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster*, ed. and trans. by Frank Barlow (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962)

VÆlf .... Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis* (*Life of King Alfred*), ed. by William Henry Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St Neots* (Oxford: Clarendon: 1904)

Wulfstan, *I Pol* or *II Pol* .... Wulfstan, *Institutes of Polity*, following Karl Jost, ed., *Die «Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical»: Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten 47 (Bern: Franke, 1972)

Secondary Sources

AHR .... *American Historical Review* (journal)

ANS .... *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* (journal)

ASE .... *Anglo-Saxon England* (journal)

CCOEL .... *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

CHEMEL .... *Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Clayton, *TÆT* .... Mary Clayton, ed. and trans., *Two Ælfric Texts:* The Twelve Abuses *and* The Vices and Virtues. *An Edition and Translation of Ælfric's Old English Versions of* De Duodecim Abusivis *and* De Octo Vitiis et De Duodecim Abusivis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013)

DMA .... *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Joseph Strayer

EETS .... Early English Text Society

EHR .... *English Historical Review* (journal)

EME .... *Early Medieval Europe* (journal)

HASS .... Jacqueline Stodnick and Renee R. Trilling, eds., *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Studies* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)

Hadley, *Masculinity* .... Dawn M. Hadley, ed., *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1999)

HSJ .... *Haskins Society Journal*

Hill, *Ethelred* .... David Hill, ed., *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, BAR British Series 59 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978)

Lees, *Medieval Masculinities* .... Clare A. Lees, ed., *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994)

NCMH .... *New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cited by volume number.

ODNB .... *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Available online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com>

PHMPCE .... *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe*, ed. by Christopher Fletcher, Sean Brady, Rachel E. Moss, and Lucy Riall (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018)

Townend, *Wulfstan* .... Matthew Townend, ed., *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004)

TRHistS .... *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (journal)

WBEASE .... *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg, 2nd edition (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014)

Abstract

While gender has become one of the most prominent subjects in the study of history, including medieval history, over the course of recent generations, the study of masculinity — of men *as men* — has only been explored by relatively few medievalist scholars; Anglo-Saxonist historians in particular have hitherto generally failed to explore masculinity as a field of historical enquiry. This study seeks to fill that gap in the research, and reassess Anglo-Saxon kingship through the lens of gender history and masculinity theory. It focuses in particular on the period of the 'long tenth century', from c. 871–1035. During this time, the Anglo-Saxon realm underwent a number of significant changes: the formation and development of a larger and more centralised Anglo-Saxon state, generations of viking attacks and conquests, a number of serious internal political conflicts, and, perhaps most importantly, the development and promulgation of a religious movement now generally known as the 'Benedictine reform,' which greatly influenced not only monastic life but secular life as well.

In order to understand the connections between masculinity and kingship in this period, this dissertation first explores what it meant to be a male, and a prince, in the long tenth century. It also asks, 'Who raises royal sons?' — that is, who was responsible for instilling in them proper masculine (and royal) behaviours? The following chapters then explore the matrix of royal and masculine behaviour into which those sons were enculturated though an in-depth analysis of the range of primary source texts that illuminate tenth-century Anglo-Saxons ideals of kingship and masculinity. Chapter 2 proposes that, while many Continental sources (i.e., *specula principum,* or 'mirrors for princes') were explicitly written as guides for right kingship, Anglo-Saxon kings and princes had no such guides. They were, this chapter argues, instead instructed through homiletic and political-theological texts that can also be read as evidence of a specific type of 'right kingship' promoted by the monastic authors of the tenth-century Benedictine reform movement. Chapter 3 turns then to another main source of Anglo-Saxon textual material: the literary world of Old English 'heroic' poetry. It proposes that these texts, too, have much to say about how men, especially aristocratic ones, were expected to behave in the long tenth century, the period from which the surveyed poetic manuscripts date. It urges caution in envisioning too strong of a dichotomy between 'heroic' texts on one hand and religious ones discussed in the previous chapter on the other, though, and argues that they must instead be read within the same tenth-century context. Chapter 4 then finally explores the actual performance of masculinity and kingship by later Anglo-Saxon kings and princes, as near as can be assessed in the surviving sources, taking as its model a three-fold conception of aristocratic and masculine 'duties' — warfare, hunting, and procreation — and exploring how all three underwent considerable renegotiation in the course of the tenth century.

In the end, the dissertation concludes that the myriad changes of the long tenth century resulted in a reimagining of both kingship and masculinity. Moreover, it argues, these new developments in the performance of kingship in the long tenth century strongly intersected with the developments in masculinity in the last centuries of Anglo-Saxon England.

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Thanks are of course also due to my family, who, despite the great distance, have always encouraged and supported me.

I would be remiss not to give my profound thanks as well to the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at the University of Manchester for their generous financial support, without which this thesis — and degree — would not have been possible.

Finally, a special thanks to the preeminent senior scholar who, at a conference during my first year as a postgraduate, dismissed my work and the study of medieval masculinity as 'pointless', and told me that I should find something more worthwhile to spend my time on. I have obviously not taken your advice, but thank you for the motivation over these last few years.

Dedication

• *To minre ealdemodor þe me afedde.* •

1944 – 2018

KINGSHIP, MASCULINITY, AND ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Þæt folc bið gesælig þurh snoterne cyning, sigefæst und gesundful ðurh gesceadwisne reccend. And hi beoð geyrmede ðurh unwisne cyning, on monegum ungelimpum, for his misræde.

The people will be happy through a wise king, victorious and prosperous through a discerning ruler. And they are made miserable through an unwise king, by many misfortunes from his ill counsel.

(Ælfric of Eynsham, *Catholic Homilies* II.19)

On the afternoon of 20 September 1902, a huge crowd gathered under heavy grey skies in the city of Winchester. Composed of an eclectic and international assortment of politicians, clergymen, academics, soldiers, and citizens, the throng made its way from the Great Hall of the former castle, past the spires of the cathedral, and out onto the Broadway. After an introduction by Mayor Alfred Bowker, former Prime Minister Lord Rosebery delivered a speech honouring the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon king Alfred the Great (r. 871–899). For Rosebery, Alfred was 'Alfred the Good, Alfred the Truth teller, Alfred the father of his country, and of ours', and, indeed, 'the embodiment of our civilisation'.[1] Rosebery's speech concluded with the unveiling of Hamo Thornycroft's new bronze statue of the great king, accompanied by a cheer from the crowd, a salute by the 90th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, and the mass singing of 'God Save the King'. More than a century later, the statue of Alfred still stands on its pedestal in the middle of Winchester's Broadway, clad in the raiment of a warrior, with sword held aloft and gripped by the blade to form a cross, emblematic of the Victorian vision of Alfred as a 'symbol of ancient freedom and nationhood.'[2] Then, and perhaps even now, Alfred embodied 'the highest type of kingship and the highest type of Englishman', around whom has been draped 'all the highest attributes of manhood and kingship.'[3]

The same cannot be said for Alfred's tenth-century descendent Æthelred II (r. 978–1016), for whom there is no great statue, bronze or otherwise, in Winchester, London, or anywhere else.[4] Today, he is scarcely remembered for much more than his moniker '*Unraed*', literally 'Ill-Counsel' or 'No-Counsel', usually mistranslated as 'Unready'.[5] When he came to power in AD 978, it was in the wake of the murder of his elder half-brother Edward (thereafter 'the Martyr'), about whose death one chronicler lamented, '*Ne wearð Angelcynne nan wyrse dæd gedon, þonne þeos wæs, syþþan hi*

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[1] Alfred Bowker, *The King Alfred Millenary: A Record of the Proceedings of the National Commemoration* (London: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 109–112.

[2] David Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 1; on Alfred's reception in the Victorian period, see Joanna Parker, *'England's Darling': the Victorian Cult of Alfred the Great* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Paul Readman, 'The Place of the Past in English Culture, c. 1890–1914', *Past and Present* 186 (2005), 147–199 (esp. pp. 152–155).

[3] Bowker, *King Alfred Millenary*, p. 109.

[4] Indeed, it seems the only commemoratory depiction of Æthelred is a stained glass window at Sherborne Abbey. A classic comparison of the lives of the two kings is Simon Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings: Alfred the Great and Æthelred the Unready', *TRHistS* 36 (1986), 195–217.

[5] This appellation is a pun on the name Æthelred, which means 'noble counsel'.

ærest Britenland gesohton.'[6] While it is doubtful that the young Æthelred was directly culpable in the murder of his brother, it was more than likely carried out by his supporters, and the act left an indelible stain on the beginnings of a reign that would continue to suffer from problems both internal and external for decades to come.[7] When Æthelred died some thirty-eight years later, the Chronicle eulogised that '*He geendode his dagas on Sancte Georgius mæssedæig, 7 he geheold his rice mid myclum geswince 7 earfoðnessum þa hwile ðe his lif wæs.*'[8] Nearly a millennium later, leading historians would still go so far as to blame him personally for 'the sinister complexion of the age', and name him 'the personification of an age of national degeneracy.'[9] While Æthelred's reputation has undergone somewhat of a rehabilitation in scholarly literature over recent decades (with one historian calling this previous negative reputation 'questionable' at best), he continues to be seen in the popular mind today as a failed king — one who did not live up to his royal responsibilities — and certainly not as a model of masculinity and kingship like Alfred before him.[10]

This dissertation seeks to understand what it meant to be a king and what it meant to be a (high-status) man in the later Anglo-Saxon period, and, more importantly, how those two ideas intersected in the lives of kings in the long tenth century, c. AD 871–1035. A Victorian speaker like Roseberry might claim that Alfred embodied 'all the highest attributes of manhood and kingship', but how did Anglo-Saxon writers and rulers themselves understand both masculinity and kingship in their own time? Further, what can we deduce about the relationship between masculinity and kingship in this period? That is: How did those ideals of masculinity influence the perception of Anglo-Saxon kings, and the performance of kingship by them? These are the central questions of this dissertation.

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[6] ASC (D) 979 (for 978): 'No worse deed had been committed, for the English, than this since they first came to Britain'. Æthelred's coronation was delayed until after Easter in 979, after the translation of Edward's relics to Shaftesbury earlier that year; see Simon Keynes, 'The Cult of King Edward the Martyr during the Reign of King Æthelred the Unready', in *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. by Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds, and Susan M. Johns (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2012), pp. 115–125.

[7] Æthelred's mother Ælfthryth has often been saddled with responsibility for the crime, but as Levi Roach (amongst others) has recently noted, this is an unfair assessment based on later sources: Levi Roach, *Æthelred the Unready* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 76–77; Levi Roach, 'Ælfthryth: England's First Queen', *History Magazine* (May 2017).

[8] ASC (C) 1016: 'He ended his days on St George's Day, and he had held his kingdom with great troubles and difficulties as long as he lived'.

[9] Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 395; Simon Keynes, 'Æthelred II', *ODNB*.

[10] Pauline Stafford, 'The Reign of Æthelred II: A Study in the Limits of Royal Policy and Action', in Hill, *Ethelred*, pp. 15–46 (p. 15).

In order to answer these questions, this study will first determine what the Anglo-Saxons conceived of as 'right kingship', or the proper way for kings to behave. This dissertation is not necessarily about the development of the institutional aspects of Anglo-Saxon kingship (though on this see more below), but on what might be thought of as the social and cultural aspects of kingship, and how they influenced that institution. This study must also explore, however, what other Anglo-Saxon sources can tell us about tenth-century ideals of masculinity too, particularly in regards to aristocratic or elite men. Looming large over these subjects is the broader concern of social change in England during the long tenth century and its effect on the ideals of kingship and gender. Having explored these topics, this study will tackle, in its final chapter, the more difficult proposal of understanding how masculinity and kingship intersected in the actual lives of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings. How did those 'highest attributes of manhood and kingship' Rosebery ascribed to Alfred inform one another in the tenth century? To what extent did ideals of masculinity affect the lived experience of medieval royal men, and the ways in which kings approached their rule?

Considerable work has been done in recent decades to assess the lives of female medieval rulers, and to explore the relationship between their gender and their offices, with some arguing that power and office could in fact be masculinising or even 'degendering' for powerful women.[11] Moreover, Stuart Airlie argues, sources that discuss queenship (e.g., commentaries on the biblical books of Judith and Esther) might have been conceived of as models of moral behaviour for men (and kings) as well as women, and that kings and queens shared virtues, even if they were not exactly conceived of as being 'identical or equal'.[12] Yet little has been done to explore the ways in which gender influenced the actual performance of rulership by men. Moreover, if kingship could be masculinising for women, can we view medieval kingship as an office inherently defined by its connections to masculinity? Of course, in exploring the subject of medieval masculinity and the relationship between masculinity and kingship, one other question must be answered from the very outset: Why should historians study masculinity anyway?

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[11] Pauline Stafford, 'More than a Man, Or Less than a Woman? Women Rulers in Early Modern Europe', *Gender & History* 7:3 (1995), 486–490 (p. 489); Pauline Stafford, 'Powerful Women in the Early Middle Ages: Queens and Abbesses', in *The Medieval World*, ed. by Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 398–415 (p. 408).

[12] Stuart Airlie, 'Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II', *Past & Present* 161:1 (1998), 3–38 (pp. 33–34).

Why Masculinity?

In his recent memoir *How Not to Be a Boy*, comedian and writer Robert Webb muses, 'There are probably lots of men who haven't had their lives marred or pointlessly complicated by the expectations of gender, but I've yet to meet one.'[13] Modern expectations of masculinity, he argues, force men to 'conform to [their] tribe' and to feel bad when they '[fail] to do manly tasks with competence'.[14] The expectations that conceptions of masculinity place on both men and women have become a subject of increasing popular and academic interest in recent years, and a central theme of modern feminist social critique is the problems caused by 'toxic masculinity', defined by psychologists in the 1990s and early 2000s as the 'constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence'.[15] The deleterious effects of toxic masculinity are an inherent part of the modern patriarchy, relegating women to the status of objects but also limiting men who do not live up to the masculine standards imposed by it. Through this system, gender has become a central, formative aspect of structures of power in modern society. This phenomenon is certainly not a solely modern one, however, and thus the implications of gender (especially masculinity) must form a part of our understanding of the social and political structures of the middle ages too.

Yet despite the rise of feminist theory and feminist/gender history since the 1970s, historians working on (especially pre-modern) masculinity have often found it necessary to defend or justify their study of the subject.[16] It is a common criticism amongst academics and non-academics alike, for instance, that all history-writing prior to the advent of gender and feminist theory was 'men's history' — '*his* story' — written by, for, and overwhelmingly *about*, men. Thelma Fenster recalls that, when organizing a conference on masculinity in 1990,

> I often heard this question: '*Men's* history? *Men's* culture? Isn't that what we've been studying for centuries, in the guise of *human* history?' History,

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[13] Robert Webb, *How Not to Be a Boy* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2017), p. 323.
[14] Webb, *How Not to Be a Boy*, p. 323.
[15] Terry A. Kupers, 'Toxic Masculinity as a Barrier to Mental Health Treatment in Prison', *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 61:6 (2005), 713–724 (p. 714).
[16] See, for instance, the succinctly-titled Thelma Fenster, 'Preface: Why Men?', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. ix–xiii. On justifications of masculinities theory more broadly, see Alex Hobbs, 'Masculinity Studies and Literature', *Literature Compass* 10:4 (2013), 383–395 (pp. 383–384).

some protested, was written 'by men about men;' they could have added that it was written largely *for* men, too.[17]

John Tosh, too, noted in 1994 that an attempt to introduce masculinity into history might be open to objection on a number of grounds: 'as an unwelcome take-over bid, as unacceptably subversive,' or indeed as 'a modish irrelevance'.[18] Even a decade ago, Dawn Hadley could still note that any 'focus on masculinity requires some justification, since it may, admittedly, appear unnecessary'.[19] And perhaps more importantly, if Pauline Stafford is correct in calling the tenth century, from an elite point of view, 'a century of women', why should anyone focus on royal men in that age in particular?[20]

It does seem quite unnecessary, *prima facie*, to focus on men when they have often been the 'norm' as both historical subjects and as historians themselves, with females relegated to the sidelines socially and academically, even relegated as a secondary or deviant sex.[21] But as Tosh has succinctly put it, this kind of analysis renders men 'everywhere but nowhere'.[22] While the contributions of feminist theory and women's history have been, and continue to be, of incalculable importance to the growth of history as a discipline, the view that women's or gender history is somehow separate from or in opposition to history more broadly is quite reductive, and obscures any reading of men *as men*.[23] On the contrary, as Hadley has written, 'when we begin to think of men as gendered beings we find divergent notions of masculinity, constructed in historically specific contexts', which allows scholars to understand, contrary to older historiographical traditions, that notions of masculinity were not 'universal, unchanging, and unquestioned', but rather 'constructed, reconstructed, and challenged' throughout history.[24] Moreover, as Jacqueline Murray suggests, the gendered study of men as males also helps to deconstruct the

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[17] Fenster, 'Why Men?', p. ix.

[18] John Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do With Masculinity? Reflections of Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop Journal* 38 (1994), 179–202 (p. 179).

[19] Dawn Hadley, 'Warriors, Heroes, and Companions: Negotiating Masculinity in Viking-Age England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 15 (2008), 270–284 (p. 270).

[20] Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The Queen's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), pp. 141–142.

[21] This is the central theme of Simone de Beauvoir's seminal study *The Second Sex*. See also the 'one-sex model' discussed in the influential Thomas W. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[22] Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?', p. 180.

[23] Fenster, 'Why Men?', p. x.

[24] Dawn M. Hadley, 'Introduction: Medieval Masculinities', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. M. Hadley (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 1–18 (p. 2).

old notion of the 'universal male', and is thus, far from being anti-feminist, quite important to the understanding of gender relations in both history and the present day.[25]

It is perhaps also necessary to justify or explain why this study focuses on kings and other elite men. Many, though certainly not all, scholars working on masculinity have tended to focus on non-elite men: those who might be defined as 'subordinate', excluded for one reason or another from the elite, 'hegemonic', patriarchal model of masculinity.[26] There is obviously great value in understanding all of these various expressions of masculinity, and Hadley is right to say that all of 'the experiences of medieval men cannot be made visible through the continued concentration on the histories and experiences of kings, law-makers, and bishops'.[27] Yet this study still aims to focus on those high-status men specifically. On a practical level, these are the men who are most evident in surviving textual materials. But more than that, understanding how 'dominant' or elite masculinities, as performed or defined by kings and bishops and other high-status individuals, developed is certainly worthwhile. As Michael Kimmel has noted, 'we continue to treat our male military, political, scientific, or literary figures as if their gender, their masculinity, had nothing to do with their military exploits, policy decisions, scientific experiments, or writing styles and subjects'.[28] Despite generations of scholarship on medieval kings and other elites, the exact same could be said about them as well. Gender is, as Joan Scott famously argued, 'a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated', and it thus seems clear that understanding these men requires us to think about them as gendered beings too.[29] However much these high-status men have been studied over the past centuries (on which see more below), there is still much yet to be learned from thinking about them *as men*, affected by the gendered expectations of their time. Masculinity and kingship, too, are both social constructs, malleable and subject to constant reevaluation in their specific social contexts, and thus this study thus also considers how conceptions of both masculinity and kingship

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[25] Jacqueline Murray, 'Hiding Behind the Universal Man: Male Sexuality in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (London: Garland, 1996), pp. 123–152; see also Daniel F. Pigg, 'Masculinity Studies', *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, Vol. 1, ed. by Albrecht Classen (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2010), pp. 829–835 (p. 829).
[26] On the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', see more below.
[27] Hadley, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[28] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), p. 3.
[29] Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *AHR* 91:5 (1986), 1053–1075 (p. 1069).

changed over the course of the long tenth century, a period of major social and political change and reform.

England in the Long Tenth Century

In the waning years of the ninth century, England could not quite yet be called a 'united' kingdom, but Mercian dominance over the southern half of England over the previous century had given way to West Saxon hegemony under Alfred the Great. Alfred's reign set the stage for the development of a more powerful and more centralised Anglo-Saxon state under his descendants in coming decades.[30] As the tenth century proceeded, a number of changes and challenges beset the fledgling Anglo-Saxon kingdom. Politically, the kings of Wessex gradually subsumed territories throughout the rest of Britain: Mercia and the so-called Five Boroughs by 918, and Northumbria in 954.[31] Alfred could claim the title 'King of the Anglo-Saxons' in the late ninth century, but within a few decades, his grandson Æthelstan (r. 924–939) could style himself 'King of the English' ('*rex Anglorum*') and, after 927, 'King of All Britain' ('*rex totius Britanniae*').[32] This unity was challenged, though, by Scandinavian kings in Northumbria, renewed viking raids in the last decades of the millennium, and eventually the conquest of England by Danish kings Swein Forkbeard in 1013–1014 and his son Cnut in 1016 following Æthelred's death. Cnut (r. 1016–1035) brought England under his control as part of a wider 'north sea empire', but nevertheless his reign might yet be read in a continuous Anglo-Saxon context rather than as a calamitous interregnum at the hands of a domineering foreign power; indeed, there is evidence that part of his success in ruling was the importing of late Anglo-Saxon models of rulership into Scandinavia.[33]

The long tenth century was not merely an era of political evolution, though; it was also one of significant cultural and intellectual change. Alfred's reign is often

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[30] The most complete recent treatment of the subject is George Molyneaux, *The Formation of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). On the historiographical debate over the nature and complexity of the late Anglo-Saxon state, see below.

[31] But see Lucy Marten's suggestion that East Anglia also remained a semi-independent, fully-functioning political unit that was only fully subsumed in the reign of Cnut: Lucy Marten, 'The Shiring of East Anglia: An Alternative Hypothesis', *Historical Research* 81:211 (2008), 1–27.

[32] Sarah Foot argues that this new title goes hand-in-hand with a range of other examples of Æthelstan's growing authority, including the use of his crowned head on the same coins: Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven: Yale, 2011), pp. 216–226.

[33] Timothy Bolton, *The Empire of Cnut the Great: Conquest and the Consolidation of Power in Northern Europe in the Early Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 317–320. Bolton does note, though, that Cnut essentially 'remained a Scandinavian ruler, with Scandinavian interests' (p. 319).

remembered as the beginning of a new era characterised by the promotion of learned culture, which has sometimes been deemed an 'Alfredian Renaissance'.[34] In the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura pastoralis*, Alfred supposedly bemoaned,

> *Swa clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelkynne ðætte swiðe feawe wæron behionan Humbre þe hiora ðenunga cuðen understandan on Englisc, oððe furðum an ærendegewrit of Lædene on Englisc areccan; 7 ic wene ðætte naoht monige begeondan Humbre næren.*[35]

Over the course of his reign, Alfred set about correcting this deficiency by promoting literacy amongst his advisors (and, notably, his children), and may have been personally involved in the translation of key theological texts from Latin into Old English for more widespread understanding in his Anglophone kingdom. Moreover, this promotion of writing and translation was part of an even broader plan for the reformation of an English society that Alfred saw as suffering from intellectual and spiritual decline, comparable to — and perhaps directly influenced by — the Carolingian programme of '*correctio*'. As M. A. Claussen writes, the efforts of the Carolingians 'to produce a moral reform of the peoples under their governance bore some fruit, and it was in fact to this end that the kings themselves, as well as many of the intellectuals of the period, worked'; much the same could be applied to the Alfredian court in the late ninth century.[36] Commensurate with these cultural developments was a renewed understanding of the role of the king himself within that reformed society, and, in England, the development of what John Hill has called an '"Alfredian" ideology of kingship, lordship, and retainership' that would continue to influence Anglo-Saxon rulership throughout the tenth century.[37]

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[34] Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship, and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Routledge, 1998), especially Chapter 6, 'The Reign of Solomon', pp. 219–257.

[35] Old English Preface to Gregory the Great's *Cura pastoralis*: 'So general was [learning's] decay in England that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their rituals in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English; and I believe that there were not many beyond the Humber'. Text from Henry Sweet, ed. and trans., *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1871); translation from Kevin Crossley-Holland, 'Preface to St Gregory's *Pastoral Care*', in *The Anglo-Saxon World: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 218–219.

[36] M. A. Claussen, 'Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the *Liber manualis*', *French Historical Studies* 19:3 (1996), 785–809 (p. 785). On Carolingian '*correctio*', see, e.g., the classic study Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London: Methuen, 1969); see also Janet L. Nelson, 'On the Limits of the Carolingian Renaissance', *Studies in Church History* 14 (1977), 51–67; and more recently, Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), particularly the chapter '*Correctio*, Knowledge and Power' (pp. 292–380).

[37] John M. Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2000), p. 130. See also Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, pp. 98–99.

Perhaps the most significant episode of cultural change in the long tenth century was the religious and intellectual movement that has come to be known as the Benedictine Reform.[38] On the surface, this 'reformation' was concerned primarily with wresting control of monasteries from secular clergy and replacing them with monks following the *Regula sancti Benedicti* ('Rule of St Benedict'). In the reign of Edgar (r. 957/959–975), leading reformer Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester and former abbot of Abingdon, produced a document known as the *Regularis concordia*, which proposed to codify a common monastic rule for all English religious houses, and for them to be overseen and protected by the king and queen.[39] Regarded by Catherine Cubitt as 'one of the most significant episodes in Anglo-Saxon history', the reform movement came to dominate not only monastic life but lay secular life as well.[40] Proponents of the movement were central figures in royal circles from the reign of Edgar until the Norman Conquest, and Æthelwold and Wulfstan in particular served as royal advisors as well as being leading writers and ecclesiasts.

As Joan Scott argues, 'changes in gender relationships can be set off by views of the needs of the state'.[41] Moreover, she says, 'massive political upheavals that throw old orders into chaos and bring new ones into being may revise the terms (and so the organization) of gender in the search for new forms of legitimation'.[42] The political and cultural upheavals of the long tenth century — from the viking raids of

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This new model was supported by and disseminated through Alfredian royal writing projects, which have even been thought of as a form of 'propaganda'; on this, see the classic study R. H. C. Davis, 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth', *History* 56:187 (1971), 169–182.

[38] There has been considerable recent scholarship problematizing the concept of 'reform' in the earlier middle ages, perhaps most notably the work of Julia Barrow on the so-called 'Gregorian reform' of the eleventh century; see, e.g., Julia Barrow, 'Ideas and Applications of Reform', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Vol. 3: Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600 – c. 1000,* ed. by Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 345–362. On the historiographical shift, see Conrad Leyser, 'Review Article: Church Reform – Full of Sound and Fury, Signifying Nothing?', *EME* 24:4 (2016), 478–499. To use the term 'reform' is, as Barrow and others have noted, probably anachronistic for the period before the twelfth century, as there is little evidence that the term was used or that 'reformers' considered their movements in such terms. However, the use of the term 'Benedictine reform' for the period in question is strongly ingrained in scholarship of tenth-century England, and I retain it for the purpose of continuity with that work, with the caveat that this recent work should be kept in mind.

[39] There has been some debate on the authorship of the *Regularis concordia*, with older traditions maintaining that it was primarily the work of Dunstan. More recent research, however, has shown that it was likely by Æthelwold instead; see, for instance, Lucia Kornexl, 'The *Regularis Concordia* and its Old English Gloss', *ASE* 24 (1995), 95–130 (pp. 97–101).

[40] Catherine Cubitt, 'Review Article: The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England', *EME* 6:1 (1997), 77–94 (p. 77).

[41] Scott, 'Gender', p. 1071.

[42] Scott, 'Gender', pp. 1073–1074.

Alfred's era through the Benedictine reform to the catastrophes of Æthelred's reign — provided fertile soil for a renegotiation of what it meant to be a man in Anglo-Saxon England. At the same time, what it meant to be king certainly changed too. Simon MacLean has recently argued that medieval queenship was a 'moveable feast': a status and office that was constantly negotiated through the flexible application of various longstanding models of right behaviour.[43] Both masculinity and kingship, as this study will show, might be thought of in similar terms.

Kingship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Historiography

Relatively little has been done to connect kingship and masculinity in Anglo-Saxon scholarship. While the historiography of Anglo-Saxon England is extensive and can be traced as far back as the development of history as a professional field in the nineteenth century, discussion of gendered aspects of Anglo-Saxon (and more broadly, medieval) history has only appeared quite recently.[44] Masculinity studies is still a relatively nascent field, with the vast majority of work on the subject dating only to the last generation. It is thus probably unsurprising that little has been written on medieval masculinity until recently.

Studies of kingship, on the other hand, are innumerable, and famous (or infamous) kings been a perennially popular subject for medievalists over the last two centuries. Studies of these figures have not abated in modern scholarship, even after the decline of so-called 'great man theory' in the wake of the social turn of later twentieth-century scholarship. Biographies and other historical explorations centred on Anglo-Saxon kings have continued to be published with some regularity into the twenty-first century, and will presumably continue into the foreseeable future.[45]

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[43] Simon MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 9–10.

[44] On older material, see, for instance: John Mitchell Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth till the Period of the Normal Conquest*, 2 vol. (London, 1848–1849); William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England: In Its Origin and Development*, 3 vol. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1874–1878); Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895); Hector Munro Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905).

[45] On kings of the long tenth century, see, for example: N. J. Higham and D. H. Hill, eds, *Edward the Elder, 899–924* (London: Routledge, 2001); Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Charles Insley, *Æthelstan, First King of the English* (London: Routledge, forthcoming); Donald Scragg, ed., *Edgar, King of the English, 959–975: New Interpretations*, Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008); Ann Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: The Ill-Counselled King* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003); Ryan Lavelle, *Aethelred II: King of the English 978–1016* (Stroud: The History Press, 2008); Levi Roach, *Æthelred the Unready* (London: Yale University Press, 2016); and Timothy Bolton, *Cnut the Great* (London: Yale University Press, 2017).

Alfred alone, for instance, accounts for over half a dozen book-length works over the course of the last half-century, including several in the past decade, prompting one historian to open his own biography with the question, 'Is there anything left to say about King Alfred?'[46] That is not to say, of course, that these more recent works mirror that older narrative/biographical tradition. Recent works have tended eschew simple narrative, and instead use the lives of their royal subjects to investigate a wider range of historical topics and themes.[47] Recent works have also done much to revisit older conceptions of these kings as well. While a great deal of older writing about Æthelred's reign, for instance, has portrayed him in a thoroughly negative light, more recent work, by Simon Keynes and many others, has sought to reappraise his reign. The 1978 *Ethelred the Unready* millenary volume edited by David Hill, for instance, contains a wealth of excellent articles by Wormald, Brooks, Loyn, Campbell, Stafford, and Keynes, amongst several others, that contain significant contributions to the study of tenth-century law, status, coinage, hagiography, and other themes.[48] It is into this historiographical trend of revisiting royal lives in order to study new or hitherto understudied themes that the present thesis fits.

One minor difficulty in pursuing the developments of kingship and masculinity in the Anglo-Saxon period is that these studies on kings themselves have often overshadowed the study of kingship as an institution and practice. The organizers of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 2006 conference on the subject of kingship and power, for example, found it 'nearly impossible' to

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[46] Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 1. A selection of biographies, editions/translations, and other book-length works on Alfred, his life, and his works published in the last half-century include: Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: Pearson, 1998); Eleanor S. Duckett, *Alfred the Great: The King and His England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, ed. and trans., *Alfred the Great* (London: Penguin, 1983); Allen J. Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne, 1986); Justin Pollard, *Alfred the Great: The Man Who Made England* (London: John Murray, 2006); Timothy Reuter, ed., *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Ryan Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars: Sources and Interpretation of Anglo-Saxon Warfare in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010); and Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach, eds, *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
[47] See, for instance, Ryan Lavelle's *Alfred's Wars*, which eschews a narrative or biographical approach in favour of a thematic investigation into ideas about organization, battle, and peace treaties, amongst other themes, during the time of Alfred; or Pratt, *Political Thought*, an in-depth study that covers ideas of lordship, writings, and relationships with the Church in Alfredian England, approaching 'Anglo-Saxon political structures on entirely their own terms, informed among other evidence by the way in which power was understood by contemporaries' (p. 7).
[48] David S. Hill, ed., *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, B.A.R. British Series 59 (Oxford: British Archaeological Series, 1978).

divorce ideas about kingship from individual named kings.[49] The present study can, however, draw upon, expand on, and perhaps argue against the large body of research on Anglo-Saxon kings and kingship, and on the growing field of gender and masculinities theory, and so it seems necessary here to provide a brief overview of the relevant literature on these subjects.

One of the major shifts in early medieval historiography occurred during and following the World Wars of the earlier twentieth century. The history of the so-called 'Germanic' tribes, and 'Germanic' kingship in particular, to which the Anglo-Saxons had been connected and which had been prominent in the writings of earlier historians like Stubbs and Kemble, became somewhat taboo in the post-war years, in large part due to an uneasiness amongst historians at appearing sympathetic to the nationalism and authoritarianism that had been the cause of so much recent calamity.[50] The study of 'Germanic' history fell into particular disfavour in the Anglophone academic community. British historians, especially medievalists, had formerly been quite familiar with 'Germanic' history and Germanophone scholarship prior to 1914, but with war against Germany looming, German scholars were excluded from positions of authority (e.g., within projects like the Cambridge Medieval History series) and over the coming decades interest in Germanic history — to include Anglo-Saxon history — quickly waned.[51] As Austrian historian Herwig Wolfram once remembered, 'racist mania and *Führer*-ideology' during and after the Second World War further created an environment in which it was difficult for scholars attempting studies of, for instance, the 'charismatic kings of [Germanic] warbands and their gods'.[52] The new generation of historians educated during and after the World Wars thus began to look west of the Rhine, to 'French' subjects and to Francophone historians, and to the themes and methodologies they espoused.[53] This trend did not abate until later decades of the millennium, and as Paul Fouracre has pointed out, even today British historians tend not to be as well-versed in the

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[49] Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Preface to *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider, Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies Vol. 13 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), p. ix.

[50] For a convenient overview of this previous Whig school of history, see, e.g., Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1–8; on Stubbs and his influence more specifically, see pp. 23–32 (and throughout).

[51] Paul J. Fouracre, '*Francia* and the History of Medieval Europe, *HSJ* 23 (2013), 1–21 (p. 10).

[52] Herwig Wolfram, '*Origo et Religio*: Ethnic Traditions and Literature in Early Medieval Texts', *EME* 3:1 (1994), 19–38 (p. 25).

[53] Fouracre, '*Francia*', pp. 10–11.

German language or German scholarship as Americans or other international medievalists.[54]

Interestingly, literary scholars, especially those working on Anglo-Saxon poetry, have had little trouble continuing to place their subjects within a 'heroic', Germanic tradition over the course of the twentieth century. Richard North's *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, as just one example, happily embraces Anglo-Saxon England's part in a pan-European 'Germanic' past just as much as nineteenth-century scholars had done before.[55] Whether or not that is quite a safe position to adopt remains to be seen; a fuller discussion of this subject will figure prominently later in Chapter 3.[56]

The decline of the British Empire and rise of new superpowers (and commensurate decline of British — or more specifically English — exceptionalism), along with a glut of war over the preceding decades, also had another effect on the historiography of the mid-century: a new focus on social, rather than military or political, history. Post-war historians started to explore subjects that were less 'traditional' (including women and gender), and to use new interdisciplinary methodologies to reassess and revise Victorian conceptions of history, drawing on evidence from literature and poetry, from hagiography, from numismatics, and from archaeology, all fields that relatively few earlier historians had used as source material.[57] This expansion of source material is perhaps the most important advancement in medieval historiography in the twentieth century, and one without which this study could not exist.

Even with this move towards social history, kings and kingship remained an important subject. But far from seeing him as a figure solely of high politics and law-making, mid-twentieth-century scholarship began to view the medieval king as 'a sacral figure, sitting apart from his people, enthroned within a specific historical, social, and liturgical setting'; he was 'accompanied and counselled by the Holy Ghost and by the historical precedents of David, of Constantine, and of Charles the Great'

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[54] Fouracre, '*Francia*', p. 1.
[55] Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[56] Scholars have begun to question these assumptions as part of a larger push to recognize and combat the misuse of 'Germanic' and medieval studies by racist and nationalist groups; see, for instance, Damian Fleming's recent blog post: Damian Fleming, 'Ethel, Sweet Ethel-weard: The First Scribe of the *Beowulf* Manuscript', <https://medievalfleming.wordpress.com/2017/11/14/ethel-sweet-ethel-weard-the-first-scribe-of-the-beowulf-manuscript/> [accessed 8 September 2018].
[57] Joel Rosenthal, 'A Historiographical Survey: Anglo-Saxon Kings and Kingship since World War II', *Journal of British Studies* 24:1 (1985), 72–93 (pp. 85–86).

with 'a house full of brothers, wives, children, and thanes'.[58] Perhaps the most indicative source in this vein is Ernst Kantorowicz's seminal *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*.[59] Kantorowicz's monumental work posits that, in the Tudor imagination, English kings had two 'bodies': the 'body natural' (that is, the king's actual physical being) and the 'body politic' (the perpetual representation of the office of kingship), and in it Kantorowicz attempts to trace this conception backwards in English medieval history. The book makes for notoriously difficult reading; as Richard Hyland has recently argued, '*The King's Two Bodies* is certainly one of the most difficult history books every written', and 'even among historians, there is no agreement as to what the book is about'.[60] Even the preface to the 1997 reissue admits the book 'lacks cogency' and suffers from 'more than a touch of what might be called too-much-ness'.[61] Yet for all that, it is perhaps the most obvious example of the push, in the mid-twentieth century, towards an understanding of kingship divorced from the physical body of an individual king.

Similar ideas about the social aspects of medieval kingship appear in a number of other works from subsequent decades, and especially in a series of three books based on lectures in the late 1960s and early 1970s: D. A. Binchy's *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, William A. Chaney's *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England*, and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill's *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent*.[62] The thing that most closely connects all three is their subscription to the theoretical model of 'sacral kingship', with Chaney being the most explicit in tackling, and promoting, the concept. The theory of 'sacral kingship', most fundamentally, is that medieval kings were thought to be invested with supernatural power borne from a divine ancestor or physical intimacy with the kingdom itself, and therefore that they

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[58] Rosenthal, 'Historiographical Survey', p. 87.

[59] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), originally published 1957.

[60] Richard Hyland, 'On Rereading *The King's Two Bodies*', *American Journal of Comparative Law* 20 (2017), 1–16 (p. 5–6). Recent Kantorowicz biographer Robert E. Lerner, too, while still acknowledging that it is widely recognised as 'one of the greatest works of medieval history of the twentieth century', admits that it has a number of detractors with a variety of complaints, the most frequent of which are that the book is 'up on the air', and 'rarely takes account of actual political events': Robert E. Lerner, *Ernst Kantorowicz: A Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 353–354.

[61] William Chester Jordan, Preface (1997) to Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. x–xi.

[62] D. A Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship: The O'Donnell Lectures for 1967-68* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970); William Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent: The Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

were divinely or supernaturally linked with the success or failure of their kingdom.[63] Wallace-Hadrill argues, for instance, that Germanic and Celtic kings 'were cult-kings, representing the moral lives and domestic ideals of their people'.[64] Chaney echoes this theory in 'The Woden-Sprung Kings', an essay that takes as its basis the appearance of (the name of the Germanic god) Woden on Anglo-Saxon, particularly West Saxon, genealogical lists.[65] Binchy argues similarly, particularly noting the sacral aspects of 'Celtic' kingship in relation to Anglo-Saxon developments. These arguments for the sacrality of kings are not without their detractors, of course; Rosenthal is probably right to say that the arguments, especially by Chaney and Wallace-Hadrill, are 'provocative' and should be 'taken with a grain of salt'.[66]

While the theory of 'sacral kingship' is certainly less prominent now, there is much to say about the connections between kingship and (Christian) religious authority in the middle ages. Wallace-Hadrill argues, indeed, that by the eighth and ninth centuries Anglo-Saxon kingship became an office with 'duties and rights defined by churchmen' in place of pre-Christian deities and cultic practices.[67] Medieval Christian kings, he says, may still have relied on warfare, expansion, genealogies, and legends for legitimacy, but kingship was, by the later Anglo-Saxon period, firmly anchored in Christian, rather than 'pagan', religiosity. This 'critical examination of these links between kings and a clerical vision of kingship' is perhaps Wallace-Hadrill's most important contribution to the historiography of medieval kingship, and forms a central part of the present study.[68]

Both Wallace-Hadrill's and Chaney's books are also indicative of another development in the study of early medieval England in the mid- and late twentieth century. While Wallace-Hadrill's *Festschrift* admits that he neither sought nor managed to create a new 'school' of history, his arguments for the influences and interactions between Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent, and specifically Francia and the Carolingian Empire, demonstrate a new readiness in Anglophone scholarship of the later twentieth century to acknowledge England's place in wider

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[63] The idea is primarily derived from James Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1890), a (now) quite controversial study of comparative mythology that greatly influenced early twentieth-century anthropologists and literary theorists, as well as a number of historians.
[64] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Germanic Kingship and the Romans', in *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 8.
[65] Chaney, 'The Woden-Sprung Kings', in *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 7–42.
[66] Rosenthal, 'Historiographical Survey', p. 83.
[67] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charles the Bald and Alfred', in *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 151.
[68] Rosenthal, 'Historiographical Survey', p. 83.

European medieval history.[69] While older works had endeavoured to examine Anglo-Saxon England in comparison with other places and times, Wallace-Hadrill's Frankish approach to aspects of Anglo-Saxon England has been particularly influential in recent generations of scholarship that stresses trans-Channel connections and influences. His *Festschrift* itself a testament to this trend, particularly in Michael Wood's essay 'The Making of King Aethelstan's Empire: An English Charlemagne?' and Patrick Wormald's 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas*, and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', which contrasts the Anglo-Saxons' creation of the idea of their own history and nationality with that of the Frankish creation of the *gens Francorum*.[70] While this study, for reasons of length, concentrates primarily on Anglo-Saxon England, it will attempt to also sit within this more 'global' Anglo-Saxonist tradition, making reference to Carolingian, Ottonian, and Irish developments where possible.

It would perhaps be remiss not to briefly note one further Anglo-Saxon historiographical debate of the last half-century: the 'maximalist' versus 'minimalist' views of the power of the later Anglo-Saxon state. Arguing against an older view of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as less sophisticated or perhaps even 'primitive', the maximalist view was espoused by a number of scholars of the later twentieth century, foremost among them James Campbell. His essay on 'The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View', does not mince words in codifying that school's position:

> Let me state a certainty. Late Anglo-Saxon England was a nation-state. It was an entity with an effective central authority, uniformly organised institutions, a national language, a national church, defined frontiers (admittedly with considerable fluidity in the north), and, above all, a strong sense of national identity.[71]

Many Anglo-Saxon historians of recent decades have worked, to a greater or lesser degree, within this maximalist school.[72] The most recent survey of the power of the

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[69] Patrick Wormald, Foreword to *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by Patrick Wormald with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Basil-Blackwell, 1983), p. x.

[70] Wormald concludes that ideas like the Anglo-Saxon *bretwalda* were about the creation of an identity of 'Englishness'. Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas*, and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. by P. Wormald, pp. 99–129. While the office of kingship was a 'status that probably did exist', it was 'less an objectively realized office than a subjectively perceived status'. The subject of the bretwaldaship has a long historiography, but it is probably not particularly relevant here.

[71] James Campbell, 'The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View', in *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), p. 10.

[72] Patrick Wormald, for instance, argues against the century-old interpretation of English common law as a post-Conquest innovation essentially developed from continental sources, and instead proposes that a unique feature of English history in comparison to its 'neighbours and counterparts' is that 'the power of [Anglo-Saxon] government has been longer and more consistently felt throughout the area it has claimed to rule' than elsewhere, and that 'law has been the instrument and expression

Anglo-Saxon state, George Molyneaux's *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century*, generally accepts the argument for a stronger, centralised Anglo-Saxon state, though he stresses that it only really applies in the later decades of Anglo-Saxon history.[73] A number of other contemporary scholars have conversely argued, though, for a more 'minimalist', or at least nuanced, view, and caution that we should not be 'seduced […] into over-stating the practical application of "undoubted royal aspirations and robust attempts to actualize them"' by sources intentionally produced to empower the royal court.[74] Janet Nelson, for instance, elaborates that the 'relative abundance of legal material' exaggerates 'the statelike appearance of the tenth-century realm'.[75] In other words, maximalists run the risk of falling into a trap created by Anglo-Saxon propagandists in the first place. Neither view, minimal or maximal, is entirely satisfactory, and as Levi Roach recognises, strict categorisation is 'at best unhelpful and at worst actively misleading'; the safest route is thus probably the middle ground between maximal and minimal views.[76] This study effectively takes the same position: while tenth-century England had developed a relatively strong centralised system of authority, that authority might nevertheless be affected by the personal authority of the kings themselves, by regional variation (particularly in the North), and, perhaps most importantly, by political and cultural developments over the course of the ninth to eleventh centuries.

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of that power ever since it was exercised by King Alfred (871–899) and his heirs'. Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Vol. I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. xi. This book was the first of a planned two-volume set, but the second volume was left unfinished at the time of Wormald's death. Wormald's notes have since been published online as part of the Early English Laws project: Patrick Wormald, *Papers Preparatory to The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Vol. II: From God's Law to Common Law*, ed. by Stephen Baxter and John Hudson, Early English Laws <http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/reference/wormald/> [accessed 8 September 2018].

[73] Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 10–11.

[74] Paul R. Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 72–3, cited in Ann Williams, Introduction to *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider, p. 2.

[75] Janet L. Nelson, 'Rulers and Government', *NCMH* III, p. 115. Nelson is one of the preeminent medievalists of the last few decades, and her work has done much to illuminate ordination, coronation, anointing, or other inauguration rituals, first in Anglo-Saxon England and later in the wider Carolingian world, as well as aspects of early medieval gender. See particularly Janet L. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', *Studies in Church History: Subsidia* 1 (1978), 31–77; *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996); Janet L. Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald, and Others* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1999); Janet L. Nelson, *Courts, Elites, and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages: Charlemagne and Others* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

[76] Levi Roach, *Kingship and Consent in Anglo-Saxon England, 871–978: Assemblies and the State in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 18–19.

The works discussed here form an (admittedly brief) overview of the corpus of work on Anglo-Saxon kingship published over the last few generations. What has hitherto been missing, however, is the historiography of gender in the middle ages, which is central to this dissertation. A brief review of relevant gender and masculinities theory, and on gender in medieval historiography, thus follows.

The rise of gender theory and gender history is probably the most significant development to have come out of the 'social turn' of the later twentieth century.[77] Joan Scott's seminal 1986 article 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis' is emblematic of this change, and should rightly be recognised as on of the most important works in Anglophone historiography of the last several generations.[78] Indeed, in a 2008 issue of the *American Historical Review* devoted to 'reassessing' Scott's article, Robert Schneider calls it nothing less than 'canonical', and notes that in just two decades it became the most cited article in the history of the journal.[79] Scott argues that, as a category of historical analysis, gender is composed of two interrelated but distinct parts: it is 'a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes', but also 'a primary way of signifying relationships of power'.[80] Gender as a social relationship between the sexes is established in four elements: cultural symbols that 'evoke multiple (and often contradictory) representations of women and/or two sexes'; normative concepts (expressed in 'religious, educational, scientific, legal, and political doctrines') that establish a doctrine of binary categories; reference to politics and social institutions and organizations; and subjective identity constructed through this range of activities, social organizations, and cultural representations.[81]

As part of the idea of gender signifying relationships of power, Scott specifically discusses the use of gender in political systems, and how historians can view historical political institutions through the lens of gender (e.g., when it is used 'to justify or criticize the reign of monarchs or express the relationship between ruler and ruled').[82] As Christopher Fletcher notes in the introduction to the recent *Palgrave*

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[77] A useful overview of recent critical theory for historians is Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*, 2nd edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), which covers all the major themes in modern and contemporary history writing, including gender theory.
[78] Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *AHR* 91:5 (1986), 1053–1075.
[79] Robert Schneider, 'Revisiting "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" – Introduction', *AHR* 113:5 (2008), 1344–1345 (p. 1344).
[80] Scott, 'Gender', p. 1067
[81] Scott, 'Gender', p. 1067–1069.
[82] Scott, 'Gender', p. 1070.

Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe, though, gender historians and political historians have long had an 'uneasy relationship', and moreover that 'gendered approaches to political history have had difficulty finding acceptance within that broader field, and that historians of gender have proved wary of straying into political history'.[83] Gender history, after all, sought explicitly from its very beginnings to revise and deconstruct traditional understandings of political power and the development of states in history. More recently, however, gender theory and gender history have become another important tool in the investigation of what has come to be called 'political culture'.[84]

For the most part, many medievalists of the late twentieth century 'largely failed to absorb the insights of the generation of scholarship' that promoted the use of critical theory and especially gender theory within the study of history.[85] This is surely a mistake. After all, as Marc Bloch, one of the great medievalists of the earlier twentieth century, wrote, 'it is indispensable that the historian possess at least a smattering of all the principal techniques of his trade, if only to learn the strength of his tools and the difficulties of handling them'.[86] In the last few decades, medievalist scholars have done much to correct this mistake, and gender theory has become one of those principal techniques of medieval historical investigation. A number of (usually female) scholars, like Christine Fell and Judith Jesch, have produced invaluable work on women in the medieval world since the 1970s and 1980s.[87] Pauline Stafford's long and distinguished career in particular has been built in part

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[83] Christopher Fletcher, 'Introduction: Gender and *Politik*', *PHMPCE*, pp. 1–16 (p. 4).

[84] A similar development has taken place in recent German historiography with the rise of the so-called '*Neue Politikgeschichte*' and '*Kulturgeschichte des Politischen*'; see, for example, Karl Ubl, 'Der kinderlöse König: Ein Testfall für die Ausdifferenzierung des Politischen im 11. Jahrhundert', *Historische Zeitschrift* 292 (2011), 323–363 (p. 326).

[85] Hadley, 'Warriors, Heroes and Companions', p. 270.

[86] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), p. 68.

[87] There are too many works to name here, but for the period studied in this dissertation, see for example: Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil-Blackwell, 1984); Judith Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991); Kathleen Herbert, *Peace-Weavers and Shield Maidens: Women in Early English Society* (Little Downham: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1997); and Stacy S. Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2006). Fell's work in particular has helped launch a major historiographical debate on the status of women in Anglo-Saxon England; on this, see Jayne Carroll and Christina Lee, 'Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of Christine Fell – Introduction', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* LI (2007), 201–205. For older and non-Anglo-Saxon sources, see Miri Rubin, 'A Decade of Studying Medieval Women, 1987–1997', *History Workshop Journal* 46 (1998), 213–239. The Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship has done much to promote the study of medieval women, especially through their project *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index* <https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/WhatIsFeminae.aspx>. Note, too, the Gender and Medieval Studies network and their corresponding journal, *Medieval Feminist Forum*.

on the study of the relationship between gender and power in Anglo-Saxon England.[88] Unsurprisingly, most of these historians have turned their attention to queens and queenship in the early middle ages, in England and beyond, and these works are still useful for comparison to kings and kingship.[89]

As Hadley cautions, however, many of these works 'were written at a time when researchers were principally concerned with increasing the visibility of women in the past, rather than engaging in the construction of gender identities'.[90] In recent decades, new works by scholars of medieval gender have moved beyond simply correcting this problem of the 'invisibility of women' in history, and have sought a broader understanding of how gender influenced medieval identity for subjects of any gender. Mary Dockray-Miller, for instance, has used modern feminist theory to understand motherhood and relationships between women and their (male and female) children in Anglo-Saxon England, in both historical and literary sources.[91] Many scholars, too, have begun to investigate medieval gender through exploration of the lives — and bodies — of both male and female religious figures.[92] Some works, like Klein's, have also explored the interaction and collaboration between secular women and religious figures, and others further examine gendered identity of religious figures specifically.[93] What these works all have in common, though, is a focus on the gender of women and men outside the realm of 'hegemonic masculinity'.

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[88] See, for example, Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983); P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001); and a volume of her collected essays: P. Stafford, *Gender, Family, and the Legitimation of Power: England from the Ninth to Early Twelfth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

[89] E.g., John Carmi Parsons, ed., *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993); William Layher, *Queenship and Voice in Medieval Northern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), which covers slightly later Scandinavian queens; and most recently, MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*.

[90] Hadley, 'Warriors, Heroes, and Companions', p. 270.

[91] Mary Dockray-Miller, *Motherhood and Mothering in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000).

[92] See, for instance, Lynda L. Coon, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); R. N. Swanson, 'Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation', in Hadley, *Masculinity*, pp. 160–177; Judith Elaine Abbott, 'Queens and Queenship in Anglo-Saxon England, 954–1066: Holy and Unholy Alliances', PhD diss. (University of Connecticut, 1989); and a number of articles in P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis, eds, *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), including Carolyn Diskant Muir, 'Bride or Bridegroom? Masculine Identity in Mystic Marriages', and Shaun Tougher, 'Holy Eunuchs! Masculinity and Eunuch Saints in Byzantium'.

[93] Klein, *Ruling Women*; Abbott, 'Queens and Queenship'; Clare Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009).

The academic study of masculinity, as noted above, is a relatively new phenomenon, and indeed, for all intents and purposes, did not exist before the mid-1980s in Britain and only slightly before that in the United States.[94] Men's studies, as it has sometimes been called (particularly in its early years), first emerged from the field of sociology, but over the last three decades masculinity studies has grown and become of interest to scholars throughout the humanities and social sciences. Leading theorists developed the field further in the 1990s, led by the publication of Australian sociologist R. W. Connell's seminal *Masculinities* in 1995.[95] Her thesis in the book instituted a major change in theoretical conception of masculinity, proposing an idea of multiple competing notions of masculinity in a given culture, and a hierarchy of masculinities dominated by what she called 'hegemonic masculinity': the 'currently most honoured way of being a man' that demands 'all other men to position themselves in relation to it'.[96] Moreover, Connell proposes a number of types of masculinities within the hierarchy, including hegemonic masculinities, subordinated masculinities, complicit masculinities, and marginalised masculinities.[97] Connell's theories revolutionised the field of masculinity and men's studies, and by the time of a 2005 retrospective reassessment, hundreds of articles, books, and conferences had been influenced by Connell's contributions to the field.[98] In 2018, it remains a 'touchstone' in masculinity studies and probably the central theory of the social structures of historical masculinity, and the best known — though not an entirely unproblematic — critical tool for thinking about men and masculinity.[99]

In a recent article in *Gender & History*, Ben Griffin has noted a number of deficiencies with Connell's theoretical framework in regards to its use as historical methodology. While not suggesting the abandonment of Connell's theory, he argues that 'elements of it can be reframed in way that will shed useful light on patterns of change in gender history more effectively than rival models', centring in particular

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[94] John Tosh, 'The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?', in *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. by John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011), pp. 17–34 (p. 17).

[95] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995). Citations here are from the second edition: R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

[96] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt. 'Hegemonic Masculinities: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society* 19:6 (2005), 829–859 (p. 832).

[97] Connell, *Masculinities*, pp. 76–81.

[98] Connell and Messerschmidt, p. 830.

[99] Ben Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem', *Gender & History* 30:2 (2018), 1–24 (p. 4).

Simon Szreter's conception of 'communication communities'.[100] In his article, Griffin instead proposes that the study of historical masculinities is in fact the study of a four-fold set of processes: a process of 'cultural contestation' wherein certain forms of masculinity are 'valorised', leading to 'patterns of subordination, complicity, [and] marginalisation' within a communication community; a process wherein those masculinities are unevenly distributed by means of social and economic factors; a process in which the communities recognises the performance of that form of masculinity, or in which a man's status remains unclear if they do not; and finally, a process by which the actor is finally 'positioned in relation to sets of institutional practices, rewards, or sanctions'.[101] In proposing this approach, Griffin solves many of the problems he has identified with Connell's more monolithic framework. Moreover, his model works well for understanding masculinities in the period this study explores. The communication communities in which — and between which — masculinity was defined in the tenth century might include the lay aristocracy of the realm, but also the Benedictine reformers, whose community included not just the reformers themselves but also their Continental counterparts and, in many cases, allied kings as well.

It is also important to note that, as Connell and Messerschmidt point out and as Griffin accounts for in his idea of plural communication communities, 'hegemonic masculinities can be constructed that do not correspond closely to the lives of any actual men', while still expressing 'widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires'.[102] Monks, especially those who wrote about idealized forms of right behaviour (royal or otherwise), were not necessarily writing about masculine or royal identity as it existed, but rather how they thought it *should* exist, based upon their post-Roman, western Christian worldview. In contrast, 'hegemony works in part through the production of exemplars of masculinity […], symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them', and perhaps the same might be said for exemplars of kingship, as this study will show.[103] Moreover, the anxiety caused by not living up to these expectations — of masculinity and indeed of

[100] Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 2 and p. 9*ff.*, following Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class, and Gender in Britain, 1860–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[101] Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 14–15.
[102] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinities', p. 838.
[103] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinities', p. 846.

right kingship too — will need to be discussed in relation to Æthelred in particular in later sections of this dissertation.

The recent development of the study of historical masculinities has, in general, been led by modernists, especially those of Victorian and contemporary Britain and twentieth-century America. John Tosh, for instance, author of 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?', has widely published on masculinity and nineteenth-century British history, while Frank Mort's 1996 book explores *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain*.[104] Griffin, too, is a specialist in Victorian and twentieth-century Britain. Interestingly, a number of scholars of the Classical and ancient world have adopted the study of masculinity as well.[105] It is only recently, though, that medievalist scholars have begun to explore medieval masculinities in the same way.[106] Most of the work has thus far been done in a number of essay collections, probably owing to the nascent nature of the field; literary scholars, rather than historians, have also tended to take the lead in exploring masculinity, and historians and archaeologists have only just begun catching up more recently.[107] The first, and probably still amongst the most useful, of these volumes was Clare A. Lees's *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, published in 1994.[108] A collection of essays on subjects ranging from *Beowulf* to the Renaissance and everything in between, *Medieval Masculinities* was a

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[104] Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?'; Frank Mort, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[105] See, for instance: Lin Foxhall and John Salmon, eds, *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power, and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society Vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1998); Mark Masterson, 'Studies of Ancient Masculinity', in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. by Thomas K. Hubbard (Chichester: Blackwell, 2014), pp. 17–30; and more broadly, John Arnold and Sean Brady, eds, *What Is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[106] Most similar to the present study is Katherine Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2013), but see also Siri Sandquist, 'The Making of Man: The Hegemonic Masculinity of the Viking Age' (MLitt diss., University of Glasgow, 2012), which touches on the subject but focuses primarily on the creation of heroic masculinities and not necessarily their relevance to kingship. Also relevant are a number of articles in Cullum and Lewis, eds, *Holiness and Masculinity*: Edward Christie, 'Self-Mastery and Submission: Holiness and Masculinity in the Lives of Anglo-Saxon Martyr-Kings'; K. Lewis, 'Edmund of East Anglia, Henry VI, and Ideals of Kingly Masculinity'; and W. M. Ormrod, 'Monarchy, Martyrdom, and Masculinity: England in the Later Middle Ages'. Another significant work is David Clark, *Between Medieval Men: Male Friendship and Desire in Early Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[107] See, for instance: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, eds, *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Routledge, 1997); Jacqueline Murray, ed., *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (London: Garland, 1999); Dawn M. Hadley, ed., *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1999); and Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith, eds, *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[108] Clare A. Lees, ed., *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

groundbreaking book that built upon as well as challenged preceding notions of gender in the study of medieval history. Lees's introduction and Thelma Fenster's preface ('Why Men?') in particular are still perhaps the most useful and readable introductions the field of medieval masculinities. Pauline Stafford's *Gender, Family, and the Legitimation of Power: England from the Ninth to Early Twelfth Century*, is also particularly noteworthy, and collects a number of Stafford's relevant articles from throughout the early years of her long and productive career; she has continued this work even to the present day, with an article on fathers and daughters in Æthelred's reign appearing as recently as Naismith and Woodman's 2018 volume in honour of Simon Keynes.[109] The work of archaeologist Dawn Hadley should also be recognised, as one of the most widely published contemporary scholars of masculinity in Anglo-Saxon and viking-age England; her works, too, are an accessible starting-point in the investigation of hegemonic masculinities in the period in question in this dissertation, and her edited volume *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* is another essential work in the field.[110]

It is also worth mentioning that several longer-form works have appeared over the last few years on masculinity in earlier medieval Europe. Rachel Stone's 2012 monograph *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* and Andrew J. Romig's 2017 *Be a Perfect Man: Christian Masculinity and the Carolingian Aristocracy* have done much to advance the state of the field, and both have been models for the present study.[111] While both focus on Continental matters, they explore a number of themes and topics that this study will apply to Anglo-Saxon England; Stone covers a wide array of themes — among them moral texts, warfare, personal power, wealth, marriage, and sex — over the course of ten chapters, and both focus on the ways in which Frankish noblemen and Christian writers struggled to determine the proper forms of both morality and masculinity in a changing medieval world.

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[109] Stafford, *Gender, Family, and the Legitimation of Power*; P. Stafford, 'Fathers and Daughters: The Case of Æthelred II', in *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Rory Naismith and David A. Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 139–161.

[110] Hadley, 'Warriors, Heroes and Companions', includes probably the best brief introduction to the use of masculinity in Anglo-Saxon studies; but see also D. M. Hadley, 'Masculinity', *HASS*, pp. 115–132; Hadley, 'Negotiating Gender, Family and Status in Anglo-Saxon Burial Practices, c. 600–950', in Brubaker and Smith, ed., *Gender in the Early Medieval World*, pp. 301–323; Hadley, *Masculinity*.

[111] Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Andrew J. Romig, *Be a Perfect Man: Christian Masculinity and the Carolingian Aristocracy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

Sources and Methodology

The sources consulted in this thesis should be familiar territory for Anglo-Saxonists, and in many cases, for medievalists in general. The time is long overdue, however, to reassess many of them in light of the developments of critical gender theory over recent generations, and especially regarding masculinities.[112] As Joan Scott writes, 'when historians look for the ways in which the concept of gender legitimizes and constructs social relationships', then we become all the closer to understanding the 'reciprocal nature of gender and society'.[113] This study will thus read these well-known sources in a new way in order to assess what they might say about later Anglo-Saxon conceptions of masculinity and kingship. The various genres or categories to which these sources belong all require different sorts of understandings, however, so the final section of this introduction will introduce these categories and the particular nuances each necessitates.[114]

While most information about early Anglo-Saxon kings, and early Anglo-Saxon England in general, often derives from one main source (Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*), the ninth to eleventh centuries provide a much wider range of written narrative sources. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (or perhaps 'Chronicles', in the plural) is the most wide-ranging of these sources.[115] The various recensions of the Chronicle cover the entire Anglo-Saxon period, beginning from Roman and early Christian Britain and extending beyond the Norman Conquest to the mid-twelfth century. The earliest versions originate from the mid- to late ninth century, and seem to have been disseminated during the promotion of learning under Alfred, if not as a direct commission by Alfred himself.[116] These versions should probably be recognised as a form of West Saxon propaganda, and other, later, versions could be viewed as the same for the burgeoning Anglo-Saxon (and

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[112] This is not to say, of course, that they have been entirely ignored. Literary scholars have built an impressive corpus of work utilizing gender theory to explore, for instance, Old English 'heroic' poetry, on which see more below.

[113] Scott, 'Gender', p. 1070.

[114] It should also be noted that, when possible, the study will attempt to expand on this historical written evidence with reference to material sources from archaeology or numismatics, as appropriate. Coinage is particularly useful for the ways in which kings used it to present an idealised version of themselves; see, for instance, Simon Keynes and Rory Naismith, 'The *Agnus Dei* Pennies of King Æthelred the Unready', *ASE* 40 (2011), 175–223.

[115] Pauline Stafford, amongst others, has preferred the plural form: P. Stafford, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Identity, and the Making of England', *Haskins Society Journal* 19 (2007), 28–50; P. Stafford, 'The Making of Chronicles and the Making of England: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles after Alfred', *TRHistS* 27 (2017), 65–86.

[116] For a fuller discussion of the manuscripts and their provenances, see each volume of the ongoing series *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer).

later Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman) states. Despite these obvious biases, these presentations of kings and kingship are useful in assessing tenth-century views of right kingship. Each version was produced in a different place and context, however, and it is worth noting the differences between some of them. The oldest, A, is often called the Winchester (or Parker) Chronicle, and is probably contemporary to the early tenth century. Chronicles B and C (the Abingdon Chronicles) are probably from slightly later in the tenth century, and include the so-called 'Mercian Register', a number of tenth-century entries specific to Mercia and Æthelflæd, 'Lady of the Mercians'.[117] The B-text concludes in 977, while the C version, included in London, BL MS Cotton Tiberius B.i with a number of other Old English vernacular texts, continues to 1066. Manuscript D, the Worcester Chronicle, includes material from a now-lost northern (i.e., Northumbrian) recension, and may include entries from Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, who figures prominently in Chapter 2 below. The last major vernacular Chronicle, E (called the Peterborough Chronicle) dates from the twelfth century, copied from a version similar, but not identical, to the Worcester version.

Another relevant narrative category is that which might be termed 'secular biography' (i.e., sources that describe the lives of specific medieval kings).[118] The most obvious example for the present study is the *Vita Ælfredi regis* (or *Life of King Alfred*) by Asser.[119] According to a semi-autobiographical sketch in the *Vita*, Asser was a monk from the monastery of St David's, in the Welsh kingdom of Dyfed, who was summoned by Alfred to be a part of his court, along with the likes of John the Old Saxon and Grimbald of St Bertin. The *Vita*, which ends abruptly and is probably unfinished, seems not to have been particularly popular or well-known in the middle ages; it survived to the modern era in only one manuscript (BL MS Cotton Otho A.xii), which itself was destroyed in the Cotton library fire in 1731, and so the *Vita*

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[117] Indeed, this has sometimes been called the 'Annals of Æthelflæd': P. Stafford, 'The Annals of Æthelflæd: Annals, History, and Politics in the Early Tenth Century', in *Myth, Rulership, Church, and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*, ed. by Andrew Wareham and Julia Barrow (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 101–116.

[118] Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* (see below) is usually cited as the first medieval example of the genre; Marie Schütt, 'The Literary Form of Asser's *Vita Alfredi*', *EHR* 72:283 (1957), 209–220 (p. 209).

[119] There have been arguments that Asser is a forgery and what we know as Asser's work was actually written centuries later; see for instance, V. H. Galbraith, *An Introduction to the Study of History* (London: Watts, 1964). For the most part, though, this has been discredited and most modern historians are satisfied with Asser's veracity: P. Wormald, 'Asser', *ODNB*. See also a forthcoming essay by Robert Gallagher, which plausibly demonstrates Asser's hand in writing charters for Edward the Elder, given more credence to the late-ninth-century veracity of the *Vita* as well.

thus only exists today in an eighteenth-century facsimile. There is evidence of its use in some later texts however, including the works of historians and chronicles of the eleventh and twelfth century.[120] The *Vita* is a combination of historical and personal details about the king, his personality, his deeds, and his private life. Asser portrays Alfred as the 'honoured and most pious [king] of the Angles and Saxons', rather in the vein of Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* (or *Life of Charlemagne*), another text also written by a member of a royal (indeed imperial) court that describes its subject's public successes as well has his private life, and which may have been a model for Asser's *Vita*.[121] Written from within royal courts, these sources may thus be quite valuable for their insight into both the lives of these early medieval monarchs. As Daisy Delogu suggests, 'Royal biographies are peculiarly well suited to articulating an analysis of kingship because they provide a means of connecting and individual life to the theoretical or normative underpinnings of kingship'.[122] As she further notes, 'the resulting intersection of theoretical concerns and specific circumstances testifies to the often sizeable distance between kingly ideals and their implementation'; it is this intersection between ideal and reality that the present study also seeks to assess.[123]

The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* ('Encomium of Queen Emma') is another particularly useful secular biography for the tenth and eleventh centuries, albeit with its own caveats for use. Commissioned by Emma of Normandy (wife of both Æthelred and Cnut), the *Encomium* survives in two manuscripts, the earliest and best known of which (BL Add. 33241) dates from the mid-eleventh century and may be an early copy of the Encomiast's original.[124] A second copy was discovered in 2008 after the manuscript containing it, the Courtenay Compendium, was sold at auction to a private collector; this version appears to be a fourteenth-century copy of a

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[120] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 223–227.

[121] See McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 7 and Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars*, p. 146, both of whom cite M. Tischler, *Einharts Vita Karoli: Studien zur Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption* (Hanover, 2002).

[122] Delogu, *Theorizing*, pp. 4–5.

[123] Delogu, *Theorizing*, p. 5.

[124] Alistair Campbell, ed. and trans., *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, Camden Third Series Vol. LXXII (London: Royal Historical Society, 1949), p. xi. The anonymous Encomiast was probably a Flemish monk of St Bertin (modern Saint Omer, Flanders); Simon Keynes, '*Encomium Emmae Reginae*', *WBEASE*, p. 174. Despite its title, Keynes and Love's article has much to say on advancements in our understanding of the Encomium in recent years due to the discovery of a second manuscript with additions probably by the Encomiast himself: Simon Keynes and Rosalind Love, 'Earl Godwine's Ship', *ASE* 38 (2009), 185–223 (esp. pp. 193–199).

recension made after the accession of Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–1066).[125] It has been proposed that the *Encomium* was meant as a political tool to help defend Emma's reputation and status in the contentious reign of Harthacnut, and probably revised after his death in the early reign of Edward.[126] As both Stafford and Keynes have argued, though, 'the *Encomium* was intended not so much for the gratification of the queen's ego, as for the edification of those in positions of power and influence at the Anglo-Danish royal court', and presumably functioned the same after the restoration of the West Saxon line under Edward.[127] The *Encomium* thus sits at the intersection of narrative and secular biography with another key category that this dissertation will term 'moral-didactic' texts.

These moral-didactic texts will be the focus of Chapter 2 of the present study, and encompass material from a variety of genres with the shared purpose of — either explicitly or implicitly — defining the guidelines of right secular Christian behaviour. Many of these texts include, or were directly influenced by, Old Testament writings, but Anglo-Saxon writers of the long tenth century also drew on nearly a millennium of writings by Church Fathers and earlier Christian writers, much of which related to morality and moral instruction.[128] The theme is best encapsulated in the continental genre of 'mirrors for princes' (or *specula principum*), but as the chapter will note, homilies and sermons, like those by Ælfric of Eynsham and Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, are perhaps the most common Anglo-Saxon iterations. These works are concerned with Christian behaviour in all its forms — masculine and feminine, clerical and lay, aristocratic and common — but as this dissertation will argue, all of the authors shared a particular interest in the behaviour of kings and princes.

Christian and Old Testament moral and theological writings are not, of course, the only source for information on Anglo-Saxon ideas about kingship or masculinity. The genre of 'heroic' poetry has often been read as an indicator of a masculine warrior ethos, particularly among the ruling elite, often compared with (or

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[125] Timothy Bolton, 'A Newly Emergent Mediaeval Manuscript Containing *Encomium Emmae Reginae* with the Only Known Complete Text of the Recension Prepared for King Edward the Confessor', *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 19 (2009), 205–221.

[126] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 28–40 (esp. pp. 37–38).

[127] Keynes, '*Encomium Emmae Reginae*', *WBEASE*, p. 174; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 29.

[128] For information on sources available to Anglo-Saxon writers, see Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2006); and more generally, Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

explicitly connected to) older 'Germanic' *comitatus*/warband culture dating as far back as the work of Tacitus in his early-second-century *Germania*.[129] As Chapter 3 will argue, though, using Tacitus to think about tenth-century England is quite problematic, to put it lightly. Nevertheless, there is still a longstanding tradition, particularly amongst literary scholars, to accept the 'pagan' aspects of (even quite late) Anglo-Saxon culture, especially as presented in the genre of vernacular 'heroic' poetry. A full exploration of Anglo-Saxon poetry would be impossible in the present study, so it will necessary focus on just a few examples.

Beowulf, the *ne plus ultra* of the genre, seems to have been composed sometime between the eighth and eleventh centuries, with considerable disagreement on the exact dating.[130] The *Beowulf* manuscript, also called the Nowell Codex (BL Cotton Vitellius A. xv), however, almost certainly dates to within no more than a generation either side of AD 1000, and thus during the reign of Æthelred (or, at the latest, that of Cnut).[131] Alongside the epic poem, the codex also contains several vernacular prose compositions (including a *Life of St Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, and *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*), and another fragmentary 'epic' poem, *Judith*, which retells the Old Testament Book of Judith 'within the Anglo-Saxon heroic ethos'.[132]

Another prominent vernacular manuscript, the Exeter Book (*Codex Exoniensis*, Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501), is the largest surviving collection of Anglo-Saxon literature, containing some thirty-five poetical works along with large collection of riddles. While the dating of the composition of the Exeter Book material is also unclear, the manuscript also probably dates to the second half of the tenth

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[129] See, for instance Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 20–21, who describes it as a 'very masculine culture'. For an example of this (problematic) view, see Stephen S. Evans, *The Lords of Battle: Image and Reality of the Comitatus in Dark Age Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997).

[130] 'Considerable disagreement' is somewhat of a polite understatement; the dating of *Beowulf* is one of the most contentious debates in early medieval literary studies, dividing many *Beowulf* scholars into two rival camps of 'early' and 'late' daters, though as the title of one article by Eric Stanley indicates, the dating of *Beowulf* often comes to 'Some Doubts and No Conclusions': Eric G. Stanley: 'The Date of Beowulf: Some Doubts and No Conclusions', in *The Dating of* Beowulf, ed. by Colin Chase (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 197–212; on one particularly fierce episode in the debate, see also Roberta Frank, 'A Scandal in Toronto: "The Dating of Beowulf" A Quarter Century On', *Speculum* 82:4 (2007), 843–864. The most extensive recent coverage of the debate is Neidorf's 2014 edited volume, though it should be noted that he is amongst the most prominent 'early' daters: Leonard Neidorf, ed., *The Dating of* Beowulf: *A Reassessment* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014).

[131] The most widely-held view is that the manuscript was produced no later than 1010, following David N. Dumville, 'Beowulf Come Lately: Some Notes on the Palaeography of the Nowell Codex', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 225 (1988), 49–63; there may yet be disagreement, however.

[132] Mark C. Amodio, '*Judith*', *The Anglo-Saxon Literature Handbook* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 295.

century (c. 960–990), thus slightly earlier than, or perhaps just contemporaneously, with the *Beowulf* manuscript.[133] Amongst the many poems within the book are several (including the so-called elegies *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *Widsith*, and *Vainglory*; the *Christ* poems; and the *Guthlac* poems) that all have something to say about kingship, lordship, masculinity, and right behaviour. Not all of the texts from the Exeter Book can necessarily be considered part of the 'heroic' genre, though. It also contains a number of works that have come to be classified as 'wisdom literature'.[134] The text known as *Maxims I*, for instance, is a collection of gnomic wisdom on a wide variety of subjects from religion and the natural world to the right and wrong behaviour.[135] Perhaps most relevant to present purposes, the Exeter Book also contains another poem now generally known as *Precepts*, but previously entitled 'Advice from a Father to a Son'.[136] The advice is wide-ranging, but ultimately Christian in nature, which might perhaps seem somewhat unusual considering its place within the manuscript, alongside the 'wisdom' poem *The Gifts of Men* but between the 'heroic' elegiac poems *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. This apparent dichotomy between Christian and 'Germanic' *mores* in general is the subject of further discussion in Chapter 3.[137]

There are a number of ways one might approach the study of rulership and gender in the middle ages using these sources and the many others (including charters, wills, law-codes, and more). In his recent study of Ottonian queenship, Simon MacLean has recently identified two typical methodologies: a thematic investigation, which usually focuses on different stages of female royal life; or alternatively, a biographical/chronological approach that follows the reigns of various queens in turn.[138] These two methodologies reflect the same general trends

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[133] The Exeter Book's provenance, at least, is traceable beginning in the eleventh century when it appears in the will of Leofric, Bishop of Exeter, in 1072 (Oxford, Bodleian MS Auct. D.2.16 [2719]).

[134] Many of these texts been collected in T. A. Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). Other examples not discussed here include the Old English *Dicts of Cato* and the *Durham Proverbs*.

[135] A second similar, but probably unrelated, set of gnomic verses known as *Maxims II* also survives in BL Cotton Tiberius B.i (alongside the C-text of the Chronicle) and also contains several gnomes relevant to the present study of kingship and masculinity.

[136] Benjamin Thorpe, ed. and trans., *Codex Exoniensis: A Collection of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1842).

[137] Perhaps the best overview of the 'Germanic' tradition in Old English literary studies is Eric G. Stanley, 'The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism', in *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 3–110. A number of recent works have challenged the notion; see, for instance, Rosemary Woolf, 'The Ideal of Men Dying with their Lord in the *Germania* and *The Battle of Maldon*', *ASE* 5 (1976), 63–81; John M. Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstruction Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000).

[138] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, p. 19–20.

in the historiography of kingship over the course of the twentieth century, as described above, and both have their uses.

This study, though, will take a slightly different approach and take its structure from the types of sources that might be used to understand masculinity and kingship in the tenth century. Chapter 1 will first explore the lifecycle of the Anglo-Saxon male as understood by medieval writers, and define what it meant to be a prince in the long tenth century. The chapter further analyses the education and enculturation of Anglo-Saxon boys and asks, 'Who Raises Royal Sons?' The following two chapters trace the ideals of kingship and masculinity that might have been a part of that cultural education, as it might have been understand in two 'communication communities' in the tenth century. Chapter 2 develops a model of what will be called 'right kingship' in the later Anglo-Saxon period: a Christian model of rulership that stressed the centrality of wisdom, morality, and justice to successful rule, displayed in and by promoted by the aforementioned 'moral-didactic' texts. These texts primarily give us an idea of the ideals of their authors, but as the chapter will show, these ideals could be put into practice and affect the actual performance of kingship. Chapter 3 for its part, turns to Old English 'heroic' poetry, and will contend with the issue of how 'pagan' or 'Germanic' the genre might or might not be, as well as these texts' place within the cultural context of the long tenth century. It will further argue that this poetry, too, can be read as morally instructional, and meant to instil or promote a particular form of aristocratic male behaviour.

Following these sections, Chapter 4 finally turns to an analysis of the practice of kingship and masculinity in later Anglo-Saxon England. Drawing on narrative sources as well as diplomatic ones (i.e., charters and wills), the chapter follows a tripartite model of masculine life — centred on warfare, hunting, and sex — and discusses how those theoretical 'duties', as well as the theoretical duties of kingship discussed throughout, influenced the actual performance of kingship.[139] Ultimately, the conclusions explore how this model of later Anglo-Saxon royal masculinity developed to understand the long tenth century might help explore the intersection of masculinity and political power in the middle ages overall, and asks how that the model might be useful beyond England, and beyond 1066.

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[139] This categorization follows from Vern L. Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in Lees, *Medieval Masculinities*, pp. 31–46.

Chapter 1

RAISING SONS, RAISING PRINCES

Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, sapiebam ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus; quando autem factus sum vir, evacuavi quae erant parvuli.

When I was a child I spoke like a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away the things that were for a child.

(1 Corinthians 13:11)

Over the last half-century, it has come to be widely accepted, in scholarship and beyond the academy, that gender — including masculinity — is socially constructed, contingent on historical context, and liable to change in response to any number of social and cultural stimuli. Masculinities, as Connell and Messerschmidt note, are 'configurations of practice that are constructed, unfold, and change through time'.[1] This change through time can occur most obviously on the historical scale, but it also means that scholars must pay close attention to how changes in the definition and practice of masculinity might occur throughout the life cycle of individual men as well. This chapter examines how Anglo-Saxons thought of young men, and young princes, before exploring the question of who raised those royal sons, thereby instilling in them the right model of masculine and royal behaviour.

Childhood and Princehood in Anglo-Saxon England

Like gender and masculinity, the historical study of the family life and childhood has only really emerged in the last half-century, concurrent with the rise of the history of daily life more generally. This new interest in what might be thought of as 'small-scale' history can be traced to the early twentieth-century *Annaliste* school, and to the work of George Duby, both through his profoundly influential *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* and his later work on the history of '*mentalités*'.[2] This anthropological shift in historical studies also coincided with the Marxist push towards 'history from below', originally proposed by Lucien Febvre as '*histoire vue d'en bas et non d'en haut*', in a memorial to *Annaliste* historian Albert Mathiez.[3] Many of these early scholars of family life, though, argued that the concepts of childhood and adolescence as a whole are only applicable to the modern world.[4] Philipe Ariès, widely considered the founder of academic childhood studies, simply states that 'in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist'.[5]

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[1] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 852.

[2] George Duby, *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1953). For a more recent reassessment of Duby's book, see F. L. Cheyette, 'George Duby's *Mâconnais* after Fifty Years: Reading It Then and Now', *Journal of Medieval History* 28:3 (2002), 291–317.

[3] Lucien Febvre, 'Albert Mathiez: un temperament, une education', *Annales d'histoire économique et social* 4:18 (1932), 573–576 (p. 576).

[4] For a brief historiographical assessment of medieval childhood, see Sally Crawford, *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. xi–xii; and Linda Mitchell, *Family Life in the Middle Ages* (London: Greenwood Press, 2007), pp. vi–ix.

[5] Philipe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la Vie Famille sous l'ancien Régime*, translated by R. Baldick as *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (London, Penguin, 1962), p. 125.

Even a cursory overview of medieval sources shows this position to be entirely untenable.[6] Just as in the present day, medieval people conceived of childhood and adolescence as distinct stages of life and not simply a vague period of non-adulthood, and of children as something more than just 'little adults'.[7] From antiquity through to the late middle ages and indeed beyond, writers commonly included childhood as a particular category in the motif of the 'ages of man'.[8] As in so many things, Isidore of Seville was particularly influential on medieval conceptions of age and aging. Born in Byzantine-controlled Cartagena circa 560 and appointed metropolitan of Seville by around 600, Isidore is perhaps the best known writer of late antiquity, and his writings were some of the most widely-read texts of the early medieval period.[9] His *Etymologiae* alone survive in around a thousand manuscripts, continually reproduced as late as the fifteenth century in *scriptoria* around Europe and the Mediterranean. Aldhelm and Bede almost certainly had copies of Isidore's works, and Isidore was a staple figure in Anglo-Saxon libraries.[10] Indeed, Peter Hunter Blair goes so far as to call Isidore's works 'a major influence on the development of Anglo-Saxon intellectual life' during the age of Bede, rivalled only, perhaps, by Gregory the Great.[11] In the *Etymologiae*, Isidore divides the life of man into six stages, based on age in years, as noted on Table 1 below.[12]

Table 1: The Life Cycle in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*

Age (Latin)	Age (English)	Years
infantia	infancy	Birth to seven years
pueritia	childhood	Seven to fourteen years
adolescentia	adolescence; young adulthood	Fourteen to twenty-eight years
iuventus	'youth'; adulthood	Twenty-eight to fifty years
gravitas	the 'age of an elder' ('*senior*')	Fifty to seventy years
senectus	old age	Above seventy years
[*senium*]	['sixth' age]	['Last part of old (sixth) age']

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[6] For a critical appraisal of Ariès's flaws from a medievalist's point of view, see Janet L. Nelson, 'Parents, Children, and the Church (Presidential Address)', *Studies in Church History* 31 (1994), 81–114 (pp. 81–83).

[7] Paul B. Newman, *Growing Up in the Middle Ages* (London: McFarland, 2007), p. 1; see also Crawford, *Childhood*, p. xi–xii.

[8] See, for instance: Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530* (London: Methuen, 1984), pp. 5–8; Crawford, *Childhood*, pp. 53–57.

[9] Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood, eds, *Isidore of Seville and His Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

[10] Fear and Wood, *Isidore*, pp. 22–23.

[11] Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 292–293.

[12] Isidore, *Etym* XI.ii.1–8. Latin text from W. M. Lindsey, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX. Tomus I, Libros I–X Continens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911); translation from Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, and Oliver Berghof, ed. and trans., *The* Etymologies *of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Anglo-Saxons took a similar view of the various stages of life, and of childhood as a distinct part of the life cycle.[13] Bede, influenced by both Isidore and Augustine, conceived of a division of the history of the world into six Ages, which he likened to the ages of the human life cycle.[14] The First Age from Adam to Noah was Mankind's *infantia*, while the Second Age from Noah to Abraham was its *pueritia*. Because it is the starting point of Christ's genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew, Bede takes the Third Age (from Abraham to David) as *adolescentia*, the age at which procreation is possible, a justification for the start of adolescence also found in Isidore.[15] The Fourth Age, from David to the Babylonian Captivity, is *iuventus* ('youth'), because it is the period of the kings of Israel and, as Bede says, this is the age at which man is 'normally apt for governing a kingdom'.[16] In the Fifth Age, 'Hebrew people were weakened by many evils, as if wearied by age' (i.e. *gravitas*), while the (current) Sixth Age, like the age described as *senectus* (old age, senectitude), is that one that draws towards death.

Tenth-century writers had a similar interest in these topics. The foremost late tenth-century homilist Ælfric of Eynsham, pupil of leading Benedictine reformer Æthelwold at Winchester before being appointed abbot of Cerne in 987 and first abbot of Eynsham by 1005, also mentions the various ages of man.[17] In his homily *On the First Sunday after Pentecost*, he describes the stages in the life of Christ as a man, and how '*þonne þæt cild wyxt, and gewyrð eft cnapa, and eft syþþan cniht*'.[18] Ælfric's fellow late-tenth-century Anglo-Saxon monk Byrhtferth of Ramsey addresses the issue as well. In his *Enchiridion*, a handbook that centres around *computus* (i.e., the calculation of Easter) but touches on a wide range of other subjects, Byrhtferth discusses the

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[13] Anglo-Saxon conceptions of old age are also highly relevant to the study of masculinity, but cannot be covered in the present study. Fortunately, old age is the subject of Thijs Porck, 'Growing Old Among the Anglo-Saxons: The Cultural Conceptualisation of Old Age in Early Medieval England' (PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2016), recently published as Thijs Porck, *Old Age in Early Medieval England: A Cultural History* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2019).

[14] Bede, *De temporum ratione* 66; Faith Wallace, trans., *The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), pp. 157–158.

[15] On the relationship between sex, procreation, and masculinity, see Chapter 4.

[16] Bede, *De temporum ratione* 66.

[17] Ælfric was a leading figure in the intellectual life of later Anglo-Saxon England, and indeed, Claudio Leonardi has called him 'the highest pinnacle of Benedictine reform and Anglo-Saxon literature': Claudio Leonardi, 'Intellectual Life', *NCMH* III, pp. 186–211 (p. 191). Ælfric will figure more prominently in the following chapter, and indeed throughout this dissertation.

[18] Pope XII.120–121: 'Then the child grew, and afterward became a *cnapa*, and afterward a *cniht*'. John C. Pope, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, 2 vol., EETS 269–270 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967–1968), pp. I.476–491 (p. I.484). The sense of what he may have meant by *cnapa* and *cniht* (usually translated as 'knave' and 'knight') is, however, unclear.

various stages of human life, probably basing his discussion on both Isidore and Bede, giving the ages of man and their corresponding seasons and humours:

> *Butan þissum þingum þe we sprecende synt, synt geswutelunga and gehwylcnyssa and twelf winda naman, and synt þa feower timan amearcod, lengten, sumor, hærfest and winter, and eac þa gelicnyssa, þæt ys cildhad and cnihtiugoð and geþungen yld and swyðe eald yld. Lengtentima and cildiugoð geþwærclæcað, and cnihtiugoð and sumor beoð gelice, and hærfast and geþungen yld geferlæca, and winter and eald ateoriað.*[19]

In another section, on the spiritual significance of all the numbers, Byrhtferth adds that 'The number four is further adorned with the fourfold distinction of human kind, that is, childhood, adolescence, manhood and old age.'[20] It appears, then, that the monastic writers of England saw a direct connection between masculinity (especially as defined through the ability to procreate) and manhood, which was specifically recognised as starting around fourteen years of age.

Anglo-Saxon law, too, appears to have recognised a division of age categories between childhood and adolescence or adulthood.[21] In the reign of Æthelstan (r. 924–939), for example, laws affirm that criminals could be subject to capital punishment so long as they are at least twelve years old.[22] A later law reconsiders this age limit, however, after the king and his *witan* decided that it was 'cruel' for such young children to be executed, and they thereafter raised the minimum age for capital punishment to the slightly more mature age of fifteen years.[23] Cnut's laws in the early eleventh century still call for twelve-year-olds to swear oaths against thievery, though, and make demands of 'freemen' over the age of twelve, implying that other teenagers could be considered part of that status, and thus, if not 'full' adults, at least able to take part in some adult duties. If this is the case, it is perhaps also worthwhile to understand what duties may have been expected from royal sons, and how princes were defined as well.

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[19] Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* I.117–133: 'Apart from these things we are discussing, there are significations, and qualities, and the names of the twelve winds, and the four seasons are written down—spring, summer, autumn, and winter—and also the similitudes—childhood, adolescence, manhood and very old age. Spring and childhood correspond, and adolescence and summer are alike, and autumn and manhood keep each other company, and winter and age decline together.' Text and translation from *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, ed. by Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, EETS S.S. 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[20] Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* IV.72–74: '*Est quaternarius adhuc humano bis bino septus stemate, id est, pueritia, adholescentia, iuuentute, senectute.*'

[21] A convenient list of Anglo-Saxon laws relating to this subject can be found in the appendix to Crawford, *Childhood*, pp. 175–177.

[22] II Æthelstan 1 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, p. 150).

[23] VI Æthelstan 12 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, pp. 182–183).

Anglo-Saxon princes are typically identified by the Old English term 'ætheling'.[24] The term seems to have applied not only to sons of a reigning king but to a range of male members of the extended royal family, leaving scholars like Binchy to argue, based on Welsh cognates, that it likely meant something like 'designated heir'.[25] As David Dumville has shown, though, the use of the term for a variety of male members of the royal family, often several concurrently, as well as the application of the term (and various Latin translations and glosses) to children or even infants, makes this theory 'most unlikely'.[26] An autograph manuscript by Æthelwold gives the *hapax legomenon* '*æþelincghad*' ('ætheling-hood', or 'princehood') to describe the period of Edgar's life before he was made king, but as Dumville explains, the single attestation of the term and lack of any kind of institutional definition probably indicates that it too probably had no official significance.[27]

Other terms appear as well, of course. Some charters use the Latin term '*filius regis*', though that too is often applied not just to sons of reigning kings, but can also refer to the sons of previous rulers.[28] Richard Abels has suggested that, by the end of Alfred's reign, the term *ætheling* had become limited to only members of the king's own lineage as part of a wider change in royal succession strategies during the reigns of Alfred and his older brothers, but there is still little reason to think of it as being some official office with royal and filial expectations.[29] Terms like '*clito*', '*indoles*', or '*indoles clito*' also appear in tenth-century charters as terms for princes, and they too have been previously thought to perhaps have some more institutional meaning.[30] However, these terms are more likely only Anglo-Latin translations, mostly derived from Greek, of '*ætheling*', rather than indicators of some other kind of formal princely status; Ælfric's *Glossary*, for instance, glosses *ætheling* explicitly with *clito*.[31] This usage, similar to the use of the Greek term '*basileus*' for tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings, is thus probably best understood as a result of linguistic changes in the court of

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[24] The word itself is the diminutive of *æthel*, 'noble'.
[25] Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, pp. 28–30.
[26] David N. Dumville, 'The Ætheling: A Study in Anglo-Saxon Constitutional History', *ASE* 8 (1979), 1–33 (p. 14).
[27] Dumville, 'Ætheling', pp. 13–14.
[28] Dumville, 'Ætheling', pp. 10–11.
[29] Richard Abels, 'Royal Succession and the Growth of Political Stability in Ninth-Century Wessex', *HSJ* 12 (2003), pp. 83–97. Dumville also recognizes the narrowing of the term in the later Anglo-Saxon period: Dumville, 'Ætheling', p. 11.
[30] '*Clito*' appears in, for example, S 931 as Æthelstan Ætheling's title in a grant in Æthelred's name, and in S 911 where, interestingly, Æthelstan witnesses as grant as '*regis filius*' while all six of his brothers attest with the title '*clito*'.
[31] Dumville, 'Ætheling', p. 7.

Æthelstan, and especially the blossoming of the so-called 'hermeneutic style' of Anglo-Latin writing promoted by Æthelwold and other members of the reform movement.[32]

While the use of these various terms can thus probably say little about the duties or expectations of royal sons, charters can perhaps say a little more about princely roles in royal life through examining *when* these sons witness them. Barbara Yorke argues, for instance, that the *ætheling* Edward ('the Elder') appears more frequently in charters of his father Alfred than his (potentially claimant) cousins, and particularly after he 'came of age' in in the early 890s, which she connects to the king preparing his eldest son for kingship.[33] Æthelred's famous 'penitential' charter of c. 993, granting freedoms to the abbey of Abingdon, also features the first attestations by the king's eldest son Æthelstan 'Ætheling' and his three brothers Ecgberht, Edmund, and Eadred.[34] The eldest prince here would have probably been only seven years or eight years old; while this age is around the time that Isidore considered the transition from *infantia* to *pueritia*, care must be taken in ascribing much significance to this coincidence, since his brothers attest the charter alongside him and these younger princes would have certainly been no more than a few years old at the time, perhaps little more than toddlers. Presumably, then, no age of majority need to have been reached to act as a witness, at least on the ceremonial occasion of the issuing of such a charter.

Attestations might prove useful in other ways, however. They are generally assumed, for instance, to be recorded in order of rank: the king first, followed in turn by archbishops, leading ealdormen, other bishops and thegns, and finally clerics, monks, and minor lay aristocrats. In the instance of Æthelred's 993 charter, Æthelstan and his princely brothers appear, interestingly, after their grandmother, Ælfthryth, and all five of them below Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury and fourteen other bishops, but above some eighteen abbots, who are then followed by the

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[32] George Molyneaux, 'Why Were Some Tenth-Century English Kings Presented as Rulers of Britain?', *TRHistS* 21 (2011), 59–91 (p. 63). These royal Graecisms have also been noted by Robert Gallagher, 'Latin Acrostic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon England: Reassessing the Contribution of John the Old Saxon', *Medium Ævum* 86:2 (2017), 249–274 (p. 261 and pp. 268–269 n. 34). More generally, see Michael Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE* 4 (1975), 67–111.

[33] Barbara Yorke, 'Edward as Ætheling', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by N. J. Higham and David Hill (Oxford: Routledge, 2001), pp. 25–39 (pp. 31–32). Yorke also notes (p. 32) that one Alfredian charter from 898 (S 350) has Edward attest as '*Eadweard rex*' ('King Edward'), but the imbuing of sons with subkingships in Anglo-Saxon England is too big of a topic to be discussed here.

[34] S 876.

ealdormen Æthelweard, Ælfric, and Ælfhelm, and finally eight ministers. The royal family thus has a position of some prominence compared to other secular figures, but still below the archbishop and bishops of the kingdom. (MacLean has suggested, however, that Ælfthryth's position below bishops but heading the list of abbots is an indication of her place 'at the head of the abbots', who served as some of her strongest allies.) [35] On the other hand, Æthelred's 1005 charter confirming Æthelmær's foundation and endowment of Eynsham abbey features the king's seven sons and his second wife in positions of prominence, second only to the king himself and before all the great religious and secular magnates of the kingdom. [36] Unfortunately, because of this fluidity in position, few strong conclusions about the status of princes can be drawn from the evidence at hand. The charters at least show that, at these particular meetings, the king's family were all gathered together and considered important enough to witness the charter, similar to Yorke's assertion that Edward the Elder's princely witnessing of Alfred's charters was part of his preparation for kingship.[37] This participation in the royal court, however, does lead to one other interesting question regarding the place of these sons in their families: who was responsible for raising them, and thereby instilling in them right royal — and masculine — behaviour?

Who Raises Royal Sons?

When Edmund II 'Ironside' was chosen by the *witan* and people of London in 1016 as the successor to his father Æthelred, who had died on St George's Day (23 April) having 'held his kingdom with great toil and difficulties as long as his life lasted', the young prince was in a difficult position.[38] Aside from having come to power in the midst of Cnut's invasion, Edmund had only been the *de facto* heir apparent for some twenty-two months, following the death of his eldest brother

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[35] Simon MacLean, 'Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology in the Late Tenth Century: Ælfthryth and Edgar in Continental Perspective', in *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947)*, ed. by David Rollason, Conrad Leyser, and Hannah Williams (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 255–274 (pp. 261–262).
[36] S 911.
[37] As Christine Senecal notes, earlier assessments (by, e.g., Tryggvi Oleson) were flawed in assuming that charter attestations were not a primary means by which thegns might establish personal power, in part because of a small sample size of charters, and also because Oleson was incorrect in his assumption that the wealthiest thegns rarely attested outside their own 'neighbourhoods'. Christine Senecal, 'Keeping up with the Godwinesons: In Pursuit of Aristocratic Status in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *ANS* 23 (2000), 251–266 (p. 253); Yorke, 'Edward as Ætheling', pp. 31–32.
[38] ASC (C) 1016: '… *he geheold his rice mid myclum geswince 7 earfoðnessum þa hwile ðe his lif wæs*.'

Æthelstan Ætheling in the summer of 1014. Edmund's accession was also somewhat unusual in that, due to his father's long reign (by tenth-century Anglo-Saxon standards, at least), he came to the throne at the relatively mature age of around twenty-five to twenty-eight years, having probably been born sometime between 988 and 991. Edmund and his late brother Æthelstan, then, were some of the first Anglo-Saxon princes to have reached maturity during the reign of their father since the previous Æthelstan, son of Edward the Elder, nearly a century prior. Edmund's accession thus stands in stark contrast to his father Æthelred's own at approximately twelve years old, and his brother Edward the Martyr's before him at probably no more than sixteen. Those two half-brothers' early careers were thus dominated not by fathers but by powerful ealdormen and the regencies of monastic figures and, in the case of Æthelred, his mother Ælfthryth. Does that mean Æthelred might have had a more personal role in the raising of his sons? Or would the lack of a father to raise royal sons actually have been an unusual feature of Æthelred and Edward's upbringing? Or, perhaps, should we look beyond fathers in understanding how Anglo-Saxon royal sons learned to be men and kings?

In assessing the roles that medieval parents played in the raising of children, it would be easy to fall into the trap of assuming that the modern stereotypical notions of gender roles have been static and unchanged since the middle ages. One relatively recent book on children and childhood in the middle ages, for instance, still notes that 'raising children was women's work', and that a father's job was to 'provide for and protect his family', though the author does also notes that these traditional roles could be shared, and that paternal involvement could be highly variable and 'run the gamut from caring and loving to negligent or abusive'.[39] Mary Dockray-Miller, in her work on motherhood and mothering in Anglo-Saxon England, follows twentieth-century postmodern feminist theory (particularly the work of Sara Ruddick) in defining 'protection, nurturance, and training of children' as specifically 'maternal', a performed gender category 'separate from those of masculine and feminine'.[40] But while Dockray-Miller's model of Anglo-Saxon maternal performance is useful in thinking of the raising of children outside a strict

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[39] Paul B. Newman, *Growing Up in the Middle Ages* (London: McFarland, 2007), p. 74.
[40] Mary-Dockray Miller, *Motherhood and Mothering in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), p. 2–5.

masculine-feminine binary, it may yet be somewhat problematic to refer to protection, nurturing, and training of children as specifically 'maternal'.

Far from Anita Schorsch's 1979 observation that 'in the Middle Ages, children were generally ignored until they were no longer children', Anglo-Saxon children, especially aristocratic ones, could expect to be not only be acknowledged but raised by a number of adults.[41] Anglo-Saxon literary and poetical sources, for instance, seem to indicate that fathers and mothers may have both played a relatively important role in the raising of their children.[42] Several poems from the Exeter Book, for example, touch on the raising of children, and fathers' roles in the familial sphere appear in several of them. *The Fates of Men*, for instance, opens with the remark that it is the man and wife together who, through God's power,

> *Ful oft þæt gegongeð   mid godes meahtum*
> *þætte wer 7 wif   in woruld cennað*
> *bearn mid gebyrdum   7 mid bleom gerwyð*
> *temiaþ 7 tæcaþ.*[43]

Maxims I, too, the gnomic poem made up of a range of short aphorisms or statements of universal truth with a didactic purpose, also stresses the importance of raising a young man without specifying child rearing as a feminine duty:

> *Læran sceal mon geongne monnan,*
> *trymman ond tyhtan þæt he teala cunne,   oþþæt hine mon atemedne hæbbe,*
> *Sylle him wist 7 wædo,   oþþæt hine mon on gewitte alæde.*
> *Ne sceal hine mon cildgeongne forcweþan,   ær he hine acyþan mote;*
> *þy sceal on þeode geþeon,   þæt he wese þristhycgende.*[44]

Other poems focus on the paternal role in instructing boys specifically. The poem now commonly known as *Precepts* but previously entitled '*A Father's Instruction to His Son*' in Thorpe's 1842 edition takes the form of ten occasions on which a '*frod fæder*' ('wise father') instructs his son how to live a good life; as the father intones in conclusion: '*Swa þu, min bearn, gemyne frode fæder lare ond þec a wið firenum geheald*'.[45]

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[41] Anita Schorsch, *Images of Childhood: An Illustrated Social History* (New York: Mayflower, 1979), p. 14.

[42] Crawford, *Childhood*, pp. 117–119.

[43] *The Fates of Men* 1–7: The parents 'bring forth a child into the world, and in colours deck it, discipline and teach it'.

[44] *Maxims I* 64–71: 'One must teach a young man, strengthen and exhort him, so that he thinks rightly, until he is tamed; give him food and clothing, until he is led forth in understanding. Nor must one scold the young child, ere he can present himself. He must grow amongst his people, so that he can be bold of purpose'.

[45] *Precepts* 93–94: 'So my boy, mind you the teachings of your wise old father, and keep yourself from wickedness'. It should be noted that a number of scholars have interpreted *Precepts* as a poem about instruction by a monastic father to new monks, though most admit its probable mixed monastic and secular use: Sandra McEntire, 'The Monastic Context of Old English *Precepts*', *Neuphilologische*

Elaine Tuttle Hansen has also argued that the passage generally known as 'Hrothgar's Sermon' in *Beowulf* should be 'recognized as the conventional admonitory address of a wise king and father to a young prince', which she recognizes as a '"set piece" of wisdom literature' from a wide variety of early European sources based on the father-son relationship.[46]

Admittedly, though, comparatively little evidence for paternal involvement is evident in historical/narrative sources for the long tenth century. Asser says that Alfred the Great kept his two eldest children, Æthelflæd and Edward, in the royal court, where they were not allowed to 'live idly' but rather spent their time learning the liberal arts, including '*et psalmos et Saxonicos libros et maxime Saxonica carmina*'.[47] His younger son, Æthelweard, on the other hand, seems to have been sent off to a sort of school ('*schola*') where he and other children learned the 'manly arts' of 'hunting and other pursuits, which are befitting of noblemen', and where they also 'became studious and clever in the liberal arts', possibly, some have suggested, in preparation for a clerical life.[48] Little has survived to say much about Edward the Elder as a father, on the other hand, only that he had over a dozen children by three different wives. At least one, Ælfweard, may have been raised in the royal court, but his eldest Æthelstan was possibly (according to later accounts) sent away to Mercia to be raised at the court of Æthelred of Mercia and Æthelstan's aunt Æthelflæd, 'the Lady of the Mercians', on which see more below.[49] The other sons of Edward the Elder were probably too young to have really been raised or instructed by their father. As for

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Mitteilungen 91 (1990), 243–249; Christina Jacobs, '*Precepts* and the Exeter Book of Vernacular Instructive Poetry', in *Varieties and Consequences of Literacy and Orality / Formen und Folgen von Schriftlichkeit und Mündlichkeit*, ed. by Ursula Schaefer and Edda Spielman (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2001), 33–48 (p. 45–46); Michael Drout, 'Possible Instructional Effects of the Exeter Book "Wisdom Poems": A Benedictine Reform Context', in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers Presented at the International Conference, Udine, 6–8 April 2006*, ed. by Patrizia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari, and M. A. D'Aronco (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 447–466. On the instructional value of Old English poetry more broadly, see Chapter 3 below.

[46] Elaine Tuttle Hansen, 'Hrothgar's "Sermon" in *Beowulf* as Parental Wisdom', *ASE* 10 (1981), 53–67 (p. 61).

[47] Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis* 75: 'both the Psalms and Saxon books, and especially Saxon songs'. Latin text from William Henry Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life of King Alfred* (Oxford: Clarendon: 1904); translation from Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, ed. and trans., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (London: Penguin, 1983), unless otherwise noted.

[48] *VÆlf* 75 '… *aptas humanis artibus vires haberent, venatoriae scilicet et ceteris artibus, quae nobilibus convenient, in liberalibus artibus studiosi et ingeniusi viderentur.*' On the possibility that Æthelweard's was a 'clerical' education, see Yorke, 'Edward as Ætheling', pp. 27–29.

[49] The suggestion is first made by William of Malmesbury, *GRA* 133, but has generally been accepted by historians as factual; see, e.g., Frederick Wainwright, 'Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. by Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), pp. 53–69 (p. 57); Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 339; Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 34–35; Sean Miller, 'Æthelstan', *WBEASE*, pp. 17–18.

other kings of the early to mid-tenth century, many died childless. Edgar (r. 959–975) did not, but also seems to have perhaps had little to do with his sons Edward and Æthelred, though like Edward the Elder, that may have had much to do with his sons' youth at the time of his relatively early death.[50]

None of this is to say, however, that fathers were not involved at all in the raising of their sons in the early middle ages. Sons (and daughters) almost certainly travelled with the royal court and participated in royal events, as the evidence of sons of various ages witnessing the charters discussed above has shown. Evidence from the Carolingians of the ninth century suggests that kings may have delegated many of the day-to-day duties of raising their children, though this in itself was an important parental duty, and does not preclude the notion that a royal father would have performed some acts of parenting either regularly or more occasionally. Thus, even if most kings were not like Alfred and spent little time raising and educating their children themselves, royal fathers nevertheless played a number of important roles through choosing spouses, serving as a model of masculine and royal behaviour for their own sons and those of their courtiers, and, perhaps most importantly, choosing those others who would be in charge of rearing their children more directly.[51]

The raising of the princes often took place under the eye of a variety of other figures acting *in loco parentis*. The most common of these substitute parental (or perhaps paternal) figures for young kings or princes were the advisors who supported them and helped see them through until adulthood, particularly for those who came to the throne at a young age. These advisors and regents comprised many of the leading political and religious elites of the tenth century. After Edgar's death, for instance, it is probably safe to assume that the major influences in the upbringing of his son and successor Edward, only a young teenager at that time, were the leading churchmen and ealdormen of the kingdom, all of whom appear multiple times in the few charters of Edward's short reign.[52] The leading Benedictine reformers — Dunstan, Oswald, and Æthelwold — lead nearly every charter's witness-list, following only the king.[53] Secular supporters surely played a role as well. Many charter attestations include Æthelwine, son of the powerful ealdorman Æthelstan

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[50] The lack of evidence for Edgar's reign also causes difficulties in understanding the early lives of his sons.

[51] Amber Handy, 'The *Specula Principum* in Northwestern Europe, A.D. 650–900: The Evolution of a New Ethical Rule' (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2011), pp. 158–160.

[52] Specifically: S 828 to S 832.

[53] One (S 830), a grant of land to the king's thegn Ælfsige issued in 976 at *Pydelan*, omits Oswald.

'Half-King', and Ælfhere of Mercia, whose family rivalled that of the 'Half-King' during the tumultuous years around the time of the so-called 'anti-monastic reaction' during the reigns of Edward and Æthelred.[54] Intriguingly, these rival groups of supporters both include men who were connected to Edgar's sons by bonds not only of lordship, but of (fictive) kinship as well. Æthelwine was Edgar's foster-brother, and Ælfhere's brother Ælfheah (who also witnessed a number of charters for both Edward and Æthelred) seems to have been the younger prince's godfather.[55] These two systems of artificial kinship were significant in the raising of royal sons in the middle ages, and should briefly be explored here.

Fosterage (i.e., the raising of children in households outside those of their own 'natural' families) was common across early medieval northern Europe. It seems to have been particularly widespread in the 'Celtic' world of Ireland and Wales, and features in both historical and literary/legendary sources.[56] The practice created important quasi-familial bonds between children and foster-families as well as between foster family and natural family, and amongst aristocratic and royal families helped forge important political bonds as well.[57] The court of Æthelstan is perhaps the best-known Anglo-Saxon example; the probably unmarried and certainly childless king made his court the home of a number of major European aristocratic foster-sons. Alan II Barbatorta ('Twistedbeard') of Brittany and Haakon 'the Good', son of King Harald Fairhair of Norway, are both known to have been fostered there, as was Louis IV 'Transmarinus' of West Francia, son of the deposed Charles the Simple and Æthelstan's sister Eadgifu; according to later writers, so too was the son of King Constantín of Scotland.[58] The fostering of Alan is the best evidenced of these

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[54] On this supposed phenomenon, and why it is now seen as problematic, see D. J. V. Fisher, 'The Anti-Monastic Reaction in the Reign of Edward the Martyr', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10:3 (1952), 254–270; and more recently, Shashi Jayakumar, 'Reform and Retribution: The "Anti-Monastic Reaction" in the Reign of Edward the Martyr', in *Early Medieval Studies in Honour of Patrick Wormald*, ed. by Stephen Baxter, *et al*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 337–352; and Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 64–68.

[55] Ælfheah's will (S 1485) calls Æthelred's mother Ælfthryth his '*gefædere*', which is usually translated 'godfather', but Roach, following Lynch, translates it as 'co-parent', i.e. the one for whose child he is serving as godfather; Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 62–63; Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship*, pp. 145–148.

[56] Peter Parkes, 'Celtic Fosterage: Adoptive Kinship and Clientage in Northwest Europe', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48:2 (2006), 359–394; T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 82–84 and pp. 115–117; T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 78–82; Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan, The First King of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 52.

[57] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 82.

[58] Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 52–55. The relationship between Æthelstan and his Norwegian foster-son is represented in the latter's purported cognomen *Aðalsteinsfóstri* ('Æthelstan's-foster') or *Æðelsteinsson* ('Æthelstan's son'), though no contemporary historical evidence survives to confirm the story, either from Æthelstan's reign or in later English sources. The relationship is thus instead deduced solely

arrangements, and seems to be confirmed by the *Chronicle of Nantes*, which describes the Bretons' flight across the Channel:

> *Fugit autem tunc temporis Mathuedoi, comes de Pohel, ad regem Anglorum Adelstanum cum ingenti multitudine Britonum, ducens secum filium suum, nomine Alanum, qui postea cognominatus est Barbatorta.*[59]

These young men would have provided Æthelstan and his (biological) brothers with a cadre of friends and followers who might also provide political (i.e., military) support in the future. Besides the obvious political expedience of these foster-relationships, Sarah Foot has also suggested that, in Æthelstan's case, these princes and the king's own younger brothers were the recipients of his paternal affection and support for which he had no other outlet: 'Given Æthelstan's childlessness,' Foot says, 'we might imagine these as his surrogate children, receiving the affection as well as the material and spiritual support that he would otherwise have bestowed on his own offspring'.[60]

More common than fosterage in Anglo-Saxon England, though, and perhaps more important, was Christian sponsorship at baptism and/or confirmation. This practice had long superseded fosterage as the primary means of creating fictive or artificial bonds, certainly by the ninth century and perhaps even as far back as the conversion period of the sixth and seventh centuries.[61] Like fosterage, the act of ritual sponsorship, particularly by royal godparents, was crucial in forging close quasi-familiar connections in the early medieval world, and was represented in familial terms: beyond the simple fact that participants were bound together as 'god-father' and 'god-son', Joseph Lynch has argued that the Old English phrase for sponsorship ('*onfon to sunu*', 'to take as a son') establishes it as similar to a form of adoption.[62]

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from the later saga material and other Scandinavian references; see, for instance, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* XIV from *Heimskringla*, translated recently as Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Vol. 1: The Beginnings to Óláfr Tryggvason*, trans. by Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2011); see also Gareth Williams, 'Hákon *Aðalsteins fóstri*: Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Kingship in Tenth-Century Norway', in *The North Sea World: Saints, Seamen, and Soldiers*, ed. by Lorna Walker and Thomas Liszka (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 108–126.

[59] *Chronicle of Nantes* XXVII: 'Also at that time, Mathuedoi, Count of Pohel, fled with a great multitude of Bretons to Athelstan, king of the English, taking with him his son, called Alan, who was afterwards surnamed "Crooked Beard."' Latin text from Peter Merlet, ed., *La chronique de Nantes* (Paris, 1896).

[60] Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 55. An extended discussion of Æthelstan's childlessness, and on celibate kingship in the tenth century more broadly, follows below, Chapter 4.

[61] Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 205–218; Joseph H. Lynch, *Christianising Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 214–228; Parkes, 'Celtic Fosterage', p. 381; Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 298; Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, p. 79.

[62] Lynch, *Christianising Kinship*, pp. 92–93.

Moreover, the ties between godparents and godsons also strengthened ties within natural families as well, and could help to defuse familial conflict, an issue that certainly would have been understood in tenth-century England.[63] There is some evidence that Æthelstan stood as god-father to Alan II Barbatorta as well as being his foster-father — the *Chronicle of Nantes* says that the king 'raised him from the font' himself — and it is possible that the same applied to Louis IV Transmarinus, who was Æthelstan's sister's son as well as being fostered in his court.[64] Like fosterage, baptismal sponsorship could also be a useful and frequently successful tool in making treaties between former enemies and in establishing new alliances. After being defeated by Alfred at Edington in 878, for example, the viking warlord Guthrum, leader of the so-called 'great heathen army', accepted baptism with Alfred himself standing as sponsor; the newly-christened Æthelstan returned to East Anglia in peace and ruled there until his death over a decade later. Alfred tried to use the same tactic at a number of other points, though admittedly with variable success.[65] The practice of baptism or confirmation as a political tool remained a useful strategy in the late tenth century as well. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a peace treaty negotiated between Æthelred and the Danish raider Olaf Tryggvason was upheld through the sponsorship of the latter by the former, with the assistance of Bishop Ælfheah, the future martyr and Archbishop of Canterbury.[66]

While the above examples have generally focused on men acting as fictive fathers, it is undeniable that women certainly also played a central role in the raising of children, royal and otherwise, within and without their natural families. (Whether or not all of these actions of nurturing and training children should be conceived of as 'maternal', as Dockray-Miller suggests, is yet to be determined.) As Connell and Messerschmidt assert too, women are 'central in many of the processes constructing masculinities — as mothers; as schoolmates; as girlfriends, sexual partners, and wives; as workers in the gender division of labor; and so forth'.[67] Anglo-Saxon royal

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[63] Nelson, 'Parents, Children, and the Church', pp. 101–102.

[64] *Chronicle of Nantes* XXVII (*EHD* I.25): '[…] *quem ipse rex Angliae Adalstannus jam prius ex lavacro sancto susceperat*' ('[…] whom the same Æthelstan, King of the English, had raised him from the holy font'); Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship*, p. 222–223.

[65] He was successful using sponsorship in dealings with the Celtic king Anarawd of Gwynydd, but not with the viking Hæsten; Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship*, pp. 215–222.

[66] ASC C (D, E) 994: '[…] *se cyning Æþelred his onfeng æt bisceopes handa 7 him cynelice gifode, 7 him þa Anlaf behet, swa he hit eac gelæste þæt he næfre eft to Angelcynne mid unfriðe cuman nolde.*' See also Henrietta Leyser, 'Ælfheah', *ODNB*; Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship*, p. 225.

[67] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 848.

women in particular appear to have been able to exercise a deal of political power in the later Anglo-Saxon period, a development that proceeded in part from their closeness to kings and princes.[68] As Lees and Overing caution, though, this leads to a central problem for historians in having to conceive of women as 'double agents': living in, and integral to, the social fabric of Anglo-Saxon England, but only visible in the 'penumbral netherworld to which [they are] relegated by clerical culture'.[69] While Asser famously suggests that the West Saxon dynasty had a strong distrust of queens — brought about supposedly by the murderous Eadburh, daughter of Offa of Mercia and wife of Beorhtric of Wessex — a closer examination of the sources reveals that royal women of the tenth and eleventh centuries certainly wielded considerable influence.[70] One of the means through which they did so was by raising royal sons.

Perhaps the best known powerful female figure of the later Anglo-Saxon period is Æthelflæd, 'Lady of the Mercians' ('*domina Merciorum*') who ruled the former Midlands kingdom under the overlordship of her brother Edward the Elder, at first alongside her husband Æthelred and then alone for some years (c. 911–918) after his death.[71] Æthelflæd was instrumental in securing West Saxon hegemony throughout northern Mercia and the Danish-held 'Five Boroughs', and in Irish and Welsh sources she was even conceived of as a queen in her own right.[72] Admittedly, no English sources afford her such a title and this view may be simply a record of her perceived status by outsiders, but it nevertheless fits within a Mercian tradition of powerful queens.[73] The *domina Merciorum* also seems to have been entrusted with the

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[68] On this extensively-studied topic, see, for example: Pauline Stafford, 'Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages', in *Medieval Women*, ed. by D. Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 79–100; P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983); and P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); amongst many others.

[69] Clare Lees and Gillian Overing, eds, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 2.

[70] *VÆlf* 13.

[71] An argument has been made, in fact, that Æthelflæd was the *de facto* ruler from at least 902, when her husband's health was already deteriorating; Maggie Bailey, 'Ælfwynn, Second Lady of the Mercians', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by N. J. Higham and D. H. Hill (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 112–127 (p. 113).

[72] The *Annales Cambriae* records in 917 that '*Ælflæd regina obiit*' ('Queen Æthelflæd died'), while the Irish *Three Fragments* calls her '*Edelfrida, bainrioghan Saxan*' ('Æthelflæd, queen of the Saxons') and the *Annals of Ulster* call her the '*famosissima regina Saxonum*' ('most famous queen of the Saxons').

[73] Pauline Stafford, 'The Queen's Wife in Wessex, 800–1066', *Past & Present* 91 (1981), 3–27 (pp. 3–4); P. Stafford, 'Political Women in Mercia, Eighth to Early Tenth Centuries', in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. by Michelle P. Brown and Carol A. Farr (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2001), pp. 35–49 (pp. 44–49).

raising of her nephew, the future king Æthelstan. While the earliest reference to this fosterage is in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, historians have generally tended to accept that William's claim is based on historical fact and that Æthelstan was probably raised amongst his relations in the Midlands.[74] According to the account, Alfred himself ordained Æthelstan's future greatness by investing him with symbols of rulership: a scarlet cloak, a gem-encrusted belt, and a sword with a gilded scabbard.[75] Alongside this,

> *Post haec in curia filiae Ethelfledae et generi Etheredi educandum curauerat; ubi multo studio amitae et preclarissimi ducis ad omen regni altus, gloria uirtutum calcauit et pressit inuidiam*.[76]

The selection of this royal aunt as the foster-mother (note especially that Æthelflæd is listed in that passage before her husband) is quite intriguing. The arrangement may simply have been out of political expedience, a relatively easy means of strengthening ties between Wessex and Mercia. The former kingdom had only recently been made a part of Alfred's realm, and conflict between West Saxon and Mercian polities only really ended when Edward forcibly deposed and detained his niece, Æthelflæd and Æthelred's daughter Ælfwynn, in 918, taking control over those territories himself. The raising of Edward's eldest child (and potential heir) in that territory may have been intended to ensure support for him in that region after his father's death then, and indeed, when Edward did die, Æthelstan succeeded only to Mercia while being passed over for the throne in Wessex in favour of his younger half-brother Ælfweard, who seems to have been more popular in Winchester.[77] His brother died within a few weeks, though, leaving Æthelstan alone in control of the whole kingdom.

The fostering arrangement may also have had something to do with a more personal complication within Edward's court: Æthelstan's mother had died by around 901, and was quite quickly replaced with a stepmother named Ælfflæd. This remarriage would soon mean new half-brothers, who in the tenth century (as in

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[74] Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 34. David Dumville, amongst some others, urges caution in accepting William of Malmesbury's assertions uncritically, though he notes that Æthelstan being raised in Mercia does help answer many questions: David Dumville, 'Between Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peacemaker: Æthelstan, First King of England', in *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), p. 146.

[75] There is considerable debate on the historicity of this passage, and many have seen it as a later interpolation based on post-conquest knighthood inauguration rituals.

[76] William of Malmesbury, *GRA* II.133 (*EHD* I.8): 'Afterwards [Alfred] had arranged that [Æthelstan] should be brought up in the court of his daughter Æthelflæd and his son-in-law Ethelred; and there, reared by the great care of his aunt and that most famous ealdorman, in expectation of a kingdom, he trampled down and destroyed envy by the glory of his virtues'.

[77] Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 17.

other periods) could spell trouble for sons of previous wives.[78] One can imagine that having these half-brothers (and thus rival claimants) raised in different courts might be a means of mitigating potential conflict.

It is also possible, though equally speculative, that the arrangement of Æthelstan's fosterage in Mercia was more directly about the death of his mother, which happened when he was still quite young, possibly only around six or seven years old: if women were central in the education and upbringing of Anglo-Saxon princes, Æthelstan was suddenly left without a royal woman to help raise him, and Æthelflæd, now the senior woman of the royal line, might have made a good substitute.[79] Æthelstan's nephew Edgar, a generation later, was similarly surrounded by a number of significant and influential female relatives during his early years, including his paternal grandmother Eadgifu (the third wife of Edward the Elder) and his aunt Eadburh, a nun — and eventually saint — at Nunnaminster, a foundation which had itself been established by Alfred's wife Ealhswith.[80] Edgar's earliest appearance as a witness to a charter is alongside his grandmother, and after his accession, one of his early charters granted (or, rather, restored) lands that had been taken by the previous king, Eadwig, back into Eadgifu's control.[81] It is speculative, but quite tempting, to read this as a sentimental act of thanks from the new king to a grandmother who was influential in his upbringing.

There is, however, other evidence that Edgar was not necessarily raised in the royal household, but was instead, after the death of his mother Ælfgifu in 944, fostered in the court of East Anglian ealdorman Æthelstan 'Half-King', whose influential family also included two other brothers as ealdormen in the southeast and in Wessex.[82] It has even been suggested, based on an assertion in the twelfth-century *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis*, that his fostering was not with Æthelstan 'Half-King'

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[78] Richard Abels has noted, for instance, that in the ninth century, kings like Æthelberht and (especially) Alfred needed to reconfigure West Saxon succession practices to limit throneworthiness to only one branch of the royal line (i.e., Alfred's), which helped provide for greater stability in later succession: Abels, 'Royal Succession'.

[79] Yorke, 'Edward as Ætheling'. Æthelstan's mother is quite a mysterious figure. Her name only survives in twelfth-century sources, and by then rumours had become generally accepted that she was not a wife at all, but a lowborn concubine. (William of Malmesbury seems to disregard a commonly held view by his own day that Æthelstan '*concubina natus esset*'.)

[80] Barbara Yorke, 'The Women in Edgar's Life', in *Edgar, King of the English 959–975: New Interpretations*, ed. by Donald Scragg (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 143–157.

[81] S 811.

[82] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 351; Sean Miller, 'Edgar', *WBEASE*, pp. 163–64; S. Miller, 'Æthelstan Half-King', *WBEASE*, p. 19.

himself, but with his wife Ælfwynn. [83] Following this, Shashi Jayakumar has suggested, citing Byrhtferth's mention in the *Vita S. Oswaldi* that Ælfwynn was of 'royal blood' (and noting that she appears by name before her husband is ever mentioned), that she may in fact be the same Ælfwynn who was daughter of Æthelflæd, and who otherwise disappears from recorded history after being deposed and carried off into Wessex by her uncle Edward.[84] If she were the same woman, Ælfwynn would thereby be performing the same role of fostering her royal cousin that her mother had done for her nephew Æthelstan. Moreover, this fosterage could again be seen as a means of legitimating Edgar's Mercian connections; as with Æthelstan's Mercian supporters, borne from a childhood raised in the Midlands, disaffected aristocrats including Æthelstan 'Half-King' led a coup to install Edgar as king in Mercia and the North in 957, while his unpopular brother Eadwig retained the overall kingship and control in Wessex and Kent. Jayakumar's theory is, however, nothing more than speculation. It is certainly more likely that after deposing Ælfwynn in 918, Edward simply had her confined to a nunnery or otherwise removed from public life, and that Edgar's fosterage was more for the political benefit of fostering the junior son of royal line with a senior ealdorman and eldest scion of the most politically dominant family of the age. Æthelstan's fosterage with Æthelflæd certainly indicates precedence, though, and in the generations after Edgar, his wife Ælfthryth too embodied what might have been a tradition of female royals contributing to, if not outright taking control over, the raising of royal sons.

Æthelred's early reign was characterised by a regency at least partly led by his mother Ælfthryth, along with the support of her allies. Ælfthryth had already been a major player in the royal court during the life of Edgar. On the occasion of their marriage, Edgar granted her an estate of ten hides at Aston Upthorpe.[85] This was probably the king's third marriage, but the first one in which such a transaction took place. Ælfthryth also seems to have been the only one of Edgar's wives to have been regarded as the 'legitimate' wife of the king.[86] Levi Roach has recently argued

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[83] Cyril Hart, 'Æthelstan "Half-King" and His Family', *ASE* 2 (1973), 115–144 (pp. 123–124).

[84] Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, ed. and trans. by Michael Lapidge (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), pp. 82–83 (esp. n. 144–145). Shashi Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar: Politics, Propaganda, Faction', in *Edgar*, ed. by D. Scragg, pp. 83–103 (p. 94).

[85] S 725.

[86] Anglo-Saxon royal marriage throughout the ninth and tenth centuries could be described as a system of 'serial monogamy', with kings marrying one wife after another in quick succession. In many cases, though, earlier wives were set aside purposefully (and thereafter often regarded as concubines) in order for kings to make more powerful marriage connections. The sons of later wives often seem to

that this donation implies both her importance at court and the growing importance of the queen in tenth-century England in general.[87] Ælfthryth certainly attests charters quite regularly as '*regina*' ('queen', rather than the more common '*coniunx regis*', or 'king's wife'), and indeed even seems to have been anointed and consecrated alongside her husband.[88] Ælfthryth also stood at the centre of the group of supporters of Æthelred at Edgar's death, and it is perhaps because of this that the (much later, and probably false) story of her involvement in Edward the Martyr's death came to be promulgated.

After Edward's death, the minority of Æthelred provided the opportunity for what became the apex of Ælfthryth's power, probably in no small part due to her role in raising her young son. The regency seems to have ended around 984, though, when Æthelwold died after a long career as royal advisor and Ælfthryth ceased to witness her son's charters, the two of them replaced by a group of new nobles who would eventually be blamed for leading the impressionable young king astray. Æthelred probably married his first wife, Ælfgifu of York, near the beginning of this 'independent' phase, but unlike Ælfthryth, she appears not to have exerted much, if any, influence over the court.[89] Ælfgifu is frustratingly invisible in the historical sources, and little remains to assess her relationship with her husband, much less her children, who numbered at least six sons and two or three daughters before her death in sometime before 1002 (and likely in the late 990s). Roach has argued that the marriage itself, corresponding to the years of the dowager-queen's declining influence, was 'symptomatic' of the young king's growing independence, and that his wife's obscurity could be read as Æthelred's attempt to free himself from further feminine influence.[90] This did not, however, necessarily mean that Æthelred became his children's primary carer though, and in fact, at least one would come to be raised by the king's mother.

Ælfthryth returned to her influential position in the early 990s as the king began to distance himself from the greedy counsellors with whom he had surrounded

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take precedence in the order of succession as well; see the case of Æthelweard and Æthelstan, for example, or the deal made between Cnut and Emma of Normandy after their marriage that their sons together, rather than those from either of their previous marriages, should be heirs. On the complications of royal serial monogamy, see more below, Chapter 4.

[87] Edgar's grants to Eadburh include S 811, S 1211, and S 1212; see Yorke, 'Women', p. 146, and Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 48–50.

[88] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 52.

[89] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 96.

[90] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 95.

himself, and from the poor choices that his aforementioned 993 penitential charter blame on 'youthful ignorance'.[91] As noted above, Ælfthryth's subscription appears in this charter alongside four of her grandsons, a situation that Roach suggests could be the king 'trying to make a point, hoping that his offspring would learn from the errors of their father'.[92] This penitential about-face also marks the beginning of Ælfthryth's return to prominence, a status she enjoyed until her death around 1000 or 1001.[93]

It is important to note that her return to favour seems to have included taking on the role of raising her grandson Æthelstan Ætheling, who would remember her in his 1014 will as '*Ælfþryðe minre ealdemodor þe me afedde*'.[94] Charter evidence also connects Ælfthryth to land at a place named *Æthelingadene* (literally the 'valley of the princes,' probably now Dean, West Sussex).[95] Æthelred's early 1002 confirmation of the endowment of Wherwell, founded by his mother and issued not long after her death, seems to show a large estate (some sixty *cassati*) in Ælfthryth's possession, in a place 'onomastically connected' to princely status, and possibly the raising of princes (Æthelstan Ætheling, perhaps one or more of his brothers, or maybe even Æthelred and Edward too).[96] The return of Ælfthryth to power might also suggest a return to the lessons of the Æthelred's youth, and thus, perhaps, to the type of behaviour taught to him by his mother and by Æthelwold, with Ælfthryth now responsible for passing on those lessons to a new generation of royal sons.[97] Interestingly, Æthelstan's will also includes mention of one Ælfswith, his 'foster-mother', to whom he bequeathed land at *Westune*, 'because of her great merits'.[98] While Æthelstan left

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[91] The charter (S 876), issued at Winchester at Pentecost in 993, is a confirmation of privileges to Abingdon Abbey, and blames the problems of Æthelred's reign on his youthful indiscretion and the ill counsel of his supporters: '*Partim hec infortunatia pro meae iuuventutis ignorantia que diversis solet uti moribus . partim etiam pro quorundam illorum detestand[a] philargiria qui meae utilitati consulere debebant accid[isse].*' ('This misfortune came to pass, in part because of my youthful ignorance which is accustomed to engage in various pursuits, and in part on account of the detestable love of money of those who ought to have counselled for my benefit.')

[92] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 139.

[93] Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 187.

[94] Will of Æthelstan Ætheling (S 1503): 'Ælfthryth, my grandmother who raised me'.

[95] S 904.

[96] Stafford, 'Fathers and Daughters', p. 141 (n. 10). See also Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 187 (n. 117); Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 58–59.

[97] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 162.

[98] S 1503: '*… 7 ic geann Ælfswyðe . minre fostermeder . for hire myclon . geearnungon . þæs landes æt Westune . þe ic gebohte æt minon fæder . mid þridde healf hund mancusan goldes . be gewihte.*' This grant, purchased by the prince from his father for 250 mancuses, was not insignificant, and is equal to that given to the Church at Marlow (Bucks.) in the same will, so it must be assumed that she held some close personal relationship with the ætheling.

considerable land and moveable wealth to other male relations — father and brothers, though apparently not half-brothers — and to male allies and retainers, Ælfthryth and this Ælfswith are the only female relations mentioned.[99] His numerous sisters and even his own mother are ignored entirely. The only women who benefit, that is, are the two who are explicitly mentioned in the context of raising the prince.

It should be noted, of course, that the roles Anglo-Saxon women like Ælfthryth seem to have played in the raising of princes were not unique amongst courts of the tenth century. On Christmas Day 983, a few weeks after the death of German emperor Otto II in a failed war against Islamic forces in southern Italy, his infant son Otto III was crowned king at Aachen. After surviving a kidnapping and abortive attempt on the throne by his cousin Henry II ('the Quarrelsome'), Duke of Bavaria, in the first two years of his reign, Otto III spent over a decade under the regency and/or supervision of three 'imperial women' (*dominae imperiales*): his mother Theophanu, a Byzantine princess; his grandmother Adelheid; and his aunt, Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinburg.[100]

The maternal influence on the raising of early medieval aristocratic boys is perhaps most evident in a ninth-century Continental text known as the *Liber manualis*. This handbook was written by Dhuoda, Countess of Septimania, for her eldest son, sixteen-year-old William, who was a guest (i.e., probably a hostage) of a young Charles the Bald after his father William, Count of Septimania, failed to give military support to Charles at the Battle of Fontenoy.[101] Foreshadowing the famous lament that post-Carolingian Europe was 'an age of iron', Dhuoda argues that in the wake of the wars between Louis the Pious's sons, 'the wretchedness of this world grew, and worsened, in the midst of the many struggles and disruptions of the kingdom'.[102] Meg Leja has argued that both Dhuoda's text and the contemporary *Histories* of Nithard explicitly blame the failings of the age on improper masculine behaviour, and that Dhuoda's handbook is thus meant to provide masculine instruction 'in the

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[99] On Æthelstan Ætheling's will, see much more below, Chapter 4.

[100] Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, trans. by Phyllis G. Jestice (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 40–51 is a good overview of their role in the regency of Otto III; see also the more recent Maclean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp. 150–179. As with Æthelred, Otto's regency was not entirely overseen by women, and leading religious figures also played a major role in the governance of the kingdom. Otto was particularly close with the polymath Gerbert de Aurillac, whom he took on as his personal teacher and who, under Otto's direction, went on to become Pope Sylvester II; on this relationship, see Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 66–69.

[101] Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, pp. 39–42.

[102] Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, *Praef.*: 'Voluente et crescente calamitate huius saeculi miseria, inter multas fluctuationes et discordias regni.' Latin text from Pierre Riché, ed., *Manual pour Mon Fils*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1991).

face of improper masculinities', a goal that she says 'was not going to be fulfilled except by her work'.[103] Moreover, Dhuoda's audience was in fact probably much wider, and her instructional text perhaps spread through the court as a whole, including to the king himself.[104] If this interpretation is correct, then more than just another example of an aristocratic woman taking the role of educating her own male relations into proper aristocratic behaviour, it might be read as part of an even wider tradition of women influencing right masculine behaviour at aristocratic and even royal levels, in the ninth century and beyond.

Conclusions

Far from Ariès's assertion that the idea of childhood did not exist in the middle ages, this chapter has shown that Anglo-Saxons in the long tenth century not only conceived of childhood as a specific phase in life, but also that families — natural and artificial — devoted time and attention to raising those children. By the time they reached adulthood, aristocratic males had been enculturated by their fathers, mothers, and extended families and friendship networks into a world of masculine and elite values. The question now becomes, of course: what sorts of behaviour were these royal sons expected to learn? The follow two chapters turn to two strands of source material in order to identify the ideals of royal behaviour in the medieval Christian Latin tradition (in Chapter 2) and the ideals of 'heroic', masculine aristocratic behaviour in Old English vernacular poetry (in Chapter 3), before returning to the actual practice of masculinity and kingship in later Anglo-Saxon England in Chapter 4.

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[103] Meg Leja, 'The Making of Men, Not Masters: Right Order and Lay Masculinity According to Dhuoda and Nithard', *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 39 (2008), 1–40 (p. 11).
[104] Janet L. Nelson, 'Gendering Courts in the Early Medieval West', in *Gender in the Early Medieval World*, ed. by Brubaker and Smith, pp. 185–97; Régine Le Jan, 'Dhuoda ou l'opportunité du discours feminin', in *Agire da Donna: Modelli e Pratiche di Rappresentatzione*, ed. by M. C. La Rocca (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 109–128.

WISDOM, JUSTICE, AND CORRECTION: DEFINING ANGLO-SAXON 'RIGHT KINGSHIP'

Reges a regendo vocati. […] *Non autem regit, qui non corrigit. Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur. Unde et apud veteres tale erat proverbium: 'Rex eris, si recte facies: si non facias, non eris.'*

Kings are so called from governing. […] But he does not govern who does not correct; therefore the name of king is held by one behaving rightly, and lost by one doing wrong. Hence among the ancients such was the proverb: 'You will be king if you behave rightly; if you do not, you will not.'

(Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* IX.iii.4)

For many Anglo-Saxons living at the end of the first millennium, the world must have seemed on the brink of the apocalypse.[1] After the relative peace of the reign of Edgar 'the Peaceable', the English kingdom was struck by decades of famine, regicide, warfare, invasion, and defeat, concluding with the exile and then death of Æthelred and his son Edmund Ironside and the loss of the throne to the Danish kings Swein Forkbeard in 1014 and his son Cnut in 1016–17. In the last decade of the first millennium, Ælfric, homilist and future abbot of Eynsham, wrote that he had composed his long series of Old English vernacular homilies '*for ðam ðe menn behofiað godre lare swiðost on þisum timan þe is geendung þyssere worulde*'.[2] Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, was even more explicit in his fiery *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*:

> *Leofan men, gecnawað þæt soð is: ðeos worolde is on ofste, 7 hit nealæcð þam ende, 7 þy hit is on worolde aa swa leng swa wyrse; 7 swa hit sceal nyde for folces synnan fram dæge to dæge ær antecristes tocyme yfelian swyþe, 7 huru hit wyrð þænne egeslic 7 grimlic wide on worolde.*[3]

In another homily, *Secundum Marcam*, Wulfstan further warns, '*Þusend geara and eac ma is nu agan syððan Crist wæs mid mannum on menniscan hiwe, and nu syndon Satanases bendas swyðe toslopene, and Antecristes tima is wel gehende*'.[4] In another early eleventh century text now generally known as the *Institutes of Polity*, Wulfstan writes that the throne, and

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[1] The historiography of the terror of the year 1000 and apocalyptic thought in medieval imagination is extensive, but in contrast to many later twentieth-century views to the contrary, William Prideaux-Collins has asserted that at least some Anglo-Saxon authors wrote with a sense of 'heightened apocalyptic anxiety, aroused by a belief in the profound eschatological significance of the year 1000'; William Prideaux-Collins, '"Satan's Bonds are Extremely Loose": Apocalyptic Expectation in Anglo-Saxon England during the Millennial Era', in *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050*, ed. by Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and Dan C. Van Meter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 289–310 (p. 290). Levi Roach has also recently argued that there was an 'unmistakable unity' to the apocalyptic and penitential discourses in the reign of Æthelred: Levi Roach, 'Apocalypse and Atonement in the Politics of Æthelredian England', *English Studies* 95:7 (2014), 733–757. See also the recent Catherine Cubitt, 'On Living in the Time of Tribulation: Archbishop Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* and Its Eschatological Context', in *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Rory Naismith and David A. Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 202–233.
[2] Ælfric, *CH* I, *Praefatio* 57–59: '[…] because men need good instruction, especially at this time, which is the ending of this world'. Latin text from both series of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* is from *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies*, First and Second Series, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Malcolm Godden, EETS S.S. 16 (First series) and 5 (Second series) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979–1997). Translations mine unless otherwise noted.
[3] Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (Bethurum XX [E]) 1–3: 'Dear men, know that this is true: the world is in haste and it nears the end, and because it is ever worldly, the longer it lasts the worse it is; and so it must necessarily greatly grow worse because of the sins of the people before the coming of the Antichrist, and indeed it will become then fearful and terrible throughout the world'. Old English text from Dorothy Bethurum, ed., *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957); translations mine unless otherwise noted.
[4] Wulfstan, *Secundum Marcam* (Bethurum VI) 40–47: 'A thousand years and more have passed now since Christ was among men in human form, and now Satan's bonds are greatly loosened, and the Antichrist's time is quickly approaching'.

therefore the nation itself, stands on three pillars: the *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*.[5] He warns further that if '*awacie heora ænig, sona se stol scylfð; 7 fulberste heora ænig, þonne hrysð se stol nyðer, 7 þæt wyrð þære þeode eal to unþearfe*'.[6] In the eyes of these writers at the turn of the millennium, the end of the world was hastening, and the sins of the English people ('*folces synnan*') were to blame for the catastrophes they were suffering.[7]

Ælfric and Wulfstan had learned this lesson about the wages of a kingdom's sins from a long medieval Christian tradition that associated 'national' morality with the realm's success or failure.[8] In the Anglo-Saxon past, it had been embodied in the works of Gildas and Bede, whose providential viewpoint blamed the earlier inhabitants of the island for their defeat at the hands of the Angles and Saxons in punishment for their sins. Amongst the Britons, Gildas wrote,

> *Non solum vero hoc vitium* [*i.e., fornicatio*], *sed et omnia, quae humanae naturae accidere solent, et praecipue* […] *odium veritatis* […] *amorque mendacii, susceptio mali pro bono, veneratio nequitiae pro benignitate.*[9]

Moreover, famously,

> *Reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos; iudices habet, sed impios; saepe praedantes et concutientes, sed innocentes;* […] *quam plurimus coniuges habentes, sed scortas et adulterantes; crebro iurantes, sed periurantes; voventes, sed continuo propemodum mentientes; belligerantes, sed civilia et iniusta bella agentes;* […] *in sede arbitraturi sedentes, sed raro recti iudicii regulam quaerentes.*[10]

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[5] This tripartite division is now commonly known as the 'three orders of society', famously studied in George Duby, *Les Trois Ordres ou l'imagination du féodalisme*. The theme's earliest Anglo-Saxon iteration is in Alfred the Great's translation of Boethius's *De consolation Philosophiae*; Ælfric also references it twice in the late tenth or early eleventh century. Rabin suggests there may also have been a lost Latin text that Ælfric and possibly Alfred drew on: Andrew Rabin, ed. and trans., *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 106. A more thorough study of the theme of the Three Orders in Anglo-Saxon England is, unsurprisingly, Timothy E. Powell, 'The "Three Orders" of Society in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 23 (1994), 103–132; more recent is Inka Moilanen, 'The Concept of the Three Orders of Society and Social Mobility in Eleventh Century England', *EHR* 131 (2016), 1331–1352.

[6] Wulfstan, *II Pol* IV.37: 'If any of them weaken, immediately the throne will tremble; and if any of them fully break, then the throne will crumble down, and that will bring the people all to ruin'.

[7] On comparisons between the two writers and their eschatological views, see Joyce Hill, 'Ælfric and Wulfstan: Two Views of the Millennium', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet L. Nelson (London: King's College Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000) p. 213–235.

[8] On this 'salvation history', see, e.g., Alice Sheppard, *Families of the King: Writing Identity in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 72–73, 88–92, and 166–167 (n. 67).

[9] Gildas, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* 21: 'There also arose not only this vice [of fornication] but also every other as well to which human nature is liable, and in particular […] the hatred of truth, […] the love of falsehood, the reception of crime in the place of virtue, the respect shown to wickedness rather than goodness'. (Hereafter: Gildas, *DEB*.) Translation following J. A. Giles, *The Works of Gildas* (London: James Bohn, 1841).

[10] Gildas, *DEB* 27: 'Britain has kings, but they are tyrants; she has judges, but unrighteous ones; generally engaged in plunder and rapine, but always preying on the innocent; […] they have an abundance of wives, yet are they addicted to fornication and adultery; they are ever ready to take oaths, and as often perjure themselves; they make a vow and almost immediately act falsely; they

These sins blinded the Britons to encroaching danger, and soon they would be overcome by the very Angles and Saxons they had invited to protect them.[11] Bede, writing on the event in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* with a few more centuries of hindsight, specifically paints the Saxons as punishment sent by God against the wicked Britons: '*Quod Domini nutu dispositum esse constat, ut ueniret contra improbos malum, sicut euidentius rerum exitus probauit*'.[12] This medieval Christian tradition of providential history in which failure is divine punishment for national degeneracy also, of course, reflects lessons from the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 28, for instance, Moses cites a long list of punishments meted out to a kingdom for not following God's law, including infertility of crops, beasts, and humans; defeat in battle; enslavement; conquest; and death.[13] These cosmological punishments would have seemed familiar to Gildas and Bede, who saw their echoes in the history of the Britons, and probably just as familiar to Ælfric and Wulfstan and other learned men and women in late tenth-century England, who themselves faced the threat of conquest by 'a nation from far away, from the end of the earth'.[14] Indeed, Wulfstan drew upon this passage, and corresponding ones from Leviticus 26, directly in a homily in which he commends his audience to remember those biblical examples and to 'take warning for ourselves thereby'.[15]

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make war, but their wars are against their countrymen, and are unjust ones; [...] they sit on the seat of justice, but rarely seek for the rule of right judgement'.

[11] Gildas, *DEB* 23.

[12] Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* I.14: 'As events plainly showed, this was ordained by the will of God so that evil might fall upon those miscreants'. Latin text from Bede, *Storia degli Inglesi (Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum)*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and trans. by Paolo Chiesa, 2 vol. (Milan: Fondazione Valla-Arnoldo Mondadori, 2008−2010); English translation from Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. by Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), unless otherwise noted.

[13] Deuteronomy 28:15−52: 'But if you will not obey the LORD your God by diligently observing all his commandments and decrees, which I am commanding you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you: [...] Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock. [...] The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out against them one way and flee before them seven ways. [...] The LORD will bring you, and the king whom you set over you, to a nation that neither you nor your ancestors have known, where you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone. [...] Aliens residing among you shall ascend above you higher and higher, while you shall descend lower and lower. [...] All these curses shall come upon you, pursuing and overtaking you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD your God, by observing the commandments and the decrees that he commanded you. [...] The LORD will bring a nation from far away, from the end of the earth, to swoop down on you like an eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, a grim-faced nation showing no respect to the old or favour to the young'. Biblical citations from New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

[14] Deut 28:49.

[15] Wulfstan, *Be godcundre warnunge* (Bethurum XIX): '*warnian us be swylcan*'.

But while the sins of the nation as a whole were often blamed for these catastrophes, writers of the early middle ages also argued that the success or failure of a kingdom was intimately tied to the suitability and morality of its ruler.[16] In his Monday homily for the Greater Litany, Ælfric advises, '*Þæt folc bið gesælig þurh snoterne cyning, sigefæst und gesundful ðurh gesceadwisne reccend. And hi beoð geyrmede ðurh unwisne cyning, on monegum ungelimpum, for his misræde.*'[17] The idea was not new: Proverbs 29:2–4, for example, reads similarly, 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan. […] By justice a king gives stability to the land, but one who makes heavy exactions ruins it'. This theological model formed the basis of the later Anglo-Saxon conception of kingship. In contrast to the harsher 'theocratic' label used by previous historians, Patrick Wormald famously coined the term 'pastoral kingship' to describe this phenomenon of an Anglo-Saxon ruler conceived as the 'shepherd' of his flock, as a bishop or abbot would be in a religious community.[18] This chapter will argue, though, that far from being simply modelled on episcopal (and biblical pastoral) duties, kingship as envisaged in later Anglo-Saxon England had a very specific conception influenced by several longstanding traditions, but modified and renegotiated in the midst of the challenges and changes of the long tenth century. Moreover, in the end, it will argue that these specific ideals of kingship came to influence the specific practice of kingship under Æthelred and Cnut at the end of the period.

The Sources of Anglo-Saxon Right Kingship

In the second half of the first millennium AD, especially in the Carolingian realms, a genre of texts known as *specula principum*, or 'mirrors for princes', flourished.[19] These mirrors were ethical and political treatises written to give advice to and provide role models for (usually young) rulers, and to admonish those who did

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[16] The classic study is Marita Blattmann, '"Ein Unglück für sein Volk": Der Zusammenhang zwischen Fehlverhalten des Königs und Volkswohl in Quellen des 7.–12. Jahrhunderts', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 30 (1996), 80–102. Sarah Foot has also written on the early medieval view of nature as 'distinctly ambivalent': the delight of God's creation juxtaposed with the terror of God's judgment expressed through 'unforeseen devastation, destruction and death to people and beasts at will'; Sarah Foot, 'Plenty, Portents and Plague: Ecclesiastical Readings of the Natural World in Early Medieval Europe', *Studies in Church History* 46 (2010), 15–41.

[17] Ælfric, *CH* II.19: 'The people will be happy through a wise king, victorious and prosperous through a discerning ruler; and they are made miserable through an unwise king, by many misfortunes from his ill counsel.'

[18] Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', p. 75.

[19] N.B. The German term *Fürstenspiegel* is also frequently found in secondary literature.

not follow their strictures. Dozens of examples survive from the sixth through ninth centuries, and many of them have been the subjects of some scholarly interest.[20] Some of the better-known mirrors from the period include Smaragdus of St Mihiel's *Via regia*, Sedulius Scottus's *De rectoribus Christianis*, and a number of works by Hincmar of Rheims, including *De ordine palatii*, *De regis et regio ministerio*, and *Instructio ad Ludovicum regem*, as well as certain sections of the same writer's *De divortio Lotharii regis et Theutbergae reginae*. Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*, written c. 841–83, should perhaps also be counted amongst these other examples of the medieval *specula principum*. Dhuoda's text is unique for a number of reasons however, not least of which is that it was authored by a woman, and by a person related to the recipient rather than by a monk or ecclesiast writing to instruct a king or prince, but also because, unlike the other mirrors, the *Liber manualis* was written not for a king, but for a lower-ranking (albeit still quite high-status) aristocrat.

Regardless of audience (or authorship), these mirrors all seek to establish a vision of proper Christian royal behaviour. Sedulius Scottus, a presumably Irish monk working in Liège, for instance, instructed West Frankish King Charles the Bald (r. 843–877) that a prince should *'velut enchiridion […] perlegat quatenus facilius animadvertere possit quanta mala malis et quanta bona bonis rectoribus superna et divina iustitia rependit'*.[21] For Sedulius, foremost amongst the things the good ruler must do is to 'obey the will and holy precepts of the Supreme Giver of all things'.[22] He does this, Sedulius continues, by first ruling himself, and ensuring he upholds righteousness: *'Justitiam diligat simul atque custodiat, injusta vero atque maligna opera in subjectis repudiet, et laudabili zelo qui est secundum scientiam corrigat.'*[23] Hincmar advises the young king Carloman II similarly in his tract *De ordine palatii*, quoting from the biblical Book of Wisdom: *'Obaudiat etiam sanctam Scripturam sibi praecipientem: "Diligite justitiam, qui judicatis*

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[20] The classic study of the genre is Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit*, Bonn historische Forschungen 32 (Bonn: 1968); a more recent study is Handy, 'The *Specula Principum* in Northwestern Europe'.

[21] Sedulius Scottus, *De rectoribus Christianis* 20: '… peruse [these ideas] like a handbook, that he may more easily observe how many evils supernal and divine justice metes out to evil rulers and how many good things to good ones'. Latin text from Siegmund Hellmann, ed., *Sedulius Scottus*, 'I. *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis*' (Munich, 1906); trans. from Sedulius Scottus, *De Rectoribus Christianis (On Christian Rulers)*, ed. and trans. by R. W. Dyson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010).

[22] *DRC* 1: '… *summi Donatoris omnium voluntati et sanctis praeceptis obedire'*.

[23] *DRC* 3: 'Let him both love and preserve justice and reject unjust and wicked works in those subject to him, and let him correct them with the praiseworthy zeal that is according to wisdom'.

terram.'"[24] This concern with justice stretched far beyond simple Christian morality, though, and these mirrors assert that morality of a king is directly connected to the success of his kingdom:

> *… justis et sanctis rectoribus multa in praesenti solatia – divitiarum abundantiam, triumphorum gloriam, pacis tranquillitatem, praeclaram sobolis indolem, multos et felices annos – ac perpetuum regnum in futurum donat.*[25]

Far from blaming the sins of the people for national catastrophe, these mirrors allege that divine punishment specifically comes to those nations whose kings are unjust:

> *Ut enim reprobis praesentes offensiones, calamitates, captivitates, filiorum orbitates, amicorum strages, frugum sterilitates, pestilentias intolerabiles, breves et infelices dies, diuturnas aegrotationes, mortes pessimas et insuper aeterna supplicia retribuit.*[26]

This is the central tenet of what this study will refer to as 'right kingship': a good king is concerned above all with justice, embodied by devotion to God's laws, first correcting himself and then ensuring the spread of justice throughout his kingdom by correcting injustice in any form it might take. When kings uphold these values, their kingdoms succeed; when kings do not, their kingdoms suffer.

Of course, one major problem must be addressed at the outset: no mirrors for princes seem to have been composed in Anglo-Saxon England, and moreover, there is little evidence that most of the above-mentioned continental mirrors were read or copied in England before the Norman Conquest.[27] There is, however, compelling evidence that Anglo-Saxon authors were reading these, or similar, texts in manuscripts now lost, and, more importantly, that these authors were citing, paraphrasing, and otherwise incorporating similar ideas from other sources. Most of this evidence comes from shorter texts, including letters, laws, homilies, and sermons, much of which might be classified as what Mayke de Jong has termed *admonitio*: short

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[24] Hincmar of Rheims, *De ordine palatii* II: '[The king] should also listen carefully to Holy Scripture, which commands him, "Love justice, ye who are the judges of the earth."' Latin text from *Hinkmar von Reims, De ordine palatii*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Gross and Rudolf Schieffer, MGH Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui 3 (1980); trans. from David Herlihy, ed. and trans., '*On the Governance of the Palace*, by Hincmar of Rheims', in *The History of Feudalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp. 208–227.

[25] *DRC* 20: 'To just and holy rulers […] it gives many consolations in the present – an abundance of riches, the glory of triumphs, the tranquillity of peace, offspring of noble character, many and happy years – and, in the future, a perpetual kingdom'.

[26] *DRC* 20: 'For to the reprobate it returns sudden accidents, calamities, captivities, the loss of children, the slaughter of friends, the barrenness of crops, intolerable pestilences, brief and unhappy days, prolonged illnesses, the worst of deaths, and, above all, eternal torment.'

[27] Eric G. Stanley, 'The Administration of Law in Anglo-Saxon England: Ideals Formulated by the Bible, Einhard, and Hincmar of Rheims—But No Formal Mirrors for Princes', in *Germanic Texts and Latin Models: Medieval Reconstructions*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus, and T. Hostra (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 53–71. While no manuscripts survive, it has been theorized that Hincmar was at least known in Alfredian England, though Stanley notes this is 'ultimately undemonstrable' (p. 69).

moralistic texts on problems affecting the (Carolingian) kingdom and on how to rule correctly.[28] Because 'mirrors for princes' (and '*specula principum*') often seem to be used as a formal term for texts like those of Sedulius and Smaragdus, this study will prefer the (admittedly less poetic) terms 'moral-didactic' or 'moral-instructional texts' in order to recognise the fact that these ideas were adapted from and addressed in a much wider range of texts and genres.

Alcuin of York, the Anglo-Saxon advisor to Charlemagne, is one of best examples of Anglo-Saxon writing about kingship, and in several of his surviving *Epistolae* he explicitly cites many of these key Carolingian moral-didactic ideas. In a letter dated to 796, for instance, Alcuin advises King Eardwulf of Northumbria:

> *Erudi te ipsum primo in omni bonitate et sobrietate; postea gentem, cui praeesse videris, in omni modestia vitae et vestitus, in omni veritate fidei et iudiciorum, in observatione mandatorum Dei et honestate morum. Sic itaque et regnum tibi firmabis et gentem salvabis et ab ira Dei liberabis illam, quae certis signis diu inminebat illi.*[29]

Moreover, in another letter, addressed to Eardwulf's predecessor King Æthelred (c. 762–769), he writes:

> *Legimus quoque, quod regis bonitas totius est gentis prosperitas, victoria exercitus, aeris temperies, terrae habundantia, filiorum benedictio, sanitas plebis.* […] *et qui bene regit subiectum sibi populum, bonam habet a Deo retributionem : regnum scilicet caeleste.* […] *Vidistis, quomodo perierunt antecessores vestri reges et principes propter iniustitias et rapinas et inmunditias vitae. Nec ab huiusmodi se peccatis criminum capitalium, Deum timentes, abstinuerunt.*[30]

The good king is further defined in the same letter:

> *Regis est omnes iniquitates pietatis suae potentia obprimere; iustum esse in iudiciis, pronum in misericordia – secundum a quod ille miseretur subiectis, miserebitur ei Deus – sobrium in moribus, veridicum in verbis, largum in donis, providum in consiliis; consiliarios habere prudentes, Deum timentes, honestis moribus ornatos.*[31]

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[28] Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 112–141; see also Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, p. 43.

[29] Alcuin, *Epist*. 108 (MGH *Epist. Kar. Aevi II*, p. 155): 'First instruct yourself in all goodness and soberness, and then the people you rule in moderation in living and dressing, in truth of belief and judgment, in keeping God's commandments and living rightly. Thus you will make your kingdom secure and save your people from the wrath of God which sure signs show to have long been threatening it'. English translation is Allott 16 from Stephen Allott, ed. and trans., *Alcuin of York: His Life and Letters* (York: William Sessions, 1974).

[30] Alcuin, *Epistola* 18 (MGH *Epist. Kar. Aevi II*, pp. 49–52): 'We read that a good king means a prosperous nation, victorious in war, temperate in climate, rich in its soil, blessed with sons and a healthy people. […] He who rules his people well is well rewarded by God — with the kingdom of heaven. […] You have seen how the kings and princes who preceded you perished because of their injustices, expropriations, and foul ways. Brothers, beware of such wickedness in yourselves'. (Allott 13.)

[31] Alcuin, *Ep*. 18: 'It is for the king to crush all injustices by the power of his goodness, to be just in judgments, quick to mercy (for God will have mercy on him as he has mercy on his subjects), sober in

It is not explicitly addressed exactly where Alcuin and others had read ('*legimus*') these ideas, but they are clearly related to those addressed in the mirrors discussed above.

It is possible, however, that Alcuin's influence might be traced more specifically. An often-cited letter to Charlemagne from an Irish or Anglo-Saxon cleric named Cathwulf, dated to 775, would likely have been known in Alcuin's Carolingian circle in the late eighth century, and has itself been called a '*Fürstenspiegel* in miniature'.[32] In the letter, Cathwulf congratulates the king on his victory over the Lombards, and explains how worldly success might be borne from right rule and proper devotion to God. The letter quotes from, paraphrases, or otherwise cites several other mirrors, including the sixth-century Irish *Proverbia Graecorum*, which is also quoted in Sedulius's *De rectoribus Christianis* from the following century.[33] It is quite possible that Alcuin, in the first letter above, had read about the effects of good kingship on a kingdom from Cathwulf's letter; if that is not the case, then that opens the possibility of even more moral-didactic instruction being written and read in Carolingian elite circles.[34]

One of these texts was certainly the tract known as *De XII abusivis* (sometimes *De duodecim abusivi saeculi*), or 'The Twelve Abuses', hereafter *De XII*.[35] The tract was incorrectly attributed throughout the middle ages to a number of earlier Christian figures, including Augustine, Cyprian, Isidore, and Patrick, but has now been identified as the work of an anonymous Irish author writing sometime in the mid-seventh century, generally known by scholarly convention as Pseudo-Cyprian.[36] Aidan Breen has further traced the tract to within a specific quarter of a century, and to a specific Irish monastic tradition (and perhaps even to a specific monk, though

conduct, truthful in word, generous in giving, foresighted in counsel, having wide advisors who fear God and are upright in character'.

[32] Mary Garrison, 'The English and the Irish at the Court of Charlemagne', in *Karl der Grosse und sein Nachwirken: 1200 Jahre Kultur und Wissenschaft in Europa / Charlemagne and His Heritage: 1200 Years of Civilization and Science in Europe*, ed. Paul Leo Butzer, Max Kerner, and Walter Oberschelp, Vol. 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 97–123 (p. 101).

[33] For a full treatment of Cathwulf's letter, see Joanna Story, 'Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis', *Speculum* 74:1 (1991), 1–21.

[34] On this, see Rob Meens, 'Politics, Mirrors of Princes and the Bible: Sins, Kings and the Well-Being of the Realm', *EME* 7:3 (1998), 345–357.

[35] The standard edition of the text is still Siegmund Hellman, ed., *Ps.-Cyprianus. De xii abusiuis saeculi*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 34 (Leipzig, 1909). Much of the more recent scholarship has been the work of Aidan Breen, who was preparing a new critical edition and translation before his untimely death, based on his unpublished PhD dissertation: Aidan Breen, 'Towards a Critical Edition of *De XII Abusivis*: Introductory Essays with a Provisional Edition of the Text' (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1988). This study uses Breen's preliminary edition.

[36] Pseudo-Cyprian's Irish roots have long been recognised; see, e.g., Hellman, *Ps.-Cyprianus*, p. 15.

that final assertion cannot be proven conclusively); *De XII*, he argues, likely dates to sometime between AD 630 and 650, and was probably composed near Downpatrick by a member of the Irish *Romani* movement (i.e., the Irish monks who followed Roman, rather than Irish, Easter tradition).[37]

Pseudo-Cyprian's *De XII* is, admittedly, not a 'mirror for princes' in a traditional sense. In comparison with the Continental mirrors written for specific kings, it is unclear exactly who the audience of *De XII* might have been. Breen calls it simply a 'series of comprehensive moral-theological treatises', but with no further idea of its audience or purpose.[38] In form, *De XII* is a series of meditations on twelve behaviours, from every stratum of society, which left unchecked will 'strangle justice' and turn mankind 'to the shadows of hell'. The titular abuses are:

> *I. Sapiens sine operibus bonis; II. Senex sine religione; III. Adolescens sine oboedientia; IIII. Dives sine elemosyna; IV. Femina sine pudicitia; VI. Dominus sine virtute; VII. Christianus contentiosus; VIII. Pauoer superbus; IX. Rex iniquus; X. Episcopus neglegens; XI. Plebs sine disciplina; XII. Populus sine lege.*[39]

The most widely cited and studied of these abuses, in the middle ages and in modern historiography, is the ninth abuse *De rege iniquo* ('On the unjust king'), which reads quite similarly to and, as will be shown, may have influenced many of the other early medieval moral-didactic texts. (The full text and translation of the ninth abuse is reproduced in full in the Appendix to this volume for reference.)[40]

The *rex iniquus*, Pseudo-Cyprian says, is one who fails in his duties to uphold justice and correct injustice, and

> *Qui cum iniquorum rector esse oportuit, licet in semet ipso nominis sui dignitatem non custodit. Nomen enim regis intellectualiter hoc retinet, ut subiectis omnibus rectoris officium*

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[37] Aidan Breen, '*De XII Abusiuis*: Text and Transmission', in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission / Irland und Europa im Früheren Mitteralter: Texte und Überlieferung*, ed. by Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 78–94 (pp. 81–85).

[38] Breen, 'Towards a Critical Edition', p. 5.

[39] *De XII, Præfatio*: '1. The wise man without good works; 2. The old man without religion; 3. The youth without obedience; 4. The rich man without almsgiving; 5. The woman without modesty; 6. The abbot-nobleman without virtue; 7. The contentious Christian; 8. The poor man who is proud; 9. The unrighteous king; 10. The negligent bishop; 11. The sect without discipline; 12. The people without the Law.' Latin text and English translations, unless otherwise noted, are from Breen, 'Towards a Critical Edition', cited by chapter and Breen's line number.

[40] The sixth abuse ('*dominus sine virtute*') is also perhaps useful, but its subject is worth clarifying. '*Dominus*' has generally been taken as simply a 'lord', i.e. a secular elite, but it seems likely that it refers instead to abbots (and indeed, Breen translates it as 'abbot-noblemen'), and perhaps specifically the secular leaders who might, in Irish practice, oversee monasteries. For further discussion and references, see: Mary Clayton, '*De Duodecim Abusiuis*, Lordship and Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. by Stuart McWilliams (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 141–163 (pp. 144–146).

procuret. Sed qualiter alios corrigere poterit qui proporios mores ne iniqui sint non corrigit?
Quoniam iustitia regis exaltatur solium et in veritate solidantur gubernacula populorum.[41]

The section continues with a list of actions by which the righteousness of a king is maintained: that he judge justly, be a protector of strangers and widows and orphans, punish adultery, not promote the wicked to high office, rout the ungodly from the land, have old and wise men as counsellors, pay no heed to wizards and sorceresses and fortune-tellers, defend his country justly and valiantly against enemies, and so on. Following these commands is a list of the consequences of an unjust king:

> *Idcirco enim saepe pax populorum rumpitur et offendicula etiam de regno suscitantur, terrarum quoque fructus diminuuntur et servitia populorum praepediuntur, multi et varii dolores prosperitatem regni inficiunt, carorum et liberorum mortes tristitiam conferunt, hostium incursus provincias undique vastant, bestiae armentorum et pecorum greges dilacerant, tempestates aeris et hemisperia turbata terrarum fecunditatem et maris ministeria prohibent et aliquando fulminum ictus segetes et arborum fleres et pampinos exurunt. Super omnia vero regis iniustitia non solum praesentis imperii faciem fuscat, sed etiam filios suos et nepotes, ne post se regni hereditatem teneant, obscurat.*[42]

As in Smaragdus and other moral-didactic texts, the virtue of the king is directly connected to his realm's success, and thus an unjust king brings only failure and catastrophe.

It is perhaps interesting to note here, especially for the purposes of this study, that *De XII* also appears to be quite a clearly gendered text. This is made most explicit in the relegation of women into one section, *De femina sine pudicitia* ('On the woman without modesty').[43] The traits that Pseudo-Cyprian uses to describe what modest might entail include a number of things that seem quite applicable to men as well as women, including:

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[41] *De XII* IX.339–345: '… although he ought to be the ruler and guide [Lt: *rector*] of the wicked, does not by his own behaviour preserve and maintain the dignity of his name. For the name of 'king' retains this significance, namely that he fulfil the office of rector to all his subjects. For how shall he correct others, who does not amend his own behaviour? For in righteousness is the king alone exalted and in fidelity and truth the governance of the peoples is established.'

[42] *De XII* IX.364–375: 'The tranquillity of the peoples is often disturbed, and causes of offence (i.e. scandals) stirred up against the kingdom, the fruits of the earth are also diminished, and the subjection (in tribute) of the peoples is obstructed, many different misfortunes beset the kingdom and hinder its prosperity, the deaths of loved ones and children (through plague?) bring sorrow, hostile invasions lay waste the provinces on all sides and cause the slaughter of the beasts of burden and the herds of (domesticated) animals, the tempests of the air (storms) and the disturbance of the upper atmosphere prevent the fertility of the land and the constancy of the tidal motion of the sea, and frequently blasts of lightning wither the corn on the ground and the blossoms and young shoots on the trees. But, above all, the unrighteousness of a king not only darkens the face of his whole realm, but even causes his sons and nephews to fade out of significance, so that they do not inherit the kingdom.'

[43] *De XII* V.152–201.

> *alienas res non appetere, omnem immunditiam devitare, ante horam congruam non gustare velle, risum non excitare, verba vana et falsa non loqui, […] cum indignis contubernia non inire, supercilii intuitu neminem aspicere, vagari oculos non permittere, pompatico et illecebroso gressu non incedere, nulli inferior in coepto bono opere apparere, nulli contumeliam aut ruborem incutere, neminem blasphemare, sense non irridere, meliori non controversari, de his quae ignaras non tractare, etiam ea quae scis non omnia proferre.*[44]

Many of these traits are repeated, however, in more masculine sections, and in particular in the section on the *rex iniquus*. Julia M. H. Smith has noted, for instance, that these sections are in fact 'equivalent' and 'contain verbal echoes of each other and deploy very similar rhetorical strategies'.[45] The structure of both abuses is probably the most striking similarity; none of the other abuses included in the text contain such long lists defining the exact behaviours that should be avoided and/or undertaken. The immodest woman is not the only other abuse that seems clearly influenced by gendered conceptions of right behaviour either; both the second abuse, *De sene sine religione* ('Of the old man without religious'), and the third, *De adolescente sine oboedientia* ('Of the youth without obedience') clear attempt to regulate behaviour for various parts of the (masculine) life cycle, in particular when Pseudo-Cyprian notes, '*Sicut ergo in senibus sobrietas et morum perfectio requiritur, ita in adolescentibus obsequium et subiectio et oboedientia rite debetur*'.[46] More could perhaps be said on this issue of the gendered reading of all of *De XII*, but for now, we must return to Pseudo-Cyprian's use as a model of right kingship.

Despite Pseudo-Cyprian's relatively anonymous origins, *De XII* was nevertheless widely read and copied throughout early medieval western Europe, and is extant in at least three or four hundred manuscripts, probably many more, from the ninth century through to the Renaissance.[47] Indeed, Patrick Wormald goes so far as to call it 'one of the most profoundly influential formulations of Christian political obligation in the entire middle ages', and Julia Smith calls it 'one of the fundamental

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[44] *De XII* V.173–183: Modesty is 'not to covet the goods of others, to avoid all impurity, not to wish to eat before the proper time, not to be a giggler or to provoke laughter, not to utter false or vain words, […] not to keep the company of unworthy persons, to look upon no one with a haughty regard, not to permit the eyes to wander not to walk with a showy or seductive gait, to appear (to be) inferior to no one in beginning good works, to be an occasion of reproach or shame to no one, to blaspheme nobody, not to make fun of the old, not to engage in dispute with one's betters, not to discourse upon things of which you know nothing nor even make display of that which you do know.'

[45] Julia M. H. Smith, 'Gender and Ideology in the Early Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History* 34 (1998), 51–73 (p. 59).

[46] *De XII* III.73–75: 'Therefore, as perfect behaviour and a grave manner are looked for in old men, so humble service, subjection and obedience are rightly expected of young men'.

[47] Breen, 'Towards a Critical Edition', p. 234; Breen, 'Text and Transmission', pp. 78–94; Padraig P. Ó'Neill, '*Duodecim Abusivis Saeculi, De*', *DMA* 4, p. 312.

cornerstones of early medieval political thought'.[48] One of the earliest attestations of the text appears to be in a letter from the Anglo-Saxon missionary Boniface, writing to Æthelbald of Mercia in around 746, and both Sedulius's *De rectoribus Christianis* and Cathwulf's letter to Charlemagne also probably reference the ninth abuse as well.

Pseudo-Cyprian's passage on the *rex iniquus* likely owes at least some of this widespread reading and popularity to its inclusion in the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, a collection of Irish canon law attributed to the monks Cú Chuimne of Iona and Ruben of Dairinis compiled in the first half of the eighth century.[49] Sections of Chapter XXV ('*De regno*') of the *Hibernensis*, in fact, are essentially a copy, or at least close paraphrase, of *De XII*'s ninth abuse (in this case, attributed to St Patrick), copying the list of calamities resulting from the bad deeds of kings, as well as the ways in which a good king shows justice. The *Hibernensis*, too, was widely known throughout western Europe, particularly in northern France, with many manuscripts originating amongst Irish monastic communities in Brittany and the Irish-connected monastery of St Gall.[50] This may have also played a significant part in promulgating Pseudo-Cyprian's royal ideals amongst the Carolingians. Manuscripts of the *Hibernensis* were probably at St Bertin, a monastery that would later develop closer Anglo-Saxon connections as the origin of Alfred's priest and translator Grimbald as well as Emma's Encomiast, by the ninth century, and others were almost certainly in major ecclesiastical centres of England, including Canterbury and Worcester, by the tenth.

As with the other Continental mirrors for princes mentioned above, no manuscripts of the Latin text of *De XII* survive from pre-Conquest England; the earliest surviving example from England is one from Cirencester, of probably the

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[48] Patrick Wormald, 'Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship: Some Further Thoughts', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. by Paul Szarmach and V. Darrow Oggins (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 151–183 (p. 160); Smith, 'Gender and Ideology', p. 60.

[49] Roy Flechner, *The Hibernensis: A Study, Edition, and Translation, with Notes* (DPhil diss., Oxford University, 2006, updated 2014), p. 17. Available online at <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/conversion/logos/Flechner_Hibernensis.pdf>. I am indebted to the author for providing me with unpublished material from this edition pending forthcoming publication. Until then, the standard edition is still Hermann Wasserschleben, ed., *Die Irische Kanonensammlung*, 2. Auflage (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1885).

[50] On this, see especially the recent Sven Meeder, *The Irish Scholarly Presence at St Gall: Networks of Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); and more generally, Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder, ed., *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture, and Religion* (London: Palgrave, 2016), especially S. Meeder, 'Irish Scholars and Carolingian Learning', pp. 179–194.

later eleventh century, while the rest are from the twelfth century or later.[51] At least one copy was certainly extant in England the mid-tenth century, however. A surviving charter, written circa 963, contains a list of books Æthelwold donated to the reformed monastery at Peterborough, and amongst the books on this list was an unattributed copy, now lost, of *De XII*.[52] Moreover, Ælfric later composed a (highly-abridged) vernacular translation of *De XII* in the mid-990s, on which see more below, and it is tempting to speculate that it may have been based on Æthelwold's copy.

Since this text, in its Latin and eventual Old English versions, became so widely read and influential in informing later Anglo-Saxon conceptions of kingship (on which see more below), it is perhaps useful to briefly overview the sources Pseudo-Cyprian drew upon in his tract. Whether or not Breen is correct in his specific authorial attributions, the Irish origins of *De XII* are not in question. As far back as Hellmann in the early twentieth century, it was recognised that Pseudo-Cyprian should be read within a specifically Irish legal tradition concerned with kingship.[53] In the mid-twentieth century, historians like D. A. Binchy often read this tradition as part of an 'overwhelming majority' of early medieval monarchies having a 'surely "religious"' origin; 'sacred or quasi-divine' kingship, he further argued, was 'a universal phenomenon in early societies'.[54] Whether or not this so-called pre-Christian, 'sacral kingship' actually existed in Ireland or elsewhere — a far too extensive and controversial historiographical debate than this study could hope to address — there does seem to be a theme of the connection between the righteousness of a king and the wellbeing of his kingdom in other Irish texts contemporary with *De XII*.[55] In the words of Kim McCone,

> At the heart of early Irish kingship theory lay the notion that a kingdom's welfare in both the social and natural spheres was intimately bound up with the sovereign's physical, social and mental condition. Medieval Irish literature abounds in descriptions attributing peace, social stability, good weather, abundance of crops, livestock and so on to the 'sovereign's truth' or *fír flatha*. Conversely, other passages record the catastrophic consequences

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[51] Meens, 'Politics, Mirrors of Princes, and the Bible', p. 354; Clayton, '*De Duodecim Abusiuis*', pp. 143–144.

[52] S 1448 (London, Soc. Ant. MS 60, 39v–40v). Other books on the list include those by Bede, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory of Tours, and Ambrose, amongst several others; see Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 135–136.

[53] Hellman, *Ps.-Cyprianus*, p. 15

[54] Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 8.

[55] But see the Introduction to this study for a brief historiographical overview of the concept.

such as strife, bad weather, pestilence and famine liable to result from the *gáu flatha* or 'sovereign's lie'.[56]

De XII is not alone amongst Irish texts in making these connections. The *Audacht Morainn* (or '*Testament of Morand*'), for example, dating in its current version to around half a century after *De XII* but perhaps having much earlier origins — indeed, Binchy calls it 'clearly pre-Christian' — has been called 'the oldest *speculum principis* (or "*Fürstenspiegel*") in western Europe'.[57] This text takes the form of advice given from a wise judge to his princely foster-son, and includes a long list of blessings 'that accrue to the *tuath* ["tribe" or "kingdom"] from *fír flathemon*, lit. "the prince's truth," the just rule of a righteous king'.[58] Under the righteous king's rule, Morand says, there is

> … prosperity and fertility for man, beast, and crops; the seasons are temperate, the corn grows strong and heavy, mast and fruit are abundant on the trees, cattle give milk in plenty, rivers and estuaries teem with fish; plagues, famines, and natural calamities are warded off; [and] internal peace and victory over external enemies are guaranteed.[59]

A later ('unmistakably Christian') law-code, too, discusses the 'seven candles' that illuminate the *gáu flathemon*, 'the injustice (lit. "falsehood") of the prince', including 'defeat in battle, famine during his reign, dryness of milch-cows, blighting of mast, scarcity of corn'.[60] Further, the so-called Irish *Triads*, a wide-ranging collection of gnomic wisdom texts, also include several references that echo the terms of *De XII*. One triad, for instance, explains that there are '*Trí cuil túaithe: flaith brécach, breithem gúach, sacart colach*.'[61] Further, there are '*Trí dofortat cach flaith: góu, forsnaidm, fingal*.'[62] These Irish writers also note that the best things for a king/chief are 'justice, peace, and army', while the worst are 'sloth, treachery, and evil counsel.'[63] Manuscripts of the *Triads* date to the later middle ages, but Kuno Meyer has argued on linguistic terms that they date from 'no later than the year 900', and most likely the second

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[56] Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1991), p. 108.

[57] Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 9.

[58] Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 9–10.

[59] Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 10.

[60] Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 10.

[61] *Triad* 91: 'Three ruins of a tribe: a lying chief, a false judge, a lustful priest.' Text and translation from Kuno Meyer, ed. and trans., *The Triads of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, and Co., 1906). Meyer notes other manuscripts replace 'lustful' with 'stumbling, offending', or 'fond of refusing'.

[62] *Triad* 186: 'Three things that ruin every chief: falsehood, overreaching, parricide.' Meyer also translated 'parricide' as 'murder of relations'.

[63] *Triads* 242, 243.

half of the ninth century.[64] If the established dating for all of these texts is accepted, there seems to be a common traditional view of right kingship in the Irish tradition stretching from at least the seventh century through to at least the ninth century.

Of course, Irish sources are not the only (or indeed, most obvious) inspirations for Pseudo-Cyprian's *De XII*, or for early medieval moral-didactic texts overall. One of the most widely cited passages on kingship in the middle ages is from Isidore of Seville. Isidore's influence was immense in the Carolingian world and the British Isles, and the oldest surviving manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* come from the Irish-influenced monastery of St Gall, written in an Irish hand, having had a major impact in early medieval Ireland.[65] Most famously, in Book IX of the *Etymologiae*, Isidore describes the origins of the word '*rex*':

> *Reges a regendo vocati. Sicut enim sacerdos a sacrificando, ita et rex a regendo. Non autem regit, qui non corrigit. Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur. Unde et apud veteres tale erat proverbium: 'Rex eris, si recte facies: si non facias, non eris.'*[66]

A king, according to Isidore, was thus responsible for not only regulating his own behaviour, but also for correcting that of his subjects; indeed, Isidore argues that correcting (*corrigere*) is key, and one who does not do it 'does not govern'. While there is still some debate on whether or not Pseudo-Cyprian's citation of this passage is from Isidore directly or through other sources, the quotation would, in the middle ages, go on to be referenced in almost every major *speculum* or moral-didactic text, including Sedulius's *De rectoribus Christianis*, Hincmar's *De ordine palatii*, and many more.[67]

Of course, the origin of many of these ideas of right kingship, for Isidore, Pseudo-Cyprian, Sedulius, and others, is ultimately biblical, and more specifically from the Old Testament. The ancient Hebrews from the period of the establishment of the first Hebrew kingdom of Israel provided a model for a wide range of early medieval kings, especially in the Merovingian and Carolingian period.[68] Patrick

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[64] Meyer, *Triads*, p. x.

[65] Barney, *et al.*, *The* Etymologies *of Isidore*, pp. 24–25; see also Meeder, *Irish Scholarly Presence*.

[66] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* IX.iii.4: 'Kings are so called from governing, and as priests (*sacerdos*) are named from sacrificing (*sacrificare*) so a king (*rex*, pl. *reges*) from governing (*regere*). But he does not govern who does not correct (*corrigere*); therefore the name of king is held by one behaving rightly (*recte*), and lost by one doing wrong. Hence among the ancients such was the proverb: "You will be king (*rex*) if you behave rightly (*recte*); if you do not, you will not."'

[67] *De XII* IX.341–344; Breen, '*De XII Abusiuis*: Text and Transmission', pp. 84–84; *DRC* 2; Hincmar, *De ordine palatii* 6.

[68] Mary Garrison, 'The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes

Wormald has argued further that while 'any early medieval *gens* could see its mirror in the Old Testament', the 'English identification with Israel arose from direct experience'.[69] The Irish, too, were heavily influenced by the Old Testament, even adopting OT dietary laws, and, as noted above, followed in the OT belief of the cosmological consequences of kingship. While George Molyneaux has recently (and probably rightly) urged caution in assuming that the Anglo-Saxons felt they held a particular, unique place as God's chosen people, they nevertheless seem to have conceived of the ancient Hebrew kingdom as models for rulership and right royal behaviour more generally.[70]

Old Testament kings, like early medieval kings, were expected to be both judges and generals, as in 1 Samuel 8:20 when the people cry out to the prophet, 'Our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles for us'. The strength, wisdom, and judgment of Saul, David, and Solomon were also models for early medieval kings, and stories from the OT books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, amongst others, were regularly echoed in the writings about later Anglo-Saxon kings. Passages from the so-called Books of Wisdom (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, Song of Songs, and Sirach/Ecclesiasticus) are readily spotted in the writings of the Christian writers of the medieval period as well. The *De regno* chapter of the *Hibernensis*, for instance, quotes Proverbs 20:28 verbatim ('Loyalty and truth preserve the king, and he upholds his throne by righteousness'), while Proverbs 16:12 ('It is an abomination for a king to commit wicked acts; for a throne is established on righteousness') is also closely echoed in later moral-didactic too. Ælfric's Old English translation of *De XII*, for instance, references the same passage — '*Ðæs cyninges rihtwisnys aræð his cynesetl*' — even when Pseudo-Cyprian's original does not.[71] Breen has further identified at least five quotations from or references to these Old Testament books in the ninth abuse of *De XII* alone, including quotations

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 114–161; Yitzhak Hen, 'The Uses of the Old Testament and the Perception of Kingship in Merovingian Gaul', *EME* 7:3 (1998): 277–290; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charlemagne and Offa', in *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 99–100; Judith McClure, 'Bede's Old Testament Kings', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. by P. Wormald, pp. 76–98.
[69] Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', in P. Wormald, *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and Its Historians*, ed. by Stephen Baxter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 207–228 (p. 217).
[70] George Molyneaux, 'Did the English Really Think They Were God's Elect in the Anglo-Saxon Period?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65:4 (2014), 721–737.
[71] Ælfric, *De XII* IX.118–19: 'The king's justice exalts his throne'. (Clayton, *TÆT*, p. 128–29.)

from Ecclesiastes (Ecl 10:16: 'For woe to the land whose king is a youth and whose princes dine in the morning'), 1 Kings, 2 Samuel, and Deuteronomy.

Another likely influence on Pseudo-Cyprian's writing that also resonated with later Anglo-Saxon writers of the tenth-century reformation movement was the *Regula sancti Benedicti* ('Rule of St Benedict') itself. It has been proposed that the structure of *De XII* may have been derived specifically from Chapter 7 of the *Regula*, which depicts the twelve grades of humility. While not explicitly rules for behaviour generally, these steps are designed so that, '*Ergo, his omnibus humilitatis gradibus ascensis, monachus mox ad caritatem Dei perveniet illam quæ perfecta foris mittit timorem*'.[72] Benedict connects this idea to the biblical story of Jacob's Ladder (Gen 28:10–18), in which the sleeping Jacob has a vision: 'And he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it; And the Lord leaning upon the ladder'. Following this, the *Regula* gives twelve steps (or perhaps 'rungs') that can bring a monk closer to God, in apposition to the twelve *abusiuis* that propel humanity downward to the shadows of Hell in Pseudo-Cyprian's text.

Irish, patristic, and biblical texts thus all seem to have had a significant influence on Pseudo-Cyprian's *De XII* specifically, as well as on a range of other sources that would have been known by later Anglo-Saxon writers. One final potential source of ideas about kingship in the later Anglo-Saxon period that must be noted is the genre of secular royal biography developed in the ninth century. The prototypical medieval example is Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*. While not exactly hagiographic, the *Vita* is a celebratory work written by a monastically-educated scholar in the employ of the emperor himself, and portrays Charlemagne as an ideal king. A generation later, two royal biographies of Louis the Pious (the *Vita Hludovici* by the anonymous 'Astronomer' and the *Gesta Hludovici imperatoris* by Thegan of Trier) echoed those same ideals. As with the Continental mirrors for princes discussed previously, though, there is no surviving manuscript evidence for the existence of *Vita Karoli* or the *vitae* of Louis the Pious in Anglo-Saxon England. They were almost certainly known in Alfred's court, however; Asser's *Vita Ælfredi regis* follows quite a similar pattern, and indeed the Welsh monk seems to have based his

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[72] *Regula S. Benedicti* VII: 'Having climbed all these steps of humility, therefore, the monk will presently come to that perfect love of God which casts out fear'. Text and translation from *The Rule of Our Most Holy Father St. Benedict, Patriarch of Monks, from the Old English Edition of 1638* (London: R. Washbourne, 1875).

Vita on Einhard's, with Lapidge and Keynes having argued persuasively that Asser read the *Vita Karoli* and used it as a model.[73] It is also probable that Asser was influenced by the (more contemporary) writings about Louis the Pious.[74] Alongside these models, it is further likely that Asser was also drawing on a (comparatively) small library that also included the *Proverbia Graecorum*, the Hiberno-Latin text that was also quoted or paraphrased in Sedulius Scottus and in Cathwulf's letter to Charlemagne.

Anton Scharer, indeed, has argued that Asser's *Vita Ælfredi* itself may have been directly influenced by Continental mirrors for princes, and perhaps even modelled in part on that genre.[75] The introductory dedication, for instance, is to Asser's '*venerabili piissimoque omnium Brittanniae insulae Christianorum rectori*', stressing his piety and using the same word (*rector*) that Isidore uses in the *Etymologiae* to denote a king's duty to correction. In the final completed section of the work, amongst other places, Asser again stresses Alfred's wisdom and justice, and depicts how he was concerned with fairness in judgment for both commoners and aristocrats, and ensured that his judges and counsellors did the same:

> *Rex ille in exequendis iudiciis, sicut in ceteris aliis omnibus rebus, discretissimus indagator. Nam omnia pene totius suae regionis iudicia, quae in absentia sua fiebant, sagaciter investigabat, qualia fierent, iusta aut etiam iniusta, aut vero si aliquam in illis iudiciis iniquitatem intelligere posset, leniter utens suatim illos ipsos iudices, aut per se ipsum aut per alios suos fideles quoslibet interrogabat, quare tam nequiter iudicassent, utrum per ignorantiam aut propter aliam quamlibet malevolentiam.*[76]

Should any judge be found to have ruled unjustly, the king would sentence him either to be removed from all his worldly offices, or else 'to apply [himself] much more attentively to the pursuit of wisdom', going so far as to have illiterate old men read to by their sons, whom earlier sections noted were educated in the court, possibly by Alfred himself.[77] So like the aforementioned Continental mirrors, Asser's *Vita* particularly focuses on Alfred's 'encouragement of religion, his careful

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[73] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, p. 116; see also Marle Schütt, 'The Literary Form of Asser's "*Vita Alfredi*"', *EHR* 72 (1957), 209–220.

[74] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English in the Ninth Century: Some Common Historical Interests', *History* 35 (1950), 202–218 (p. 215).

[75] Anton Scharer, 'The Writing of History at King Alfred's Court', *EME* 5:2 (1996), 177–206 (p. 193).

[76] Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis* 106: 'The king was an extremely astute investigator in judicial matters as in everything else. He would carefully look into nearly all the judgements which were passed in his absence anywhere in his realm, to see whether they were just or unjust; and if he could identify any corruption in those judgements, he would ask the judges concerned politely, as is his wont, either in person or through one of his other trusted men, why they had passed so unfair a sentence – whether through ignorance or because of some other malpractice'.

[77] *VÆlf* 75–76; on Alfred as a teacher, see above, Chapter 1.

organization of his own kingdom, and his deep interest in justice and the pursuit of wisdom'.[78] It should be noted, however, that David Pratt is not convinced that this Alfredian material should be so directly connected to insular or continental traditions in mirrors for princes or other advice literature; indeed, he argues, 'given the intertextuality of royal imagery, the threshold for positive influence must be set high'.[79] Whether or not we can make the case for direct influence, Asser's text does still seem to sit comfortably within the wider genre of moral-didactic writing.

Moreover, like the *Vita Karoli*, Asser's *Vita* does not seem to have been widely known in manuscripts during the Anglo-Saxon period. Only one copy survived to the modern era, but that single copy was destroyed in the Ashburnham House fire in 1731. There is one possible reference to the *Vita Ælfredi* in a list of books bequeathed by Bishop Leofric to Exeter around 1069–72, along with a copy of Gregory's *Cura pastoralis*, Boethius, and Smaragdus's *Diadema monachorum*, but the reference is garbled: it notes a '*Liber Osserii*', which Lapidge takes to mean either Asser's *Vita* or, possibly, a book by Orosius. The *Vita* does seem to have been known to the Encomiast and to several later chroniclers, though, including Byrhtferth of Ramsey, John of Worcester, and the writer of the Annals of St Neots, showing that at least some copies were extant in monastic communities during the period between its writing and those compositions.[80]

Of course, other writings from Alfred's court (previously — and sometimes still occasionally — ascribed to the king himself) provide further examples of the contemporary conceptions of right kingship in the king's circle. In the preface to the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura pastoralis*, Alfred (or, at least, the author writing in his name) famously laments the decline in learning in England, and also reminisces about how kings contributed to the idyllic England he proposes existed in the past:

> *Ðe cyðan hate ðæt me com swiðe oft on gemynd, hwelce wiotan iu wæron giond Angelcynn, ægðer ge godcundra hada ge worul[d]cundra; 7 hu gesæliglica tida ða wæron giond Angelcynn; 7 hu ða kyningas ðe ðone onwald hæfdon ðæs folces [on ðam dagum] Gode 7 his ærendwrecum hersumedon; 7 hie ægðer ge hiora sibbe ge hiora siodo ge hioraonweald innanbordes gehioldon, 7 eac ut hiora eðel gerymdon; 7 hu him ða speow ægðer ge mid wige ge mid wisdome; 7 eac ða godcundan hadas hu giorne hie wæron ægðer ge ymb lare ge ymb liornunga, ge ymb ealle ða ðiowotdomas ðe hie God [don] scoldon; 7 hu man utanbordes wisdom 7 lare hieder, on lond sohte, 7 hu we hie nu sceoldon ute begietan gif we hie habban*

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[78] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 56.
[79] Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 145–146.
[80] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 57.

sceoldon. […] *Geðenc hwelc witu us þa becomon for ðisse worulde, þa þa we [wisdom] nohwæðer ne selfe ne lufodon ne eac oðrum monnum ne lefdon [lærdon].*[81]

Six manuscripts of this translation of Gregory's *Cura pastoralis* survive from later Anglo-Saxon England, including two from Alfred's own time, possibly from Winchester itself.[82] Other versions include one from Worcester dated to the second half of the tenth century, one from Sherborne from the late tenth or early eleventh, and one from the southeast or London from that same time.[83] Even if Asser's *Vita Ælfredi* was left unfinished and perhaps not the most widely-read manuscript in the tenth century, the writings from Alfred's broader circle were thus well known, and represented the same promotion and wisdom and justice.

While the tradition of early medieval 'mirrors for princes' does not appear to have existed in Anglo-Saxon England, the same themes and ideas that comprised those texts can nevertheless be found in a number of moral-didactic texts read and written there. Like Continental *specula*, this array of sources — Irish, biblical, patristic, and biographical — conceived of a king who was, above all, a wise and just ruler who corrected injustice throughout his kingdom, thereby bringing about a bountiful, peaceful reign for his people. The remainder of this chapter now turns to the question of how later Anglo-Saxon writers made use of this model of kingship in their own writings, and how that model influenced their conception of right kingship during the changes that occurred in the long tenth century.

Theorising Right Kingship in the Long Tenth Century

The tenth-century monastic reform was probably the most important development in Anglo-Saxon Christianity since the conversion period, and indeed

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[81] Preface to Old English translation of Gregory's *Cura pastoralis*: 'And I would have it known that very often it has come to my mind what men of learning there were formerly throughout England, both in religious and secular orders; and how there were happy times then throughout England; and how the kings, who had authority over this people, obeyed God and his messengers; and how they not only maintained their peace, morality and authority at home but also extended their territory outside; and how they succeeded both in warfare and in wisdom; and also how eager were the religious orders both in teaching and in learning as well as in all the holy services which it was their duty to perform for God; and how people from abroad sought wisdom and instruction in this country; and how nowadays, if we wished to acquire these things, we would have to seek them outside. […] Remember what punishments befell us in this world when we ourselves did not cherish learning nor transmit it to other men'. (Trans. from Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*.)

[82] BL Cotton Tiberius B.xi + Kassel, Landesbibliothek Anhang 19; BL Cotton Otho B.x.

[83] CCCC 12; Cambridge, Trinity College R.5.22 (717), as a third part appended to two probably post-Conquest texts; and BL Cotton Otho B.ii. For more information, see Gneuss and Lapidge, *ASMBH*. There is also Oxford, Bodleian MS Junius 53, a transcript made by Franciscus Junius (1589-1677) in the seventeenth century, based on Tiberius B. xi.

one of the most significant moments in Anglo-Saxon history in general.[84] The movement, wresting control of religious centres from secular hands and restoring them to monastic control, has been extensively studied, and to discuss its origins, results, influences, and Continental connections would take far too much time. The movement, however, was also deeply concerned with the spread of Christian monastic morality outside the walls of the monasteries, and especially, it seems, to kings.[85] The reform was thus as much a political movement as a religious one, and it should come as no surprise that many of the leading reformers might also be rightly regarded as some of the most important and well-connected political figures of the age. The rest of this chapter thus explores what the works of some of the key figures from the movement can say about the Anglo-Saxon conception of kingship during the long tenth century.

Amongst the first leaders of the Benedictine movement, Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury and eventual Archbishop of Canterbury, seems to have been deeply involved with the royal family on both good and bad terms. He was a central figure in both secular and ecclesiastical matters, and has memorably been called the 'first Prime Minister of England, great alike as statesman, reformer, and saint'.[86] Dunstan was made abbot by Edmund after the death of Æthelstan despite opposition (his *vita* says) from his 'malicious enemies', and continued to carry out important administrative functions for Edmund's successor Eadred.[87] When Eadred died, Edmund's son Eadwig came to the throne — a new king in whom Dunstan seems to have found a fierce opponent. After supposedly chastising Eadwig for a lurid episode on his coronation day, Dunstan went into exile in Ghent, forging links with the abbot of the monastery of Mont Blandin before being recalled two years later to serve Edgar, who became a close ally after he was promoted to the kingship of the northern territories in the last years of Eadwig's reign. He promoted Dunstan first to the see of Worcester in 957, and Dunstan held it in plurality with the bishopric of London beginning the following year; when Eadwig died and Edgar became sole king, he promoted Dunstan to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The archbishop's status continued to grow after his death in 988, and he was soon venerated as a saint

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[84] Cubitt, 'Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform, p. 77.
[85] On the relationship between lay and monastic in the period, see Alexander Rumble, 'The Laity and the Monastic Reform in the Reign of Edgar', in *Edgar*, ed. by Donald Scragg, pp. 242–251.
[86] J. Armitage Robinson, *The Times of Saint Dunstan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), p. 82.
[87] Lapidge, 'Dunstan', *ODNB*; Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 34–35.

and commemorated in a *vita* (written c. 997–1002) that claimed he was possessed of the gift of prophecy.[88] His reputation was further cemented (as it happens, along with Æthelred's) in the writings of William of Malmesbury, who had a particular interest in Dunstan and composed another *Life* of the saint sometime around 1129.[89]

Dunstan's abbey of Glastonbury was, in the words of Michael Lapidge, the place where 'the ideals of the Benedictine reform movement were nurtured and articulated'.[90] Interestingly, Glastonbury also seems to have been strongly associated with the so-called 'Celtic' (i.e. Irish) church, with the cult of St Patrick, and with groups of Irish pilgrims who are said to have brought Irish religious books with them.[91] What those books might have been is unknown, but it is quite tempting to speculate that they may have included the types of moral-didactic sources discussed above, particularly *De XII* and the *Hibernensis*. Even if this was not the case, it is certain that one of Dunstan's associates knew them.

Trained at Glastonbury and professed as a monk by none other than Dunstan himself, Æthelwold eventually became the abbot of Abingdon and later Bishop of Winchester. From these offices, he helped lead a series of major monastic reforms, including the replacing of secular clerics from the Old and New Minsters with monks from his reformed Abingdon. Æthelwold, too, was deeply involved in the politics of the tenth century, including playing a 'major advisory role' during the early years of Æthelred's minority.[92] Most notably, Æthelwold was the central figure in the creation of the *Regularis concordia Anglicae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque*, a document based in part on the *Regula Benedicti* and designed to govern all monastic foundations (male and female) in England, and to reform them to one common standard, overseen by the king and queen. The *Regularis concordia*, along with providing a model for monasteries, also 'emphasised the Christological aspects of kingship', and the Reform as a whole 'represented a mutually advantageous alliance between the kings and monks', and an attempt to regulate the behaviour of both.[93] Roach has recently asserted moreover that the *Regularis* and the English Benedictine Reform of the tenth century more widely were in fact part of a larger movement of

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[88] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 6.
[89] William of Malmesbury, *Saints' Lives*, ed. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), pp. xiv–xv.
[90] Michael Lapidge, 'Oswald', *ODNB*.
[91] Lesley Abrams, 'St Patrick and Glastonbury Abbey: *nihil ex nihilo fit?*', in *Saint Patrick, A.D. 493–1993*, ed. by David N. Dumville (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), pp. 233–243 (p. 235).
[92] J. Nelson, 'Æthelwold', *ODNB*.
[93] Cubitt, 'Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform', p. 83, p. 86.

church reforms that had their origins in the ninth century, all of which exhibited a 'shared Carolingian heritage'.[94] The image that emerges is thus one of the tenth-century reformers, like the authors of the Continental mirrors for princes of the Carolingian world, proposing a religiously-informed vision of kingship, and a broader alliance of Church and kings, that was beneficial for both parties.[95]

Like the Carolingian reformers of the ninth century, the work of the Anglo-Saxon reformers in the tenth drew on that same range of moral-didactic texts. Besides deriving in part from the *Regula Benedicti*, the *Regularis concordia* also seems to reference a number of other moral-didactic texts. It describe, for instance, the '*viam regiam*' ('royal way') by which a certain abbot — presumably Æthelwold — instructed the young king Edgar, perhaps derived from Smaragdus's *Via regia*. George Molyneaux is not convinced this circumstantial evidence is enough to prove a direct link, but points out that Æthelwold certainly owned or had access to another of Smaragdus's works, the *Diadema monachorum*, through a copy probably written at Canterbury in the second half of the ninth century.[96] Moreover, as noted above, Æthelwold was also personally in possession of a copy of *De XII* by Pseudo-Cyprian, which he later donated to the reformed house at Peterborough. It is possible that this copy is one that introduced Æthelwold's pupil Ælfric to Pseudo-Cyprian's tract.

Ælfric, best known for his two series of *Catholic Homilies*, has probably rightly been regarded as representing 'the highest pinnacle of Benedictine reform and Anglo-Saxon literature'.[97] His homilies, dedicated to Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury (and thus dating from no earlier than 990), were written while he was serving as a monk and mass-priest ('*munuc and mæssepreost*') at the abbey of Cerne (Cerne Abbas, Dorset), following orders by Bishop Ælfheah, Æthelwold's successor as bishop of Winchester and himself future Archbishop of Canterbury. The *Præfatio* to his first series of *Homilies* states that he undertook his mission, to turn Latin wisdom into vernacular homilies, because of the poor quality of English writing and a lack (aside, he says, from Alfred's translations) of evangelical and theological texts in the Old English language. Like many moral-didactic writers, Ælfric seems to have also had a particular interest in precision and the avoidance of errors. Ælfric regularly cites biblical passages from Ezekiel and Isaiah, for instance, where God

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[94] Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 33.
[95] Cf. Wormald's conception of 'pastoral kingship' mentioned above.
[96] Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 191–192, esp. note 356; Cambridge. MS UL Ff. 4.43 (*ASMBH* 8).
[97] Claudio Leonardi, 'Intellectual Life', *NCMH* III, pp. 186–211 (p. 191).

exhorts followers to warn and instruct the wicked ('*unrihtwisan*'), and to turn them to righteousness, lest the instructor be condemned alongside them. This insistence even applied to the copying of manuscripts; in the closing lines of his *Præfatio*, he warns the reader to avoid errors in transcription, and beseeches

> … *gif hwa þas boc awritan wylle þæt he hi geornlice gerihte be ðære bysene. þy læs ðe we ðurh gymelease writeras geleahtrode beon; Mycel yfel deð se ðe lea writ. buton he hit gerihte. swylce he gebringe þa soðan lare to leasum gedwylde. for ði sceal gehwa gerihtlæcan þæt þæt he ær to woge gebigde, gif he on godes dome unscyldig beon wile.*[98]

Even when he is discussion copying of his own manuscript and the religious ideas within, then, his focus is quite specifically on the correction of '*unrihtwisnysse*'.

While this preface does not discuss kings or kingship specifically, only mentioning that he was sent to Cerne in '*Æthelredes dæg cyninges*' ('King Æthelred's day'), Ælfric's writing seems to be quite highly interested in the ideals of right kingship, and discusses them in a number of places.[99] In his Monday homily for the Greater Litany from the second series of *Catholic Homilies*, for instance, he writes that

> *Cyninge gerist. rihtwisnyss and wisdom. him is nama gesett of soðum reccendome. þæt he hine sylfne. and siððan his leode mid wisdome wissige. and wel gerihtlæce; Þæt folc bið gesælig þurh snoterne cyning. sigefæst. and gesundful. ðurh gesceadwisne reccend; And hi beoð geyrmede ðurh unwisne cyning. on manegum ungelimpum. for his misræde.*[100]

The reference to the king's *nama* seems to be a reference to Pseudo-Cyprian and Isidore's insistence that the word *rex* derives from *regendo*, 'correcting', though this etymological pun is lost in the vernacular translation. As in those texts, the rule of a good king makes the people happy and the land prosperous; when the king fails in this duty — when he is a *rex iniquus* — all suffer. Mary Clayton has argued quite convincingly that this homily, written in the midst of renewed Scandinavian invasion in the 990s, can be read as Ælfric placing blame squarely on Æthelred for not directing his people with wisdom and correcting them. (This is, remember, around the time of his 'youthful ignorance', when he eschewed the advice of his mother and

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[98] Ælfric, *CH* I *Præfatio* 129–134: '… if anyone will transcribe this book, that he carefully correct it by the copy, lest we be blamed through careless writers. He does great evil who writes false, unless he correct it; it is as though he turn true doctrine to false error; therefore should everyone make that straight which he before bent crooked, if he will be guiltless at God's doom'. Trans. Thorpe.

[99] Malcolm Godden, 'Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon Kingship', *EHR* 102 (1987), 911–915; Kevin R. Kritsch, 'Fragments and Reflexes of Kingship Theory in Ælfric's Comments on Royal Authority', *English Studies* 97:2 (2016), 162–185; Robert K. Upchurch, 'A Big Dog Barks: Ælfric of Eynsham's Indictment of the English Pastorate and *Witan*', *Speculum* 85:3 (2010), 505–533.

[100] Ælfric, *CH* II.19: 'Justice and wisdom befit a king; in him is set the name of true rulership, that he may guide himself and then his people with wisdom and correct them well. And the people will be happy through a wise king, victorious and prosperous through a discerning ruler. And they are made miserable through an unwise king, by many misfortunes from his ill counsel (*misræde*).'

Æthelwold and took up with a group of advisors who led him astray.)[101] The pun *misræde* seems particularly deliberate, too, specifically recalling Æthelred's name that literally means 'wise counsel'.[102] The importance of choosing wise counsel, while somewhat a common-sense approach, also figures specifically in Pseudo-Cyprian's conception of right kingship: that a hallmark of the righteousness of a king is 'not to promote the wicked (to high office)' but instead 'to set good men in charge of the affairs of his kingdom, [and] to have those who are old and wise as counsellors'.[103]

This homily is not Ælfric's only reference to the importance of wise counsel to right kingship. In a homily for the first Sunday after the Ascension, he returns to the theme, possibly drawing specifically on *De XII*, and writes:

> *And þæs behofað se cyning þæt he clypige to his witum, and be heora ræde, na be rununge fare, for ðan þe se cyning is Cristes sylfes speligend ofer ðam Cristenan folce þe Crist sylf alysde, him to hyrde gehalgod, þæt he hi healdan sceole, mid þæs folces fultume, wið onfeohtendne here, and him sige biddan æt þam soðan Hælende, þe him þone anweald under him sylfum forgeaf, swa swa ealle cyningas dydon þe gecwemdon Gode.*[104]

Another example of the importance of good counsel in Ælfric's works is *Wyrdwriteras*, a text arguing that it is permissible for a king not to lead an army himself, but instead to delegate authority. There is debate about the text's exact purpose — Æthelred, after all, had been all too willing to delegate military leadership for most of his career — but it seems clear that Ælfric is also particularly concerned that a king should choose his generals carefully.[105]

Ælfric's conception of right kingship can also be seen in a number of passages from his third series of homilies, commonly known as the *Lives of Saints*.[106] The fates of good and bad kings and emperors, particularly from the Book of Kings (*LS* XVIII: '*Sermo excerptus de Libro Regum*'), occupy a number of passages, but Ælfric devotes two

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[101] Cf. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 177.

[102] Mary Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon*, ed. by J. Roberts and J. Nelson, pp. 65–88, (p. 71). Perhaps also relevant is the passage that notes that 'true rulership' is set 'in his name'.

[103] *De XII* IX.349–353.

[104] Pope IX.46–54: 'And thus it behoves the king that he should call upon his councillors [i.e. his witan] and, according to their [open] counsel (he should by no means proceed through secrecy, for the king is Christ's own vicar over that Christian people whom Christ himself redeemed, consecrated as a shepherd unto them), that he should, with the support of the people, preserve them against an attacking army and pray for victory for them before the true Lord who bestowed the power upon him [i.e. the king] beneath Himself, just as all kings did who were pleasing to God'. Trans. from Kritsch, 'Fragments and Reflexes', pp. 164–165.

[105] On interpretations of *Wyrdwriteras*, see Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', pp. 82–86; and more generally, below, Chapter 4.

[106] Text from Walter W. Skeat, ed. and trans., *Ælfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days formerly observed by the English Church*, 2 vol. (London: EETS, 1881–1900); translations mine, unless otherwise noted.

homilies to the Anglo-Saxon martyr-kings Oswald of Northumbria (*LS* XXVI) and Edmund of East Anglia (*LS* XXXII). In the latter, the king lives just as Pseudo-Cyprian's good king should:

> [*Gif*] *þu eart to heafodmen geset ne ahefe þu se*
> *ac beo betwux mannum swa swa an man of him*
> *He wæs cystig wædlum and wydewum swa swa fæder*
> *and mid wel-willendnysse gewissode his folc*
> *symle to rihtwisnysse and þam reþum styrde*
> *and gesæliglice leofode on soþan geleafan.*[107]

Not only is Edmund shown as generous to the poor and a father to widows, he also guides ('*gewissode*') his people well and corrects ('*styrde*') the cruel. Notably, Ælfric also depicts Edmund as a saintly virgin who '*butan forligre her on worulde leofode, and mid clænum life to criste siþode.*'[108] (On this royal celibacy, see much more below, Chapter 4.) Ælfric, then, writing in the period of national trauma of the 990s, may have been reading the kingdom's problems as not just the results of an ineffective king, but instead as the result of Æthelred's behaviour as a *rex iniquus*, exemplified by his (ironic) '*misræde*'. Indeed, Clayton has identified this later period as one in which Ælfric had an 'increasing concern with addressing issues of contemporary relevance'.[109] He was not, as it turns out, alone in such concerns.

While Ælfric almost certainly knew Æthelred personally by the first decade of the eleventh century — the charter (S 911) establishing Eynsham with the support of Æthelmær is attested by the king himself and by two abbots named Ælfric, one of whom is presumably the homilist — and had written texts that may have been meant for the ears of the king and his advisors specifically, he was not necessarily a major player in the political dynamic of Æthelred's kingdom directly.[110] That is not the case for Wulfstan, who was certainly one of the leading royal advisors and politicos of Æthelred's later reign, and of Cnut's after him. Very little is known about the early life of Wulfstan. He probably originally came from the fens of the East Midlands, but the only real records of his life are those related to his episcopal

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[107] *LS II* XXXII 20–25: 'If you are ever made a chief man, exalt not yourself, but be amongst the people just as one of them. He was generous to the poor and just like a father to widows, and guided his people with benevolence always to righteousness, and punished the cruel, and lived happily in the true faith.'

[108] *LS II* XXXII 187–188: 'lived without fornication in this world, and departed to Christ with a clean life.'

[109] Mary Clayton, 'Of Mice and Men: Ælfric's Second Homily for the Feast of a Confessor', *Leeds Studies in English* 24 (1993), 1–26 (p. 1), cited in Upchurch, 'A Big Dog Barks', p. 505.

[110] S 911 is signed twice by 'Ælfric abbas',

appointments: first as Bishop of London in 996 (coincidentally, probably the same year Ælfric began composing his translation of *De XII*) and then as Archbishop of York in 1002, held in plurality with the see of Worcester until 1016. He remained Archbishop of York until his death in 1023, having served for two decades under two different kings, and indeed two different dynasties.

In contrast to other reformers mentioned above, it is somewhat surprisingly unclear exactly where Wulfstan was educated, and little evidence of his monastic background survives, including whether or not he was educated in an Æthelwoldian, reformed tradition or otherwise.[111] Like Ælfric, though, Wulfstan was a prolific writer.[112] Alongside twenty-six sermons (including four in Latin) and a large number of other sermon fragments assumed to be his work, he is also credited with a large number of political texts, law-codes, and possibly two poetic passages in the D manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.[113] Andy Orchard has asserted that all of these texts, which are concerned with both secular affairs and 'the national moral degeneration and warnings about the end of the world', place him firmly in a 'central role in both church and state'.[114] This role also seems to have been guided by the now-familiar model of right kingship based on the same sources explored above.[115]

As a prominent member of the royal court, Wulfstan must have had a much more direct audience with both Æthelred and Cnut, either in private or as part of the audience of his sermons, and his writings contain a wealth of material on kingship theory.[116] Wulfstan seems to have been especially interested in promoting the reign of Edgar as a golden age, presumably because of the king's support of the Benedictine reform movement.[117] Amongst his numerous religious-political texts, for instance, is a text known as the *Canons of Edgar*, a compilation of church law which is

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[111] On this, and Wulfstan's biography more generally, see Patrick Wormald, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 9–27 (pp. 12–16).

[112] This Wulfstan is sometimes called 'the Homilist' to distinguish him from the two other Archbishops of the name and from Wulfstan Cantor, the contemporary poet and monk from Winchester who composed the *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*.

[113] A convenient introduction to many of these texts is Andrew Rabin, ed. and trans., *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

[114] Andy Orchard, 'Wulfstan the Homilist', *WBEASE*, pp. 514–515.

[115] Mary Clayton, 'The Old English *Promissio regis*', *ASE* 37 (2008), 91–150 (p. 138–141).

[116] See, for instance, Wilcox's suggestion that the *Sermo Lupi* was written to be delivered to the gathered *witan* in February 1014: J. Wilcox, 'Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 375–396.

[117] Rabin, *Political Writings*, p. 85.

almost certainly a forgery but which Wulfstan nevertheless felt safe attributing to the former king.

In this same vein might also be counted the Old English version of the *Promissio regis*, the three-fold oath supposedly made by a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon king to his people on the occasion of his coronation, along with two other paragraphs of semi-homiletic material.[118] While multiple English *ordines* in Latin survive starting from the ninth century, this vernacular translation seems to date from the later tenth century, with the first section of the text claiming that the document had been '*gewriten stæf be stæfe. be þam gewrite þe dunstan arcebisceop sealde urum hlaford æt cingestun. þa on dæg þa hine man halgode to cing*'.[119] While scholars have thus generally assumed that Dunstan was the author of the *Promissio*, which would then have been written for Æthelred's coronation, Mary Clayton has recently argued that the text was in fact probably authored by Wulfstan, and in fact 'appears to be a distillation of his thinking about just kingship'.[120] If this is the case, which seems quite possible, then here once again, as in the *Canons of Edgar*, Wulfstan is invoking the age of Edgar and Dunstan to lend authority to his writings on kingship and moral correction.[121] Moreover, while the general assumption has also been that the *Promissio* is itself a coronation text, Clayton further suggests instead that it was not meant for an actual coronation, but as an instructional sermon; she, along with Wormald and Treharne, have suggested that its copying into the Leofric Missal indicates its role not as coronation ritual, but as homily or sermon to be given at a royal event, probably as a means of reminding a king of his duties or admonishing him for *iniquus* behaviour.

The first section of the *Promissio* recounts the three-fold promise that the unnamed king supposedly made at Dunstan's behest:

> *On þære halgan þyrnnesse nama. Ic þreo þing behate cristenum folce. and me underðeoddum; An ærest þæt godes cyrice and eal cristen folc minra gewealda soðe sibbe heald. Oðer is þæt ic reaflac and ealt unrihte þing. eallum hadum forbeode. Þridde þæt ic behate and bebeode on ealt domum riht and mildheortnesse. þæt us eallum arfæst and mildheart god þurh þæt. his ecean miltse forgyfe. se lyfað and rixað.*[122]

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[118] Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', pp. 74–75.

[119] *Old English Promissio regis*: '… Written [i.e., copied] letter by letter in accordance with the document which Archbishop Dunstan gave our lord at Kingston on the day of when he was consecrated as king'. Text and translation from the Appendix to Clayton, 'The Old English *Promissio regis*', pp. 148–150.

[120] Clayton, 'Old English *Promissio*', pp. 131–154 (esp. p. 147).

[121] Clayton, 'Old English *Promissio*', p. 137.

[122] *Old English Promissio regis*: 'In the name of the Holy Trinity, I promise three things to the Christian people who are subject to me: First, that God's church and all Christian people in my dominions preserve true peace; the second is that I forbid robbery and all unrighteous things to all orders; the

As in the Benedictine writings and earlier texts, correcting injustice and '*ealt unrihte þing*' is the central tenet of kingship. Much of the rest of the text, indeed, seems to have been directly inspired by *De XII*, perhaps via the paraphrasing of it from the *Hibernensis*.[123] It notes, for instance:

> *Gehalgodes cynges riht is. þæt he nænigne man ne fordeme. and þæt he wuduwan and steopcild. and ælþeodige werige. and amundige. and stala forbeode. and unrihtæmedu gebete. and siblegeru totwæme. and grundlunga. Forebeode. wiccan. and galdra adilige. mægmyrðran and manswaran of earde adrife. þearfan mid ælmyssan fede. and ealde. and wise. and syfre him to geþeahterum hæbbe. and rihtwise mæn him to wicnerum sette.*[124]

This passage presents the same duties of the righteous king as presented in the ninth abuse of *De XII*, down to the order of duties and word order, possibly taken from the *Hibernensis* version of the tract.[125] As noted above, both texts were widely available in England, and Wulfstan would have had access to both; moreover, the various versions of Wulfstan's so-called 'commonplace Book' (admittedly surviving only in later manuscripts) contain passages from several of the aforementioned moral-didactic texts, including Sedulius Scottus, Isidore, and the *De regno* section of the *Hibernensis* specifically.[126]

There are also echoes of these moral-didactic themes in Wulfstan's most famous work, the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* ('Sermon of the Wolf to the English').[127] Though his primary influence is probably Gildas, Wulfstan's descriptions of the evils that come from the immorality of the people are again evocative of the perils of the *rex iniquus*:

> *Ne dohte hit nu lange inne ne ute: ac wæs here 7 hungor, bryne 7 blodgyte on gewelhwylcan ende oft 7 gelome. And us stalu 7 cwalu, stric 7 steorfa, orfcwealm 7 uncoþu, hol 7 hete […] 7 us unwedera foroft weoldan unwæstma; forþam on þysan earde wæs, swa hit þincan mæg, nu fela geara unrihta fela 7 tealte getrywða æghwær mid mannum.*[128]

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third, that I promise and command justice and mercy in all judgments so that the kind and merciful God because of that may grant us all his eternal mercy, who lives and reigns.'

[123] Clayton, 'Old English *Promissio*', pp. 113–117 (and *passim*).

[124] *Old English Promissio regis*: 'The justice of a consecrated king is that he condemn no man [unjustly?]; and that he defend and protect widows and orphans [stepchildren] and foreigners; and forbid theft; and correct adulteries; and separate those who commit incest; and completely forbid witches; destroy spells; drive kin-murderers and perjurers out of the country; feed the needy with alms; have old and wise men as counselors; and appoint righteous men as officers'.

[125] Clayton, 'Old English *Promissio*', pp. 126–130.

[126] Clayton, 'Old English *Promissio*', pp. 115–116.

[127] Bethurum XX (*EHD* I.240).

[128] Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi* (Bethurum XX [E]) 55–61: 'Nothing has prospered now for a long time either at home or abroad, but there has been devastation and famine, burning and bloodshed in every district often and again; and stealing and slaying, plague and pestilence, murrain and disease, malice and hate, […] and storms have very often caused failure of crops; therefore in this land there have been, as it may seem, many years now of injustices'.

The cause of these problems, he asserts, is widespread injustice:

> […] *Folclaga wyrsedan ealles to swyþe (syððan Eadgar geendode) 7 halignessa syndan to griðlease wide, 7 Godes hus syndan to clæne berypte ealdra gerihta 7 innan bestrypte ælcra gerisena, 7 wydewan syndan wide fornydde on unriht to ceorle […] 7 cradolcild geþeowede þurh wælhreowe unlaga forlytelre þyfþe wide gynd þas þeode.*[129]

There is comparatively little contemporary narrative information on the life of Æthelred, despite his lengthy reign, and the sources that do remain, like the *Sermo Lupi*, follow this pessimistic view. When Æthelred's reign began with the murder of his brother, Edward, the *Chronicle* says 'no worse deed' had been committed since the time the English came to Britain.[130] The same year, the Chronicle recounts the ominous portent of 'a bloody cloud […] in the likeness of fire' appearing in the sky all night; subsequent entries are largely comprised of Viking raids, the first great murrain of cattle in 986 (perhaps not incidentally the same year Æthelred 'laid waste the diocese of Rochester'), the defeat of Byrhtnoth at the Battle of Maldon in 991, various payments of tribute to the Danes, and finally the loss of the throne in 1013 to Swein Forkbeard. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Wulfstan makes Æthelred into the prototypical *rex iniquus*, and, indeed, Alice Sheppard has used that exact term to describe him.[131]

The pinnacle of the development of moral-didactic thinking in this period, and in Wulfstan's corpus overall, is a text now known as the *Institutes of Polity*.[132] The tract survives in a four manuscripts, all with different material, in two surviving forms: an earlier, shorter version (now generally known as *I Polity*) produced in the waning years of Æthelred's reign, and a later, longer version (*II Polity*) compiled by the author during Cnut's reign in the early 1020s.[133] The opening sections of *Institutes*, in both *I Pol* and *II Pol*, focus on kings (*I Pol*: '*Be cinincge*' / '*Be cynge*'; *II Pol*: '*Be eorðlicum cyninge*') and kingship ('*Be cynedom*'); one manuscript of *II Pol* (Jost's MS X)

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[129] Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi* (Bethurum XX [E]) 15–22: 'The laws of the people have deteriorated entirely too greatly (since Edgar died), and sanctuaries are widely violated, and God's houses are entirely despoiled of all rights and are stripped within of everything fitting, and widows are widely forced to marry in unjust ways, […] and infants are enslaved by means of cruel injustices on account of petty theft throughout this nation'.

[130] ASC 978 (E 979).

[131] Sheppard, *Families*, p. 90.

[132] The title is derived from the first modern edition: Benjamin Thorpe, ed. and trans., *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, Vol. 2 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1840), pp. 304–341. The standard edition remains Karl Jost, ed. and trans., *Die « Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical, » Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten 47 (Bern: Francke, 1972).

[133] Rabin, *Political Writings*, p. 101–102. Text from Jost, ed., and trans. from Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 103–124 (of *II Polity*), unless otherwise noted.

also adds another heading '*Be cynestole*' ('on the throne'). Following this are sections on royal counsellors (specifically bishops, nobles, and reeves), and religious figures (priests, men in orders, abbots, monks, women religious), followed by laypersons, widows, the church, and finally all Christian people.

Institutes does not fit neatly within the standard categorisation of Anglo-Saxon, or even medieval, texts. It is not a law-code, but does not seem to be a sermon either. It has been labelled by scholars as simply 'a work on political theory', or even more ambiguously, a 'semi-homiletic/semi-legislative programme'.[134] Rabin, following Dorothy Bethurum Loomis, concludes that it is an example of 'estates literature', but bases this on the hierarchical arrangement that is, in fact, found in only one or two manuscripts.[135] The problem of classification is made even more complicated by the manuscript tradition, and Wulfstan's penchant for self-citation and continual editing and rewriting over the course of his long career, possibly obscuring its original purpose. It is likely, too, as Wulfstan's constant reworking of the text over the course of more than two decades shows, that the latest surviving version of *II Polity* was not necessarily the final form either, and that whatever form it was meant to take was left unfinished at his death. As Rabin cautions, the text as it survives must be understood 'as a modern editorial construct that only approximates Wulfstan's original vision for the work'.[136]

It is perhaps better, then, to view *Institutes* more generally through the lens of moral-didactic literature. Wulfstan was certainly familiar with, and probably inspired by, the major works of the genre: he draws on material from Pseudo-Cyprian; references the *Proverbia Grecorum* (probably via Sedulius Scottus's *De rectoribus Christianis*) in describing the eight columns that firmly support lawful kingship, including the correction of evils and equity in judgment; and he had possibly read Hincmar as well.[137] Wulfstan's assertion that 'through an unwise king, the people will be made wretched not once but very often, because of his misdirection', but that 'through the king's wisdom the people will become prosperous and successful and victorious', almost certainly derives from Ælfric, to whom Wulfstan had personally

[134] Mary Clayton, 'Preaching and Teaching', *CCOEL*, 159–179 (p. 176); Wormald, 'Wulfstan', *ODNB*.
[135] Rabin, *Political Writings*, p. 102; Dorothy Bethurum Loomis, '*Regnum* and *Sacerdotium* in the Eleventh Century', in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 129–145 (pp. 129–130).
[136] Rabin, *Political Writings*, p. 101.
[137] Stanley, 'Administration of Law'. If not, he was certainly working within the same cultural framework and seeking 'similar remedies', as Stafford has noted: Stafford, 'Laws of Cnut', p. 185.

written earlier in his career to ask advice, and who, as demonstrated above, was a key promoter of the Benedictine ideals of kingship — and right behaviour both lay and monastic more generally — in the reign of Æthelred.[138] Renée Trilling argues that *Institutes of Polity* is perhaps best regarded as 'handbook', to be used by homilists and sermon-writers as a reference for writing sermons and for pastoral administration.[139] This theory may well be true, especially considering Wulfstan's propensity for compiling 'commonplace books' in the same vein. Perhaps, though, *Institutes* might also be read as a moral-didactic text itself, but meant for the wider Christian population: not a *speculum principis*, then, but a *speculum Christianorum*, perhaps — though this is purely speculation — even modelled on *De XII* itself.[140]

Right Kingship in Practice in the Reign of Æthelred

Of course, all of these texts tell us more about the theory of right kingship than how kingship had actually been practiced, be it under Edgar, Alfred, or the Irish kings of Pseudo-Cyprian's day. Yet despite Frank Barlow's assertion that it is impossible to tell 'whether tenth- and eleventh-century kings were at all interested in political theory and in the claims made for them by the literate church', it seems obvious from a number of other sources of Æthelred's later reign that he eventually began to (at least try to) follow the conception of right kingship promoted by the Benedictine reformers of the tenth century, and this provides a good example of how such theoretical ideals might come to be used in actuality.[141] For all his bad press over most of the last millennium, Æthelred's fault is not that he was 'unready' or even unwilling to correct his wrongs and try to save his kingdom; rather, it seems more that he was simply unlucky and, in the end, unsuccessful. It is in the later years of his reign, certainly after 990 and especially after the turn of the millennium, that Æthelred seems to have begun to use these texts not only a theoretical conceptions of how kingship ought to be performed, but as a guide for his actual practice of

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[138] Malcolm Godden, 'The Relations of Wulfstan and Ælfric: A Reassessment', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 353–374 (*passim*).

[139] Renée Trilling, 'Sovereignty and Social Order: Archbishop Wulfstan and the *Institutes of Polity*', in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. by John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 58–85 (p. 64).

[140] Whether or not *Institutes* was directly modelled on *De XII*, this theory of the purpose of Wulfstan's text might also help answer the question of Pseudo-Cyprian's purpose. Perhaps *De XII*, too, might have been meant in part as a handbook, to help explain right Christian behaviour for the whole population, but specifically as a handbook to be drawn upon in writing new sermons and texts.

[141] Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 68.

kingship, attempting through laws and other documents to structure his kingship, and kingdom, around the idealised form of kingship it prescribed in order to save his realm from problems internal and external.

As Levi Roach has recently demonstrated, for instance, Æthelred's charters show a definite turn towards penitence as early as the 990s, when Æthelred set aside those who had influenced him towards immorality after Æthelwold's death.[142] His law-codes, too, show similar concerns. Æthelred's earlier codes deal quite prominently with secular matters — theft, counterfeiting, and so forth — which are not exactly firm evidence of the influence of the model of right kingship thus far presented, but at least show an attempt to correct some injustice.[143] His later law-codes though, probably written and certainly influenced by Wulfstan, show attempts to correct the spiritual wrongs plaguing the realm as well, specifically following in the vein of the moral-didactic teachings cited in Wulfstan's other works.[144] The code issued at Enham in 1008, for instance, says that:

> *Ure hlafordes gerædnes 7 his witena is, þæt man rihte lage up arære 7 ælce unlage georne afille, 7 þæt man læte æghwilcne man beon rihtes wurðe, 7 þæt man frið 7 freondscype rihtlice healde innan þysan earde for Gode 7 for worolde.*[145]

It continues, 'Every injustice shall be zealously cast out from this land as far as is possible', again stressing the notion of the king, through his laws, correcting injustice.[146] Æthelred's most ambitious code, VII Æthelred, issued at Bath in 1009 by the king and his '*sapientes*', goes so far as to call for a national three-day period of penitence, prayer, fasting, and daily masses to be sung 'against the heathens':

> [2] *Et instituimus, ut omnis Christianus, qui ętatem habet, ieiunet tribus diebus in pane et aqua et herbis crudis. Et omnis homo ad confessionem uadat et nudis pedibus ad ecclesiam et peccatis omnibus abrenuntiet emendando, cessando. Et eat omnis presbiter cum populo suo ad processionem tribus diebus nudis pedibus. Et super hoc cantet omnis presbiter XXX missas et omnis diaconus et clericus XXX psalmos.* […]

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[142] Levi Roach, 'A Tale of Two Charters: Diploma Production and Political Performance in Æthelredian England', in *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Rory Naismith and David A. Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 234–256.

[143] Andreas Lemke, '*Ealle þas ungesælða us gelumpon þuruh unrædas*: Voices from the Reign of Æthelred II', in *Von Æthelred zum Mann im Mond: Forschungsarbeiten aus der englischen Mediävistik*, ed. by Janna Müller and Frauke Reitemeier, Göttinger Schriften zur Englischen Philologie 4 (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2010), pp. 13–120 (p. 67).

[144] Pauline Stafford, 'The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo-Saxon Royal Promises', *ASE* 10 (1982), 173–190 (p. 188).

[145] V Æthelred 1.1–1.2 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, pp. 237–38): 'The decree of our lord and of his councillors is that justice shall be promoted and all injustice zealously suppressed, and that every man shall be allowed the benefit of the law, and that peace and friendship shall be rightly maintained within this land in matters both secular and religious'. Trans. Rabin.

[146] V Æthelred 32.

[3] *Et precipimus, ut in omni congregatione cantetur cotidie communiter pro rege et omni populo suo una missa ad matutinalem missam, que inscripta est 'contra paganos'.*[147]

This law-code is quite interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, it might be taken as evidence that later Anglo-Saxon kings had the power — in theory, if not in practice — to declare such edicts that directly mandated behaviour to all their subjects. But moreover, it seems to show, if the whole thing was not made up from whole cloth by Wulfstan in the king's name, that Æthelred was, in fact, desperately trying to spurn the ways of the *rex iniquus* and instead become a just and righteous king and *rector*.[148] Patrick Wormald argued that these laws 'can be read as a whole series of illustrations of the principals expounded at his coronation [i.e., in the *Promissio regis*]: equity, widows, adultery, incest and witchcraft are all there'.[149] If Clayton's argument about Wulfstan's hand in writing the Old English *Promissio* is correct, perhaps it is not only that these laws echo a coronation oath by the same writer, but that the king had begun to take those lessons to heart after his period of youthful negligence in order to try to save his kingdom.

Unfortunately for the king, his efforts seem not to have made much difference, and things continued to get worse for him — and England — over the following few years, until he was finally driven into exile on the Continent in 1013. The sudden death of Swein a few months later presented him with an opportunity to return, but as the Chronicle entry for 1014 makes clear, his return to the throne was not without stipulation:

> *Ða geræddan þa witan ealle, ge hadode ge læwede, þet man æfter þam cyninge Æðelrede sende, 7 cwædon þet him nan leofre hlaford nære þonne heora gecynde hlaford gif he hi rihtlicor healdan wolde þonne he ær dyde.*[150]

Æthelred had failed in many of the things a king should do, but the problem boiled down, it seems, to the fact that he was not behaving *rightly*. As Isidore had written,

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[147] VII Æthelred 2–3 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, p. 260–261): [2] And we institute that every Christian, who is of age, shall fast for three days on bread and water and raw herbs. And every man shall go to confession and to church with bare feet and denouncing all sins through changing, ceasing. And every presbyter shall go with his congregation to the procession for three days with bare feet. And above that every priest shall sing 30 masses and every deacon and cleric 30 psalms. […] [3] And we order that daily, in every congregation, shall be jointly sung in the morning masses a mass, for the king and his subjects, that is written "against the pagans"'.

[148] Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 160, concludes that Anglo-Saxon kings 'sought advice regularly and [were] willing to respond to it'.

[149] Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', pp. 75–76.

[150] ASC (E) 1014: 'All the councillors who were in England, ecclesiastical and lay, determined to send for King Æthelred, and they said that no lord was dearer to them than their natural lord, *if he would govern them more justly than he did before*.' (Emphasis mine.)

after all, 'If you do rightly, you will be king; if you do not, you will not.' Æthelred had not done rightly (or, at least, not rightly enough), and, therefore, he did not rule any longer; the kingship and kingdom were lost, only to be restored by right rule. This period around the time of Æthelred's exile and return was also the high point of royal moral-didactic writing from Wulfstan. Clayton dates the Old English *Promissio regis* to the year 1014, and suggests that it was a text written to instruct Æthelred (once again) on what it meant to '*rihtlicor healdan*' as he returned from exile in Normandy.[151] The *Sermo Lupi*, too, seems to be dated, in its earliest versions, to circa 1009, with corrections and additions made up to 1014 (with MS I noting that it was written in '*millesimo .xiiii.*').[152] There was increasingly, it seems, a demand for text that instructed the king and his counsellors on the sorts of things that might be required to assuage God's wrath and help the king lead his people rightly.

Æthelred's attempts to behave more rightly did not succeed, however; after his death and Emma's remarriage to Cnut, the agreement that their children together would take precedence over Æthelred's completed Pseudo-Cyprian's warning that the *rex iniquus* would cause his sons and nephews to fade out of significance, '*ne post se regni hereditatem teneant.*'[153] Cnut appears to have learned the lessons of Anglo-Saxon right kingship from the long tenth century as well. He also, of course, had the added benefit of having Wulfstan, who had been part of Æthelred's inner circle for decades and who had spent that time explicitly preaching about the proper way to be a Christian king, as an advisor. The royal promises in Cnut's letter to the English, written in 1019–20, recall the same ones made in the *Promissio regis*, and in the wider context of royal ideals:

> [2] *7 ic cyðe eow, þæt ic wylle beon hold hlaford 7 unswicende to Godes gerihtum 7 to rihtre woroldlage.*
> [3] *Ic nam me to gemynde þa gewritu 7 þa word, þe se arcebiscop Lyfing me fram þam papan brohte of Rome, þæt ic scolde æghwær Godes lof upp aræran 7 unriht alecgan 7 full frið wyrcean be ðære mihte* […]
> [9] *Gif hwa swa dyrstig sy, gehadod oððe læwede, Denisc oððe Englisc, þæt ongean Godes lage ga 7 ongean minne cynescype oððe ongean woroldriht* […] *þonne bidde ic Þurcyl eorl 7 eac beode, þæt he ðæne unrihtwisan to rihte gebige, gyf he mæge.*
> [11] *7 eac ic beode eallum minum gerefum, be minum freondscype 7 be eallum þam þe hi agon 7 be heora agenum life, þæt hy æghwær min folc rihtlice healdan 7 rihte domas deman*

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[151] ASC (E) 1014: 'behave more rightly'.

[152] On the dating of the *Sermo Lupi*, see Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Homiletic Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan: A Critical Study* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), especially Chapter 7 on 'The Danish Invasions and the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*', pp. 147–163.

[153] *De XII* IX.374–375: 'so that they do not inherit the kingdom'.

be ðæra scira biscopa gewitnesse 7 swylce mildheortnesse þæron don, swylce þære scire biscope riht þince 7 se man acuman mæge.

[15] *7 eac hy us furðor lærað, þæt we sceolon eallan […] ælc unriht ascunian, ðæt synd mægslagan 7 morðslagan 7 mansworan 7 wiccean 7 wælcyrian 7 æwbrecan 7 syblegeru.*[154]

The letter survives only in a version annotated (and indeed partly composed) by Wulfstan himself, and shows him continuing to act in codifying, and influencing, Anglo-Saxon kingship even under the new Danish ruling dynasty.[155] Translator Kevin Crossley-Holland suggests that the political theory lying behind this letter, connecting 'God's law and royal authority', in some way 'foreshadows the concept of the divine right of kings'.[156] This is surely a mistake: instead of looking forward to later medieval developments, Cnut's (or, at least, Wulfstan's) political theory in the early eleventh century should instead be read in the context of earlier medieval conceptions of right kingship, and particularly in the writings of, and sources that inspired, the tenth-century Benedictine reformers.

Conclusions

When Cnut died after a reign of nearly two decades, he was succeeded in turn by his sons Harold ('Harefoot') and Harthacnut before, in 1042, Æthelred's last surviving son Edward came to the throne. It might be imagined that Edward's mother Emma would have been placed in a rather awkward situation, having also been Cnut's second wife and the mother of those stepbrothers who had preceded Edward as king. It was probably during Harthacnut's reign that Emma commissioned a text now known as the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, which chronicled

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[154] 'Cnut's Letter to the English' (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, pp. 273–274): '[2] And I inform you that I will be a gracious lord and a faithful observer of God's rights and just secular law. [3] I have borne in mind the letters and messages which Archbishop Lyfing brought me from Rome from the pope, that I should everywhere exalt God's praise and suppress wrong and establish full security […] [9] If anyone, ecclesiastical or laymen, Dane or Englishman, is so presumptuous as to defy God's law and my royal authority or the secular law […] I then pray, and also command, Earl Thorkel, if he can, to cause the evil-doer to do right. […] [11] And also I charge all my reeves, on pain of losing my friendship and all that they possess and their own lives, that everywhere they maintain my people justly, and give just judgements with the witness of the bishops of the dioceses. […] 15. [The bishops] teach us further that we must […] shun all evil-doing, namely homicides and murderers, and perjurers and wizards and sorceresses, and adulterers, and incestuous deeds'. (Trans. from Crossley-Holland, *The Anglo-Saxon World*, pp. 29–31.)
[155] T. A. Heslop, 'Art and the Man: Archbishop Wulfstan and the York Gospelbook', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 279–308 (p. 284); A. D. Smart, 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Importance of Paying God His Dues', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 16:1 (2016), 24–41 (p. 37); Timothy Bolton, *The Empire of Cnut the Great: Conquest and the Consolidation of Power in Northern Europe in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden, Brill, 2009), p. 84, which cites N. R. Ker, 'The Handwriting of Archbishop Wulfstan, in *England Before the Conquest*, ed. by P. Clemoes and K. Hughes, pp. 315–441 (pp. 330–331).
[156] Crossley-Holland, *Anglo-Saxon World*, p. 25.

the lives of Cnut and his family (though explicitly not Æthelred and his sons), perhaps as a means of illustrating her own role in the ruling Anglo-Danish regime, and perhaps also to bolster the rocky position of Harthacnut after the scandalous murder of Æthelred and Emma's son Alfred at the hands of Harold and Earl Godwin in 1036/37.[157] Cnut was, for the anonymous, probably Flemish, monastic author known as the Encomiast, a '*vir strenuous*' (an 'active man'), but even 'in the flower of youth […] was nevertheless master of indescribable wisdom'.[158] The Encomiast's depiction of Cnut specifically shows him doing all of the things that a good king ought to do, using many of the same terms discussed in *De XII* and other tenth-century moral-didactic texts:

> *Defensabat sedulo pupillos et uiduas, sustentabat orphanos et aduenas, leges oppressit iniquas carumque sequaces, iustitiam et equitatem extulit et coluit, ecclesias extruxit et honoranit, sacerdotes et clerum dignitatibus ampliauit, pacem et unanimatatem omnibus suit indixit.*[159]

Cnut, moreover, provided a model of right kingship that might be passed down to future generations:

> *Deo omni(modis) placita studuit, ideoque quicquid boni agendum esse didicerat non negligentiae sed operationi committebat.* […] *Discant igitur reges et principes huius domini imitari acciones.*[160]

Perhaps, then, in the *Encomium* we might finally have an Anglo-Saxon 'mirror for princes', albeit one written by a Flemish monk, commissioned by a Norman queen, for her Danish family in England!

The wise, just example of the Encomiast's Cnut sits firmly within a tradition of Christian kingship described in sources throughout early medieval Europe. But it also sits firmly within a *specific* tradition of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon right kingship, which drew upon those older traditions but reflected them through the Benedictine reform's ideals and the context of the catastrophes of Æthelred's reign. This vision of

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[157] The edition and translation cited here is Alistair Campbell, ed. and trans., *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, Royal Historical Society Camden Third Series Vol. LXXII (London: Royal Historical Society, 1949). Note, though, that a later recension, discovered in the more recently-uncovered manuscript of the text, does mention Æthelred; see Keynes and Love, 'Earl Godwine's Ship', pp. 198.
[158] *EER* II.15.
[159] *EER* II.19: 'He diligently defended wards and widows, he supported orphans and strangers, he suppressed unjust laws and those who applied them, he exalted and cherished justice and equity, he built and dignified churches, he loaded priests and the clergy with dignities, he enjoined peace and unanimity upon his people'.
[160] *EER* II.20–22: 'He gave his attention entirely to things pleasing to God, and therefore he did not abandon to neglect any good thing which he had found to require doing, but set it in train. […] *Therefore let kings and princes learn to imitate the actions of this lord*'. (My emphasis.)

kingship, carefully crafted by the leaders and key writers of the long tenth century, based on biblical, Carolingian, insular, and Alfredian models, promised a way of defeating enemies, restoring the kingdom to prosperity and happiness, and ensuring salvation for king and country alike. Even though there were no 'true' mirrors for Anglo-Saxon princes as there had been for Carolingian lords, religious writers of the long tenth century had a particular model of right kingship in mind, and used their status within royal circles to promote it through homilies, law-codes, and other writings. When the catastrophes of Æthelred's reign began to mount, the king seems to have put that theory of right kingship itself into practice, probably inspired by his childhood lessons at the hands of Æthelwold and Wulfstan's place within the royal circle in the years after c. 1002.

But while these moral-didactic texts tell us much about tenth-century conceptions of right royal behaviour, they are certainly not the only source that might understand what influenced the practice of kingship and behaviours of kings attempting to solve the crises of their reigns. In the preface to *De rectoribus Christianis*, Sedulius lists the 'arts' through which a 'commonwealth [may] flourish and conquer and for many years be governed happily':

> *Gloria nam regum, nitidis et stemmata sceptris*
> *Dogmata sunt Domini, nec non exempla priorum,*
> *Gestaque nobelium procerum famosa per orbem.*[161]

This chapter has shown how central 'doctrines of the Lord' and 'examples of the elders' were to Anglo-Saxon writers creating a new 'pastoral' form of kingship that kings espoused to save them from the tribulations sent by God as punishment for their worldly sins. But those 'deeds, famed through all the world, of noble chieftains', may be important as well, and the next chapter explores how the accounts of those deeds in Old English 'heroic' poetry might help illuminate aristocratic masculine behaviour.

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[161] *DRC, Præfatio*: 'For these are the glory of kings and garlands for bright sceptres: / The doctrines of the Lord, the examples of the elders, / And the deeds, famed through all the world, of noble chieftains'.

'Songs of the Pagans?'
Aristocratic Masculinity in Old English 'Heroic' Poetry

> *Đa se wisa spræc,*
> *sunu Healfdenes;   swigedon ealla: [...]*
> *'Bebeorh þe ðone bealonið,   Beowulf leofa,*
> *secg betsta,   ond þe þæt selre geceos*
> *ece rædas;   oferhyda ne gym*
> *mære cempa.'*

'Then spoke the wise one, Healfdene's son; all stood silent. [...] "Protect yourself from such wickedness, beloved Beowulf, best warrior; and choose the better: eternal counsels. Care not for pride, great champion!"'

(*Beowulf*, ll. 1698–1761)

The model of kingship discussed in the previous chapter had its origins in a variety of European traditions, but these traditions shared a common post-Roman, Christian, Latin background: one that might be thought of as part of a Western Christian communication community.[1] As the language of the Romans, Latin had spread throughout the Empire and beyond, from Ireland in the west to the Levant and beyond far to the east, and throughout the early middle ages it remained the language of the (western) Church and, therefore, the literate class across Western Europe. For this reason, the majority of texts surviving from the western middle ages are in Latin, though it functioned as a second (i.e., non-native) language for most of those medieval writers in the north of Europe (although not, of course, for those in the south, such as Italy and Iberia, where the vernacular developed out of Latin over the course of the middle ages). In any case, a rich vein of vernacular writing runs through most medieval traditions, not least in the later Anglo-Saxon period. It is to these vernacular Old English texts that this chapter turns.

Old English vernacular writing survives in a large number of texts, both prose and poetic, from a wide range of genres.[2] Old English prose comprises many of the same genres as in Latin: religious texts (e.g., the Old English Hexateuch), sermons and homiletic materials, chronicles and historical texts, laws-codes, wills and charters, and vernacular translations of classical and post-Roman Latin texts (such as the Alfredian versions of the works of Boethius and Gregory the Great mentioned above). But a large part of the surviving Old English corpus — tens of thousands of lines, in fact — takes the form of poetry. Much of this poetry is contained in four manuscripts: the Nowell (or *Beowulf*) Codex, the Exeter Book, the Vercelli Book, and the Junius (or Cædmon) manuscript.[3] These manuscripts contain a wealth of poems on subjects both secular and religious, embodying the full range of Anglo-Saxon literary genres. The Nowell Codex, while most famous for containing the epic *Beowulf*, also includes 'travel' poetry in the form of *Wonders of the East* and *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* (both vernacular retellings of Latin texts) as well as a vernacular epic retelling of an Old Testament story in *Judith*. The Exeter Book, the largest

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[1] See Introduction above; cf. Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', pp. 9–15.
[2] This is a simplified view of course, because Old English actually includes several dialects that vary in orthography and morphology. West Saxon, the version used in Alfred's court, became the dominant one, but others include Mercian, Kentish, and Northumbrian.
[3] Nowell Codex: BL MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv; Exeter Book: Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501; Vercelli Book: Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare di Vercelli MS CXVII; Junius Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian MS Junius 11.

collection of Old English poetry, contains vernacular versions of gospel stories (the *Christ* poems), 'elegiac' poetry in both masculine (*The Seafarer*, *The Wanderer*) and feminine (*The Wife's Lament*) voices, gnomic wisdom texts (*Maxims I*, *Vainglory*), and even a so-called 'barbarian history' of far-off lands, kings, and heroes (*Widsið*), alongside nearly one hundred riddles, some probably original and some based on older Latin models. The Vercelli Book, copied in England but housed probably since the middle ages in the cathedral library of Vercelli in northern Italy, contains six vernacular poems (including an epic about the apostle Andrew entitled *Andreas* and the famous *Dream of the Rood*), but mainly features a series of some twenty-three prose homilies, including a fragmentary *vita* of St Guthlac. These poems, and others from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (e.g., the *Brunanburh* poem) and other manuscripts provide a fruitful base of textual material to explore Anglo-Saxon perceptions of masculine, aristocratic virtue.

Historians have long recognized the relevance of literary or poetical works to the study of the past. Marc Bloch, for instance, argued as far back as 1939 that 'in every literature, society contemplates its own image'.[4] More generally, in an assessment of the role of Homeric epic in Greek society, Eric Havelock has asserted that for earlier societies,

> Poetry is central in the educational theory. [… It] provided a massive repository of useful knowledge, a sort of encyclopaedia of ethics, politics, history, and technology which the effective citizen was required to learn as the core of his education's equipment. Poetry represented not something we call by that name, but an indoctrination which today would be comprised in a shelf of text books and works of reference.[5]

While some previous generations of Anglo-Saxonists argued that poetry may not actually 'let us into the secrets of contemporary politics', even they had to admit it 'can on occasion make us look at Anglo-Saxon society through a contemporary's eyes'.[6] It would be ahistorical to imagine Anglo-Saxon writers of the tenth century thinking about gender the way scholars today might, after half a century of the development of gender theory. Nevertheless, early writers certainly had ideas about gendered behaviour, drawing upon what Joan Scott calls 'culturally available symbols' and 'normative concepts' that their medieval audiences would have

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[4] Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. by L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 102.

[5] Eric A. Havelock, *A Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1963), p. 27.

[6] Dorothy Whitelock, 'Anglo-Saxon Poetry and the Historian', *TRHistS* 31 (1949), 75–94 (p. 94).

recognized as aspects of right behaviour for men and, to a much lesser extent, women.[7] So what does Anglo-Saxon society look like through the eyes of tenth-century? And what can it say about Anglo-Saxon ideas of masculinity?

Old English verse is mostly widely associated with the genre that has generally come to known as 'heroic' poetry, perhaps best embodied in *Beowulf* and the shorter so-called 'elegies', but also encountered in more explicitly Christian forms in *Andreas*, *The Battle of Maldon*, and the *Brunanburh* poem, amongst other texts.[8] These poems seem to be a window into an enticingly exotic, perhaps even primitive, worldview, separate from and possibly even inimical to that of the Christian tradition introduced in the sixth and seventh centuries (and intimately connected to Anglo-Saxon kingship by the tenth, as the previous chapter discussed). As Wormald puts it, these 'heroic' texts 'are literature about, for and even by the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy', and are 'a window on the mentality' of a specifically 'warrior aristocracy'.[9] Further, as John Niles has asserted,

> To judge from their extant heroic and elegiac literature, the Anglo-Saxons never ceased being fascinated by stories of their more grand and brutal ancestors. They must have brewed from those tales a heady mixture of history, nostalgia, escapism, moral philosophy, and genealogical pride, as well as a sense of their own enlightened spirituality when measuring themselves against the people of former times.[10]

These fascinating, 'brutal' poems are central to the modern conception of Anglo-Saxon society, but they are, of course, also particularly relevant to understandings of Anglo-Saxon — or more generally, early medieval or even 'barbarian' — masculinity.[11]

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[7] J. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category', p. 1067.

[8] Throughout this chapter, and dissertation, I use the term 'heroic' in single quotes in order to challenge the idea that it represents a formal genre with a specifically 'heroic' point of view, for reasons that will be elaborated below.

[9] Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in Patrick Wormald, *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and Its Historian*, ed. by Stephen Baxter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 30–105 (pp. 33–34).

[10] John D. Niles, 'The Problem of the Ending of *The Wife's Lament*', *Speculum* 78:4 (2003), 1107–1150 (p. 1112).

[11] Hence, in part, the obsession of the recent so-called 'Alt-Right' movement of white nationalists and white supremacists with early medieval (and especially Anglo-Saxon and viking) history. This has been the subject of a number of recent discussions, including Damian Fleming's blog-post on white ethno-nationalism and *Beowulf*, and Ruarigh Dale's paper on 'toxic masculinity' in depictions of vikings in modern pop culture, which he credits as being a reaction to the rise of feminism in the late twentieth century: Damian Fleming, 'Ethel, Sweet Ethel-weard: The First Scribe of the *Beowulf* Manuscript'; Ruarigh Dale, 'The Pillage People: Macho, Macho Men and the Depiction of Viking Warriors', 13th Annual Midlands Viking Symposium, University of Birmingham (29 April 2017).

Indeed, that these poems are explicitly or even overwhelmingly 'masculine' and concerned primarily with men seems obvious. As Gillian Overing has argued, for instance, 'We certainly do not need feminist theory to tell us that *Beowulf* is a profoundly masculine poem'.[12] Dismissal of the need to examine masculinity in these heavily masculine texts, though, is a problematic over-simplification; rather, as Clare Lees has argued, 'the masculinity of *Beowulf* may be self-evident, but its construction — how masculinity works in the poem — is by no means transparent'.[13] Or, as John Tosh has argued more generally, a non-gendered, or perhaps even *de*-gendered, reading renders men and masculinity in these texts 'everywhere but nowhere'.[14] It is only through reading these stories of men *as men* that scholars can understand how masculinity was constructed in the eras of their composition.

But this apparent warrior complexion of Old English poetry makes for a puzzling conundrum: these 'heroic' poems only survive in manuscript contexts that suggest a monastic role in their transmission and presentation, if not composition.[15] Moreover, the four codices in which much of this 'heroic' verse survives are now generally understood to date to the period during or immediately following the tenth-century Benedictine reform, probably within a decade either side of AD 1000. The same is certainly true for other well-known heroic poems too; after all, the historical events that inspired the Chronicle's *Brunanburh* poem and *The Battle of Maldon* provide firm *termini post quem* of 937 and 991 respectively. Anglo-Saxon 'heroic' poetry, in other words, was copied down into its current forms within the same Christian, and probably monastic, context and milieu as the moral-didactic writings of the preceding chapter. How then can one square the Christian concepts of piety, wisdom, and right moral behaviour in those texts with these Old English poems that seem to promote pride, heroism, and glorious death in battle as the best way to live?

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[12] Gillian R. Overing, *Language, Sign, and Gender in 'Beowulf'*, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. xxiii.

[13] Clare Lees, 'Men and *Beowulf*', in Lees, *Medieval Masculinities*, p. 146.

[14] Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?', p. 180.

[15] While it is possible that some texts, particularly vernacular ones, from the Anglo-Saxon period may have been written or copied outside of monasteries, it is generally accepted that most scribes would have been in monastic orders; there was certainly some degree of lay literacy in both Latin and Old English, however, so we cannot be certain: Malcolm Godden, 'Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 1: c. 400–1100*, ed. by Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 580–590; Patrick Wormald, 'The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and Its Neighbours', *TRHistS* 27 (1977), 95–114. (There is also the possibility that some Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are the products of women scribes, though any real examination of that subject is beyond the scope of the present study.)

As early as the late eighth century, Alcuin recognised this apparent dichotomy, admonishing one contact (usually identified as Higbald, Bishop of Lindisfarne, though Bullough and Garrison propose Bishop Unuuona of Leicester) for allowing the 'songs of the pagans' ('*carmine gentilium*') to be sung at the ecclesiastical table.[16]

> *Verba Dei legantur in sacerdotali convivo. Ibi decet lectorem audiri, non citharistam; sermones patrum, non carmina gentilium. Quid Hinieldus cum Christo? Angusta est domus: utrosque tenere non poterit.*[17]

This masculine, 'heroic' poetry thus appears, on the surface, to be the literature of a totally different communication community than that which produced the moral-didactic texts discussed in the previous chapter, a different forum in which other forms of masculinity could be valorised.[18] (Garrison, in fact, places the epistle in the context of Offa's reign, arguing that it is an injunction against 'vernacular entertainments' that might suit the propaganda of a royal court, but not the table of a bishop, like Unuuona, who might be seen as allying too closely with that king and his court.)[19] But are the 'songs of the pagans' and 'sermons of the Fathers' really, as Alcuin seems to say, polar opposites, contradictory visions of a society divided between a pagan past and Christian present?[20]

This chapter will in fact argue the opposite: that these two disparate positions can be reconciled, giving a more complete yet nuanced picture of aristocratic masculine ideals in later Anglo-Saxon England. In order to do so, this chapter will first explore what the so-called 'heroic' tradition in Anglo-Saxon poetry entails, particularly the 'Germanic' traditions to which scholars have traditionally connected

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[16] Donald Bullough, 'What Has Ingeld to Do with Lindisfarne?', *ASE* 22 (1993), 93−125.

[17] Alcuin, *Ep.* 124: 'Let the Word of God be read at clergy's meals. There it is fitting to hear the reader, not the harpist; the sermons of the Fathers, not the songs of the pagans. What does Ingeld have to do with Christ? The house is narrow; it cannot hold both.' Alcuin is almost certainly echoing a number of biblical and Patristic sources, including Paul ('What agreement does Christ have with Belial?' [2 Cor 6:15]), Tertullian ('What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?') and Jerome ('What does Horace have to do with the Psalter, Virgil with the Gospels, Cicero with Paul?'); Mary Garrison, 'Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?' in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge, Vol. 1*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 237−259 (p. 245−248).

[18] Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', pp. 14−15.

[19] Garrison, 'Quid Hinieldus', p. 252.

[20] This passage has aroused much academic attention; alongside Garrison, 'Quid Hinieldus', see also: Robert Levine, 'Ingeld and Christ: A Medieval Problem', *Viator* 2 (1971), 105−128, and more recently, Thomas G. Duncan, '"*Quid Hinieldus cum Christo*?": The Secular Expression of the Sacred in Old and Middle English Lyrics', in *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, ed. by Lawrence Besserman (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006), pp. 29−46. While not featuring prominently within the work, Alcuin's quote also serves as inspiration for the title of Michael D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts in Old English Christian Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972).

it. It will argue, however, that Old English 'heroic' poetry might instead be read in light of its reception within a tenth-century, Christian, probably monastic, context, and that those 'heroic' elements are not necessarily inimical to the Christian teachings of the tenth-century reformers, but rather should be read as *a part* of that moral-didactic ethos, promoting a particular form of proper aristocratic masculine behaviour.

The 'Pagan' Background of 'Heroic' Poetry?

In discussing what 'heroic' poetry can illuminate about Anglo-Saxon masculinity, and about Anglo-Saxon society more broadly, the first question must be: What does 'heroic' poetry even mean? Joyce Hill defines this genre as 'a tradition of narrative poetry in many ancient, medieval and modern cultures, which celebrates the mighty deeds of heroes, whose socially determined code of honour is tested in circumstances commonly involving physical risk'. [21] Moreover, 'the warrior's paramount goal' in the genre, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe argues, is 'the achievement of a lasting reputation'.[22] The hero Beowulf himself says as much to the wise king Hrothgar before the expedition against Grendel's mother:

> *Ure æghwylc sceal   ende gebidan*
> *worolde lifes;   wyrce se þe mote*
> *domes ær deaþe;   þæt bið drihtguman*
> *unlifgendum   æfter selest.*[23]

Or more simply, in the gnomic phrasing of *Maxims I*: '*Dom biþ selast*' ('Glory is best').[24]

Perhaps most important, though, is the loyalty that marks the bond between lord and retainer, in which the warrior serves in battle in exchange for the physical rewards from the hand of his lord, characterised as both a *goldwine* ('gold-friend') and *beahgifa* ('ring-giver').[25] This relationship is evident throughout everything from *Beowulf* to *The Battle of Maldon*, and its loss the central feature of the emotive landscape of *The Wanderer* and other elegies. Michael Cherniss, too, identifies loyalty

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[21] Joyce Hill, 'Heroic Poetry', *WBEASE*, p. 241.

[22] Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Values and Ethics in Heroic Literature', *CCOEL*, pp. 101–118 (p. 102).

[23] *Beowulf* 1386–1389: 'Each of us must come to the end of life in this world — let him who can achieve glory before death; that will be best afterwards for a warrior no longer living'. Text from *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); translations mine unless otherwise noted.

[24] *Maxims I* 80.

[25] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Values and Ethics', p. 101.

as the central theme of heroic literature, the hub to which the other thematic spokes — vengeance, treasure, and exile — are all connected.[26] Vengeance is the means by which loyalty is most easily displayed, while treasure serves as a physical manifestation of the worthiness of each man as defined through that loyal relationship; exile, Cherniss's final theme, is the ultimate result of the loss of the loyal lord-retainer bond, either through cowardice or through the death of one's lord, and means the loss of home, wealth, and status. As Joyce Hill has argued, this feature of 'heroic' literature — its focus on the hero and his loyal '*comitatus*', or warband — is a simplification of older Migration Age stories of tribes and minor heroes, remoulded and reorganised to fit into a scheme of 'individuals responding to personal pressures and the demands of their own heroic moral code'.[27] This 'heroic moral code' might also be thought of, indeed, as the ideals of masculine aristocratic behaviour of that elite communication community: the poetry not only tells the stories of heroes earning glory, but teaches how men can behave rightly. More than solely a bond of political alliance, the central 'heroic' characteristic of the lord-retainer bond can also be read as a representation of right homosocial bonds, both hierarchical and lateral. As the *Beowulf* poet notes early in the poem, interrupting his eulogy for Scyld Scefing, in fact,

> *Swa sceal ge(ong) guma   gode gewyrcean,*
> *fromum feohgiftum   on fæder (bea)rme*
> *þæt hine on ylde   eft gewunigen*
> *wilgesiþas,   þonne wig cume*
> *leode gelæasten*[28]

Other gnomic passages in *Beowulf* further define how masculinity ought to be practiced too, such as when Beowulf intones, '*Selre bið æghwæm, þæt he his freond wrece, þonne he fela murne*'.[29]

There has been a widespread scholarly tendency, dating back at least to the nineteenth century, to trace these primal concepts of virtue, honour, and loyalty in Anglo-Saxon literature to a common northern European, 'Germanic', and

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[26] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 30–119 (and *passim*). He cautions, of course, that these are literary constructs and that he 'intentionally ignore[s]' their 'relevance to contemporary conditions' (p. 26).
[27] Joyce Hill, 'Heroic Poetry', *WBEASE*, p. 241.
[28] *Beowulf* 20–25: 'So must the young warrior do good, with splendid dispensing of treasure, while under his father's care, so that in his old age dear companions will still stand beside him, his people support their chief'.
[29] *Beowulf* 1384–1386: 'It is better for each man that he avenge his friend, rather than mourn him too greatly'.

specifically pagan origin.[30] As such, many Anglo-Saxonist literary scholars have seen little problem with citing Classical texts, particularly those by Caesar and Tacitus, as part of their investigations into the 'heroic', 'Germanic' nature of Anglo-Saxon society.[31] Some historians too, as far back as the nineteenth-century, were more than happy to see Tacitus as a starting point for tracing Anglo-Saxon culture.[32] But even more recently, historians like Peter Hunter Blair have felt confident enough in the connection to argue that

> Although Tacitus was writing some six hundred years before Bede's time and drawing upon only a limited knowledge of the *Germania* of his day, much of what he says about Germanic warband — the *comitatus* — is characteristic of Anglo-Saxon society not merely in the age of migration and settlement, but still in much later times.[33]

But when these Old English 'heroic' texts only survive in their current manuscript form in (probably monastic) copies from the late tenth century, over four hundred years after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, and nearly a millennium after those Classical texts were written, can this interpretation really be justified?

There are, admittedly, many commonalities between Roman descriptions of the Germani and the traits of Anglo-Saxon 'heroic' culture as found in the later poetry. Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, for instance, argues that '*Vita omnis in venationibus atque in studiis rei militaris consistit: ab parvulis labori ac duritiae student*'.[34] Some have found an echo of this masculine training in the lives of aristocratic Anglo-Saxon boys, who it seems also studied war from their earliest days; the young St Guthlac, for instance,

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[30] The term 'Germanic' has recently been problematised by a number of historians and archaeologists; this debate is the subject of the future volume of conference proceedings: James M. Harland, Matthias Friedrich, and Nik Gunn, eds, *Interrogating the 'Germanic': A Category and Its Use in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Berlin: DeGruyter, in preparation).

[31] For example: Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Mark C. Amodio, *The Anglo-Saxon Literature Handbook* (Oxford; Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 278; Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 26–27 (and *passim*); Crawford, *Childhood*, p. 63; Hilda R. Ellis Davidson, 'The Training of Warriors', p. 21; Wormald, 'The Age of Bede and Æthelbald', p. 98; Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, pp. 15–17. Wormald discusses some challenges to this point of view in the second additional note in Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*', p. 103–105.

[32] Stubbs, for instance, concludes in his chapter on 'Caesar and Tacitus' that, in those Classical works, 'we have germs and traces of all' the characteristics of later Anglo-Saxon society: William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England*, 6th edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 37.

[33] Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, reprinted 1990), p. 33.

[34] G. Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VI.21: 'Their whole life is composed of hunting expeditions and military pursuits; from early boyhood they are zealous for toil and hardship'. Text and translation from Caesar, *The Gallic War*, ed. and trans. by H. J. Edwards, Loeb Classical Library 72 (London: William Heinemann, 1958). (Hereafter: Caesar, *DBG*.)

when he came into adolescence and 'remembered the valiant deeds of heroes of old', is recorded as 'gathering a band of followers' and taking up arms.[35] Similar ideas appear in Asser's *Life of Alfred*; as Chapter 1 noted, Alfred's children and the other children at court were educated not only in the liberal arts, but also in the 'manly arts' of '*venatoriae* […] *et ceteris artibus, quae nobilibus convenient*'.[36]

The *Germania* of Publius Cornelius Tacitus is perhaps the most frequently referenced Classical text in writings on the 'Germanic' nature of Anglo-Saxon culture. Here, as in Old English 'heroic' poetry, the importance of warlords and the military retinues they attracted is central. In one of his most famous passages, Tacitus writes that '*Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt; nec regibus infinita aut libera potestas, et duces exemplo potius quam imperio, si prompti, si conspicui, si ante aciem agant, admiratione praesunt.*[37] Their virtuous warleaders lead from the front, and motivate their followers by their own bravery. It is through that bravery that they attract a large following or warband (*comitatus*), the members of which vie against each other to be recognized by the leader and achieve higher status:

> *Gradus quin etiam ipse comitatus habet, iudicio eius quem sectantur; magnaque et comitum aemulatio, quibus primus apud principem suum locus, et principum, cui plurimi et acerrimi comites. Haec dignitas, hae vires, magno semper electorum iuvenum globo circumdari, in pace decus, in bello praesidium.*[38]

Both Tacitus and Caesar also describe the ultimate example of the loyalty in the lord-retainer relationship: dying alongside one's lord rather than facing the shame of living should he fall in battle.[39] On such an occasion, Caesar writes,

> *Si quid his per vim accidat, aut eundem casum una ferant aut sibi mortem consciscant; neque adhuc hominum memoria repertus est quisquam qui, eo interfecto cuius se amicitiae devovisset, mortem recusaret.*[40]

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[35] Felix, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* XVI. On this, see more below, Chapter 4.

[36] *VÆlf* 75: 'hunting and other pursuits, which are befitting of noblemen'.

[37] Tacitus, *Germania* 7: 'Kings they choose from their noble birth, generals from their virtue; for their kings, power is neither unlimited nor arbitrary, and their generals lead by example rather than by command, if they are zealous, if they are conspicuous, if they go out before the battle-line'. Latin text from Tacitus, *Dialogus – Agricola – Germania*, ed. and trans. by Maurice Hutton, Loeb Classical Library Edition (London: William Heinemann, 1914); translations mine unless otherwise noted. (Hereafter, *Germania*.)

[38] *Germania* 13: 'In the retinue itself there are degrees, by the judgment of him whom they follow, and there is great rivalry amongst the retainers for whom shall have the first place with the chief, among the leaders as to who has the largest and keenest retinue. There is dignity, to be surrounded always with a large band of chosen youth; in peace glory, in war protection'.

[39] This topic has been regularly discussed in the historiography; see, for instance: Roberta Frank, 'The Ideal of Men Dying with Their Lord in *The Battle of Maldon*: Anachronism or *Nouvelle Vague?*', in *People and Places in Northern Europe: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. by Ian Wood and Niles Lund (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), pp. 95–106; Rosemary Woolf, 'The Ideal of Men Dying with Their Lord in the *Germania* and in *The Battle of Maldon*', *ASE* 5 (1976), 63–81.

The same virtue, of bravery in battle up to death with one's lord rather than fleeing and surviving, is also paramount to Tacitus's Germans:

> *Cum ventum in aciem, turpe principi virtute vinci, turpe comitatui virtutem principis non adaequare. Iam vero infame in omnem vitam ac probrosum superstitem principi suo ex acie recessisse.*[41]

On the subject of those who flee battle, Tacitus further writes that '*Scutum reliquisse praecipuum flagitium, nec aut sacris adesse aut concilium inire ignominioso fas; multique superstites bellorum infamiam laqueo finierunt*'.[42] Similar themes have also been identified in Classical texts by Sallust, Plutarch, Valerius Maximus, Servius, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Agathias.[43] Anglo-Saxonists who accept this millennium-long connection have found these traits echoed in a variety of Old English texts too. In *Andreas*, a Vercelli Book poem about the apostle Andrew written in the 'heroic' style, the titular saint's followers are dismayed that they might be left behind and abandoned when their lord goes on his quest, bemoaning the anxiety of upholding their end of the deal. Another prominent and oft-cited connection is the annal for 755 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which recounts the Cynewulf/Cyneheard episode in which two retinues refuse to betray their lord or survive after his death.[44]

But despite these similarities, the use of Tacitean (or earlier) materials to illustrate later Anglo-Saxon society is problematic for a number of reasons. Before even making connections to England a millennium after their writing, it must be said that neither Caesar nor Tacitus were necessarily interested in providing a 'real' picture of the Germanic peoples of their eras in the first place. Caesar, for his part, mentions the Germans only in comparison to his main (Gallic) subject, thereby

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[40] Caesar, *DBG* 3.22: 'if any violent fate befalls their fellows, they either endure the same misfortune along with them or take their own lives; and no one yet in the memory of man has been found to refuse death, after the slaughter of the comrade to whose friendship he had devoted himself'.

[41] *Germania* 14: 'In the field of battle, it is disgraceful for the chief to be surpassed in valour; it is disgraceful for the companions not to equal their chief; but it is reproach and infamy during a whole succeeding life to retreat from the field surviving him'. (Trans. Hutton.)

[42] *Germania* 6: 'To abandon your shield is the basest of crimes; nor may a man thus disgraced be present at the sacred rites, or enter their council; many, indeed, after escaping from battle, have ended their infamy with the noose'. (Trans. Hutton.)

[43] Woolf, 'Ideal', pp. 65–66.

[44] See also Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., 'The Germanic Context of "Cynewulf and Cyneheard" Revisited', *Neophilologus* 81 (1997), 445–465; Barbara Yorke, 'The Representation of Early West Saxon History in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History*, ed. by Alice Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brill, 2010), pp. 141–160 (p. 142). Note also a similar passage in the Revised Royal Frankish Annals for 782, in which a large number of military followers choose to die alongside their (Frankish) lords and leaders in battle against the Saxons. (I am indebted to Paul Fouracre for this reference.)

creating an 'Other Other' to distinguish between one 'barbarian' culture that might be assimilated into Roman civilization (the Gauls) and another (the Germans) who were wild and distant and incomprehensible.[45] Tacitus, in his work, was more concerned with presenting a picture of the Germans as 'noble savages', contrasted with a Roman Empire he saw as suffering from moral and social decline; praising the alien Germans was a way to make Romans re-evaluate their own standards of culture. As Rosemary Woolf puts it, the *Germania* 'contrasts the civilized but degenerate Romans with the noble savages of Germany, the men brave and loyal to the point of dying with their chief, the women free of vanity and irreproachably chaste'.[46] Moreover, while Caesar at least wrote with some first-hand knowledge of the Gauls, it is unlikely that Tacitus ever journeyed beyond the northern *limes* of the Roman Empire, and thus any account he provides is, at best, second-hand, if not third- or fourth-hand via older textual sources. Neither author, then, should necessarily be viewed as reliable or trustworthy sources for the realities of Germanic culture in the Roman period.

Having acknowledged that, perhaps even more damning is the gulf of nearly a thousand years separating these Classical sources and the works of the Old English 'heroic' tradition. Thinking of these Roman texts as models for Anglo-Saxon culture seems to require one of two conclusions: either a continuous 'Germanic', 'heroic' warrior culture endured without significant change for hundreds of years despite conflict, collapse, migration, settlement, conversion, and amalgamation; or, Christian Anglo-Saxon religious writers and monks knew about their 'Germanic' ancestors through the writings of Caesar and Tacitus (or other classical writers) and then consciously modelled their own work on themes present in those thousand-year-old texts. Both seem rather unlikely. In the latter instance, the *Germania* survives to the modern day in only a single manuscript, which is in fact a Renaissance facsimile of part of a supposed eighth-century original, the Codex Hersfeldensis, originally composed at the imperial abbey of Hersfeld in Hesse, with no evidence it was known in England before the modern period.[47] The former is a more problematic

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[45] Andrew M. Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), p. 47. For more on this, see Maggie Thompson, 'Primitive or Ideal? Gender and Ethnocentrism in Roman Accounts of Germany', *Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity and Classics* 1:1 (2006), 1–19.
[46] Woolf, 'Ideal', p. 65.
[47] L. D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmissions: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), pp. 410–411; C. W. Mendell, 'Manuscripts of Tacitus's Minor Works', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 19 (1949), 133–145 (pp. 135–136). Since the compilation in the Renaissance, this manuscript

assumption, but has hitherto been generally accepted. M. J. Toswell has recently argued quite convincingly, however, that 'there seems to be little basis for the scholarly desire to link Tacitus and his ethnography of the German tribes to Anglo-Saxon behaviours in a different millennium and place'.[48] She specifically argues that 'the call to Tacitus reflects a more profound desire' by scholars to connect the Anglo-Saxons to 'a longstanding and rich tradition' that 'reaches back to the Germanic tribes ranged against the Roman legions', and a nationalistic desire to 'interpret cultural and social behaviour as "natural" to a particular nation or group of tribes by demonstrating longevity'.[49] It is probably safest, though doubtless many Anglo-Saxonists will still disagree, to avoid Tacitus as a source for Anglo-Saxon culture overall, and especially for the tenth century.

Yet even if the specifically Tacitean inspirations of Anglo-Saxon 'heroic' culture are discounted, there still remains what appears to be an obviously 'pagan' or pre-Christian set of texts. Whether or not Tacitus provides a real glimpse of (either classical or early medieval) 'Germanic' culture, many northern European groups certainly remained non-Christian well into the early middle ages. Charlemagne's campaigns against the pagan Saxons of the Continent in the later eighth century are well known, and the last pagan Anglo-Saxon king (on the Isle of Wight) probably survived until the late seventh century, though Christianisation, rather than individual conversion, likely took much longer.[50] But even then, that still leaves a gap of some three centuries before the compilation of the major works of 'heroic' poetry.

'Pagan' interpretations of Anglo-Saxon poetry have a long scholarly tradition, and this trend is, as with much else, most evident in *Beowulf* scholarship.

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of the *Germania* has had a rather cinematic history. It disappeared from the records again, but was then rediscovered in Italy around the turn of the twentieth century in possession of a noble family in Jesi in Ancona, whose home was later ransacked by Nazis in search of the document. The Nazis were unsuccessful in finding the manuscript, which was eventually donated to the post-war Italian state and held in Florence, where it was then damaged in the landmark Arno flood of 1966 before finally being transferred to the National Library of Rome where it is now remains, as Codex Vitt. Em. 1631. The book's association with Germanic fascist ideology and the Nazis' interest in it has contributed to it recently being called one of the 'most dangerous' books in world history: Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's* Germania *from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2012); see also Mendell, 'Manuscripts'; Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), pp. 75–81.

[48] M. J. Toswell, '*Quid Tacitus*…? The *Germania* and the Study of Anglo-Saxon England', *Florilegium* 27 (2010), 27–62 (p. 57). Toswell is particularly critical of literary scholars, who do seem to espouse the Tacitean view of Anglo-Saxon culture more readily, though many historians have been equally guilty.

[49] Troswell, '*Quid Tacitus*…' p. 27, p. 57.

[50] Bede, *HE* IV.16, recounts how Cædwalla, king of the West Saxons, 'took the Isle of Wight, which until then was entirely given over to idolatry, and by merciless slaughter endeavoured to destroy all the inhabitants thereof'.

Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin, the poem's first translator and early editor, argued, 'Nothing in this poem […] would smack of Christianity had mention not crept in' through copyists, going so far as to attribute these Christian incursions to Alfred himself.[51] F. A. Blackburn, too, concluded that 'the *Beowulf* once existed as a whole without the Christian allusions', and that all the instances of Christianity in the poem were later additions by Christian copyists.[52] Edward B. Irving, Jr., has elaborated on this further and proposed three different senses in which 'paganism' might be investigated within the poem: the actual practice of paganism; 'fossil paganism', or the fleeting pre-Christian references throughout the poem; and the 'pagan' ethics and morality of the world of *Beowulf*.[53] The first, of course, is little evidenced within the poem, aside from the passage in which the despairing Danes turn to the worship of heathen gods, much to the poet's dismay, and by the 'fanciful etymologies' and other strained interpretations of earlier scholars.[54] The second type, on the other hand, what Irving, Jr., calls 'fossil paganism', is the type that most scholarship has tended to focus on; as he notes, though, these expressions of 'pagan' traits 'may well have lost any such specific meaning', just as the days of the week in modern English derive from the names of Germanic deities 'but no one notices it'.[55]

Much of this fossil paganism, scholars have argued, is the result of oral traditions passed down through the centuries, with a sharp divide envisioned between an earlier oral 'heroic' (i.e., Germanic, pagan) tradition on one hand and a later written (Christian) one on the other.[56] An oral tradition of 'pagan songs' does seem well attested in sources from Christian England. Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, for instance, a work very much concerned with the struggle of orthodox Christianity against paganism and heresy, makes the distinction in the famous story of Cædmon, a shy, illiterate cowherd who was struck by divine inspiration and became the first and greatest of Christian Anglo-Saxon singers. The catalyst for such an ordination,

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[51] Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin, *De Danorum rebus gestis secul. III & IV: Poëma Danicum dialecto Anglosaxonica : ex Bibliotheca Cottoniana Musaei Britannici* (1815); cited in Edward B. Irving, Jr., 'Christian and Pagan Elements', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 175–192 (p. 181).

[52] F. A. Blackburn, 'The Christian Coloring in the Beowulf', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 12 (1897); reprinted in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), pp. 1–21.

[53] Irving, Jr., 'Christian and Pagan Elements', pp. 177–180.

[54] Eric G. Stanley, 'The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism', in *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past: The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism and Anglo-Saxon Trial by Jury* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), p. 77.

[55] Irving, Jr., 'Christian and Pagan Elements', pp. 178–179.

[56] Stanley, 'Search', pp. 10–13.

Bede says, came after Cædmon refused to take up the harp '*in conuiuio, cum esset laetitiae causa decretum, ut omnes per ordinem cantare deberent*'.[57] This harp-accompanied secular singing is put into contrast with Cædmon's inspired Christian song, though; because his gift was divinely inspired, '*nil umquam friuoli et superuacui poematis facere potuit, sed ea tantummodo, quae ad religionem pertinent, religiosam eius linguam decebant*'.[58] Alcuin's aforementioned diatribe against the 'songs of the pagans' also seems to be evidence that secular, oral traditions survived at least into the late eighth century, even within monastic or ecclesiastical communities.

Caution should be taken, however, in relying on supposed orality as evidence of a continuing thread of pagan characteristics throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. In the case of *Beowulf*, for instance, more recent scholarship has cast doubt on how much attention should be paid to its supposed orality; while the poem certainly has some of the indicators of oral composition (e.g., the use of formulaic patronymic phrases and obscure kennings), those indicators do not necessarily prove that they were passed down as oral tales over the centuries between conversion and manuscript creation. Indeed, at least according to Wormald, it seems that these poems are in fact missing many other indicators of orality, and thus a strong case could be made that they were in fact *not* orally composed after all.[59] Cherniss, too, has specifically argued that an 'oral-formulaic' theory of composition, in which markers of orality are included long after poems cease to be orally composed, helps explain the survival of a number of 'heroic' tropes and motifs long after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, and notes that the poems need not have been composed orally themselves as long as their heavy debt to older oral traditions is admitted.[60]

To be sure, aspects of pre-Christian 'Germanic' stories certainly survived in some form into the later Anglo-Saxon period. Unlike Alcuin, who demanded to know '*Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?*' — 'What does Ingeld have to do with Christ?' — Anglo-Saxons of the tenth century seem to have had no problem with reading and copying these stories in a Christian setting, 'often without recognizing any essential

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[57] *HE* IV.22: '… at a feast, when it was decided for sake of pleasure that all of them ought to sing in turn'. The *Old English Bede* specifies that this happened '*in gebeorscipe*' ('at a drinking-party').

[58] *HE* IV. 22: '… he could not ever compose anything of frivolous or useless poetry, but only those which pertained to religion were fitting for his religious tongue'.

[59] Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*', p. 36. Wormald provides a thorough selection of sources on this at p. 86 (n. 26).

[60] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 248–49; p. 20.

contradiction between the two'.[61] Asser, for instance, tells a story of a fine book of vernacular poetry ('*Saxonicum poematicae artis*') that Alfred's mother Osburh offered to whichever of her sons could first learn the material by heart:

> *Cum ergo quodam die mater sua sibi et fratribus suis quendam Saxonicum poematicae artis librum, quem in manu habebat, ostenderet, ait: 'Quisquis vestrum discere citius istum codicem possit, dabo illi illum.' Qua voce, immo divina inspiratione, instinctus, et pulchritudine principalis litterae illius libri illectus [...] ille statim tollens librum de manu sua, magistrum adiit et legit. Quo lecto, matri retulit et recitavit.*[62]

Alfred is, of course, the winner of the competition, learning the poems faster than all his older brothers. Asser further notes that the king's interest in vernacular poetry continued into his adult life; alongside his other interests, the king liked '*Saxonicos libros recitare, et maxime carmina Saxonica memoriter discere, aliis imperare*'.[63] As noted above, part of the court education of his children also included '*et psalmos et Saxonicos libros et maxime Saxonica carmina*'.[64]

The mythical pre-Christian smith figure Weland — known in the Scandinavian tradition (e.g., in the Poetic Edda) as Völundr — may have been known from such books and songs, and features by name in the Alfredian translation of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*, as well as in the heroic poem *Deor* from the Exeter Book. Weland also appears on the Franks Casket, a whalebone box, possibly a reliquary, of early-eighth-century Northumbrian manufacture on which Weland is juxtaposed with Christ, Romulus and Remus, and other Classical figures. [65] Toponymic evidence also shows that the name of Weland and at least some understanding of his legendary background survived in popular memory into the tenth century as well, with the Neolithic long-barrow known as Wayland's Smithy

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[61] Alcuin, *Ep*. 124; Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 27.

[62] *VÆlf* 23: 'Now on a certain day his mother was showing him and his brothers a book of Saxon poetry, which she held in her hand, and finally said: "Whichever of you can soonest learn this volume, to him will I give it." Stimulated by these words, or rather by divine inspiration, and allured by the beautifully illuminated letter at the beginning of the volume, [...] the boy took the book out of her hand, and went to his master and learned it by heart. When he had read it, he returned to his mother and recited it'.

[63] *VÆlf* 76: 'to recite the Saxon [i.e., Old English] books, and especially to learn by heart the Saxon poems, and to make others learn them'.

[64] *VÆlf* 75: 'both the Psalms and Saxon books, and especially Saxon poems'.

[65] The Franks Casket is now held in the British Museum, with one panel in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence; J. D. Hill, ed., 'Franks Casket', in *Masterpieces of the British Museum*, ed. by J. D. Hill and Neil MacGregor (London: British Museum Press, 2009), p. 21. On the Franks Casket and Christian England, see Barbara Yorke, 'King Alfred and Weland: Traditional Heroes at King Alfred's Court', in *Transformations in Anglo-Saxon Culture: Toller Lectures on Art, Archaeology, and Text*, ed. by Charles Insley and Gale Owen-Crocker (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), pp. 47–70; and Richard Abels, 'What Has Weland to do with Christ? The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Speculum* 84:3 (2009), 549–581.

(Ashbury, Oxon.) appearing in the bounds of a charter of the reign of Eadred in the mid-tenth century (c. 955).[66]

These connections to Weland (or Völundr) are also indicative of one other feature of the study of 'heroic' Old English literature: the use of 'Celtic', Scandinavian, and other Continental 'Germanic' materials to try to illuminate its 'pagan' aspects.[67] Similarities can also be found with, for instance, Irish heroic tales from the Ulster Cycle, or with the Welsh *Y Gododdin* and poetry of Taliesin, or the Norse saga material written in later centuries but nominally describing the earlier medieval past.[68] As with the use of Tacitean and other Classical sources to understand Anglo-Saxon culture, the use of this other material is also quite problematic. Judith Jesch, for instance, has criticised the methodology of using Scandinavian material on the grounds of 'the grave problems of chronology, genre, and cultural context that make such an attempt quite perilous'.[69] The same might be said of the 'Celtic' material from Wales or Ireland. That is not to say that these mythologies were unknown in England, of course: the court of Cnut in the eleventh century, for instance, certainly inspired (and indeed commissioned) both written and physical works of art indebted to those Scandinavian communication communities.[70] As Jesch concludes, Scandinavian immigrants to England brought with them not only names and language, but also their 'cultural habits', and while the English of the tenth and eleventh centuries were 'a thoroughly God-fearing people', they saw no issue in accepting the trappings of what she calls 'cultural paganism', references to that pre-Christian past in works otherwise written or copied in a strongly Christian context.[71]

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[66] S 564.

[67] See, for instance: North, *Heathen Gods*; J. S. Ryan, 'Othinn in England: Evidence from the Poetry for a Cult of Woden in Anglo-Saxon England', *Folklore* 74:3 (1963), 460–480

[68] On these comparative views, see for instance: Karin E. Olsen, *Conceptualizing the Enemy in Early Medieval Northwest Europe: Metaphors of Conflict and Alterity in Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, and Early Irish Poetry* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016); Stephen Evans also draws on these divergent traditions, albeit in a considerably less critical way: Stephen S. Evans, *The Lords of Battle: Image, Reality of the Comitatus in Dark-Age Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997).

[69] Judith Jesch, 'Scandinavians and "Cultural Paganism" in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. by Paul Cavill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 55–68 (p. 55).

[70] Jesch, 'Scandinavians', pp. 59–63; see also Matthew Townend, 'Conceptualising the *Knútsdrápur*: Skaldic Praise-Poetry at the Court of Cnut', *ASE* 30 (2001), 145–179, which argues that, unique amongst the corpus of Anglo-Saxon texts, these poems can be traced to a specific circumstance of composition, 'to particular phases in the reign of the king, and some of them to a particular year or two; […] not just to a region or place, but perhaps even (for those with a Winchester provenance) to a particular, locatable building' (p. 178).

[71] Jesch, 'Scandinavians', p. 67.

This interaction between Christian and 'culturally pagan' ideals is the main subject of Cherniss's *Ingeld and Christ*, which proposes to 'show how inadequate general, all-encompassing statements about the use of pre-Christian elements in Old English Christian poetry are', and, moreover, 'to illustrate some of the different ways in which Anglo-Saxon poets used these elements in their poems', including both the 'least overtly Christian' poems and more explicitly Christian ones. [72] The aforementioned 'heroic' traits he explores (loyalty, vengeance, treasure, and, in their absence, the wanderer's exile) have a probable 'pre-Christian' origin, but should not be thought of as especially 'pagan', for 'those who seek information about pagan Germanic religion in Old English poetry find it rather barren ground'; rather, 'heroic' poetry is actually based on 'secular moral values' that originate from outside the Christian religious sphere but are nevertheless applicable within it.[73] Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, these Christian and 'secular moral values' intermingled in Old English poetry, though the process was not instantaneous and, Cherniss argues, developed over a long period in a number of stages.[74] In the early conversion period, traditional 'heroic' poems were infused with Christian imagery but not necessarily influenced by it, and the new 'heroic' songs that were composed were infused with Christian imagery in order to be more palatable to Christian audiences. Later, in poems like *Andreas*, Christian subjects were depicted in traditionally 'heroic' ways. Finally, in the later Anglo-Saxon period, poets focused on explicitly Christian subjects, but using 'heroic' formulae and references without explicitly promoting the 'heroic' virtues of previous eras. In the end, poets no longer even needed the 'heroic' framework at all, and the poets of *Juliana* and *The Seafarer* were free to adopt explicitly Christian points of view that looked on the 'heroic' life negatively. Cherniss admits that this chronology of development is entirely speculative, but, as he insists, it is not unreasonable to see Christian Anglo-Saxon poetry developing out of a pre-Christian tradition, making use of and changing that tradition, and then eventually abandoning it when it was no longer necessary.[75]

Though there are a number of methodological issues with Cherniss's work, in particular his cherry-picking of source material, his understanding of Christian 'heroic' poetry provides a useful way of thinking about the interaction between pre-

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[72] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 9, p. 26.
[73] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 28–29.
[74] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 249–51.
[75] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 252–55.

Christian and Christian models of behaviour within it.[76] While the so-called 'pagan'/'Germanic'/'heroic' traits apparent in Old English poetry may have pre-Christian origins, and share similarities with cultures across the classical and early medieval North, it is unnecessary (and potentially problematic) to think of them as directly related to a millennium-long 'Germanic' cultural tradition embodied in Tacitus, Norse sagas, or other sources. Indeed, the fact that these sources promote similar ideas might not point to a common source, but rather to what might be thought of as cultural 'convergent evolution': similar historical circumstances giving rise to similar literary and cultural *topoi*.[77] The 'secular moral values' in the range of 'heroic' sources need not be thought of as specifically 'Germanic' and 'pagan', when they could be thought of as the ones that might be particularly valued in any militarised, pre-state (or proto-state) society like Anglo-Saxon England. Later authors, though Christian, could — and did — draw on the traditional stock of characters, themes, and ideals without necessarily having to espouse the entirety of a 'heroic', 'pagan' society themselves, in much the same way that modern American screenwriters and directors can draw on common tropes from western films and novels without actually living in the era the 'Wild West' themselves. While Fredrick Jackson Turner's 'frontier thesis' has been heavily critiqued by academics, the popular mind still maintains that the 'rugged individualism' of the Western frontier (and the emblematic figure of the cowboy) is the most quintessential American trait, and popular culture constantly relies on, and promotes, such an image.[78] Writers of the later Anglo-Saxon period could easily have used 'Germanic' or 'pagan' traits in a similar way, without embracing them as still-existing, matter-of-fact cultural institutions.

'Heroic' Poetry and Christian Instruction

Despite the long tradition of finding (or, at least, seeking) evidence of paganism within every aspect of *Beowulf* and other Anglo-Saxon 'heroic' poems, interpretation placing these poems firmly within a Christian milieu has almost as long a historiographical lineage. Since at least the middle of the twentieth century,

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[76] See, for instance, reviews by Cecily Clark, *English Studies* 57:1 (1976), 70–71; George Hardin Brown, *Speculum* 50:3 (1975), 482–485; and Colin Chase, *Review of English Studies* 27:108 (1976), 448–450.

[77] Viljoen also discusses the 'popular culture' aspect of the *Beowulf* manuscript: Viljoen, 'The *Beowulf* Manuscript Reconsidered', pp. 39–57.

[78] Richard W. Slatta, 'Taking Our Myths Seriously', *Journal of the West* 40:3 (2001), pp. 3–5.

Beowulf, has generally been accepted as the work of a Christian scribe writing for a Christian audience, however much of a 'pagan' background it might have originally had.[79] R. E. Kaske's 1958 article on '*Sapientia et Fortitudo* as the Controlling Theme of *Beowulf*' already showed that the essay's titular theme was part of a longstanding 'Græco-Latin-Christian tradition' evident in Virgil, the Old Testament, and Isidore's *Etymologiae*, but which can also be identified in *Beowulf* as well as in Alfred's writings and other Old English religious poems.[80] For Kaske, 'the poet has used this old ideal as an area of synthesis between Christianity and Germanic paganism'.[81] Even scholars as early as Klaeber and Tolkien, a generation earlier or more, argued for the inseparable nature of the Christian elements of poems like *Beowulf* despite its apparent 'pagan' or 'Germanic' theme.[82]

Many other scholars, of course, have been uneasy at such a conclusion, and have argued that those focusing on *Beowulf*'s Christian nature run the risk of focusing on 'a tiny number of details widely scattered in the poem—surely making up no more than 1 percent of the poem', and thus letting these few details 'wag the dog'.[83] Even the staunchest critics, though, have come to grudgingly admit that *Beowulf* can at least be seen as a fusion of 'heroic' ideals tempered with Christian elements, though that still leaves some with a sense of 'a certain uneasy incongruity'.[84] This reluctance may be unfounded, however. Read in the late tenth-century context of their reception and copying, these poems' display of Christian morals in the language and world of 'heroic' warrior culture may not be surprising.

Indeed, the 'heroic' ethos that continues to pervade even late tenth-century texts finds little incongruity with the poems' Christian setting. *The Battle of Maldon*, Cherniss argues, may be an indication that pre-Christian secular values continued into the later period, but they were in no way opposed to Christian ones.[85] John M. Hill has proposed, too, that the appearance of a 'heroic', 'warrior ethic' in Alfredian

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[79] See, for instance, Dorothy Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951).

[80] R. E. Kaske, '*Sapientia et Fortitudo* as the Controlling Theme of *Beowulf*', *Studies in Philology* 55:3 (1958), 423–456 (esp. p. 424–425).

[81] Kaske, '*Sapientia et Fortitudo*', p. 426.

[82] See, e.g., Friedrich Klaeber, 'Die christlichen Elemente im *Beowulf*', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 35–36 (1911–1912), 111–136, 249–270, 453–482, and 169–199; J. R. R. Tolkien, '*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 22 (1936), reprinted in Nicholson, *Anthology*, pp. 51–103.

[83] Irving, Jr., 'Christian and Pagan Elements', p. 189.

[84] John D. Niles, 'Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief', *CCOEL*, pp. 120–136; Irving, Jr., 'Christian and Pagan Elements', p. 189.

[85] Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 256–257

and post-Alfredian texts does not require the direct survival of 'Germanic' ideals, and can instead be seen as one means by which West Saxon kings helped to legitimate a radical new model of kingship based on hierarchy rather than reciprocity.[86] An unpublished PhD thesis by Kent Gregory Hare has also made a similar argument, placing the corpus of Anglo-Saxon 'heroic' poetry squarely within the reign of Alfred and envisioning it as part of the king's education/social reform efforts.[87] While Hill's and Hare's arguments for the Christian didactic purpose of 'heroic' poetry seem correct, their dating of the poems to Alfred's reign is based on incorrect information and (in the latter case) a somewhat unfounded logical leap. While many of the poems certainly have earlier origins, their manuscripts' later tenth-century context — that is, their reception and preservation in relation to a widespread Benedictine movement stressing reform in both church and in individual behaviour — is crucial to understanding them. This position has been taken by a number of *Beowulf* scholars in recent generations, particularly those whom John Niles identifies as the 'neotraditionalists', who have argued for *Beowulf* 'as one outcome or expression of an Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition that had evolved, by the poet's day, to incorporate both Latinate learning and Germanic lore'.[88] For these neotraditionalists, Niles continues, 'the heroic world of the poem offers models for conduct in the world that the audience inhabited': a world of Christian reform as much as 'heroic' masculinity.[89]

Other historical developments of the ninth and tenth centuries can help further explain the existence of 'heroic' traits in Christian texts. In particular, the close interaction between the aristocracy and monastic/ecclesiastical communities — what might be called, in Continental contexts, the 'proprietary church' or *Eigenkirche* — could explain what seems to be the merging of the two 'communication communities' of reformist churchmen and warrior-aristocrats, and an audience for tales of heroic, military achievement nevertheless copied by monks and sprinkled with religious flourishes. Wormald has also made a strong case for a connection

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[86] John M. Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

[87] Kent Gregory Hare, 'Christian Heroism and Holy War in Anglo-Saxon England' (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1997).

[88] John D. Niles, 'Introduction', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 7.

[89] Niles, 'Introduction', p. 8.

between the two phenomena (i.e., heroic poetry and secularly-controlled religious houses), asking in the conclusion to one article:

> Does the composition by a literate poet, who was probably therefore a cleric, of a great secular poem about the pagan kings of the past still seem anomalous in a society where monasteries function partly as the royal court and partly as royal family property, where bishops go to war, where Gospel books have begun to look like secular treasures, and where the adventures of saints resemble so closely those of heroes?[90]

The answer must be: certainly not! Indeed, Wormald continues, not only was *Beowulf* the literature '*par excellence*' of the Anglo-Saxon warrior-aristocracy, giving us 'a window on the otherwise closed and unknown thought-world' of that society, but 'the early English Church was, in a sense, dominated by aristocratic values itself'.[91] Moreover, these monastic scribes would have, in many cases, come from those same aristocratic families, 'awash', as Peter Brown says, 'with stories and maxims' that told elites 'how to behave as noble men and women'.[92] Hugh Magennis, too, has shown that the Christian monastic 'textual community' of vernacular Old English poetry would certainly not have been unfamiliar with the intricacies and standards of lay Anglo-Saxon life, of which they may very well have been a part.[93] Many of the leading churchmen (and, indeed, churchwomen) of the long tenth century were, after all, of royal or aristocratic lineage, or otherwise intimately connected to the upper echelons of secular society. Even the leading reformer Æthelwold was probably of noble birth, and served in a secular capacity at Æthelstan's court, where he was 'the king's inseparable companion', according to one source.[94] As such, it makes sense that these poetic texts might include Christian moral-didactic instruction as well as the promotion of the 'secular moral values' discussed above. Old English poetry can thus be read — recalling Havelock's conception earlier — as an 'encyclopaedia' of all of the things a (high-status) Anglo-Saxon should know, and thus perhaps also as a means of instilling that education.

German literary scholar Levin L. Schücking proposed in two articles from the earlier twentieth century that *Beowulf* was not really a 'Germanic' text at all (in

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[90] Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*', p. 58.
[91] Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*', p. 58.
[92] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, tenth-anniversary revised edition (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 477.
[93] Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 3–15.
[94] Wulfstan of Winchester, *Vita Æthelwoldi* 7.

the 'pagan', Tacitean sense), but rather a work written to present a specifically Augustinian form of Christian kingship, and one that might literally be read as an Old English mirror for princes.[95] Schücking's articles have received relatively little critical attention over the last century, though. While his article on 'Das Königsideal im Beowulf' appears in most bibliographies on the subject of *Beowulf*, and is frequently mentioned in these texts (or at least in footnotes), the vast majority of these references simply redirect the reader to Schücking's article (usually in translation from Nicholson's volume), hardly ever engaging critically with his arguments.[96] Eric Stanley's *In the Foreground: Beowulf*, for instance, vaguely summarises Schücking's thesis in one sentence ('Beowulf's kingship is analysed within the setting of the historical study of medieval European literature') and says that in Schücking's work 'we have moved away from the warriors of the Germanic Heroic Age to a world of courtliness, Christian courtliness.'[97] A number of historians have seized upon Schücking's theory, probably most notably Wallace-Hadrill, and this interpretation of *Beowulf* as a Christian *speculum* thus merits closer attention.[98]

Schücking's 'Königsideal' opens with the statement that, if one takes *Beowulf* as the result not of an ancient oral tradition but instead as the product of a single Anglo-Saxon author (regardless of date), then the 'leading ideas underlying its composition' become evident; the origins of the poem's — and its author's — ideas can be traced then more specifically than to a vague primitive paganism.[99] Schücking argues moreover that, if the *Beowulf* poet wanted to write a solely 'Germanic' epic, he could have done so much more clearly by choosing a different subject (e.g., the Continental hero Eormanric). The ideals that are apparent in *Beowulf*, though, he says, fit much more closely with those from an Augustinian

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[95] Levin L. Schücking, 'Wann Entstand der *Beowulf*? Glossen, Zweifel, und Fragen', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 42 (1917), 317–410; Levin L. Schücking, 'Das Königsideal im *Beowulf*', *MHRA Bulletin* III (1929), 143–154, reprinted as Levin L. Schücking, 'The Ideal of Kingship in *Beowulf*', in Nicholson, *Anthology*, pp. 35–49.

[96] Schücking's article in Nicholson's *Anthology* immediately precedes Tolkien's '*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics', and it is tempting to think many scholars skip straight past Schücking's shorter work to move onto that seminal essay. The only other substantial citation seems to be Scott Gwara, *Heroic Identity in the World of Beowulf* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 351–355. Other, usually brief, citations include: John D. Niles, 'Locating *Beowulf* in Literary History', *Exemplaria* 5:1 (1993), 79–109; David Rosen, 'The Armor of the Man-Monster in *Beowulf*', in *The Changing Fictions of Masculinity*, ed. by D. Rosen (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 1–26; R. E. Kaske, '*Sapientia* et *Fortitudo*'; F. H. Whitman, 'The Kingly Nature of Beowulf', *Neophilologus* 61:2 (1977), 277–286.

[97] Eric G. Stanley, *In the Foreground: Beowulf* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 16–17.

[98] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charlemagne and Offa', in *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 120–123.

[99] Schücking, 'Ideal', p. 35.

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Christian background, especially from the writings of 'Gregory the Great, Pseudo-Cyprian, Sedulius Scottus, Hincmar of Rheims, etc.,' whose texts promote the wise and just king who must put aside *amor sui* ('love of self') for *amor Dei* ('love of God').[100] Schücking also seeks to establish what particular ideals *Beowulf*-as-*speculum* might espouse, arguing that the key characteristic for the king in this ideological system is the king as good shepherd, which he also sees as a specifically paternal system.[101]

Wallace-Hadrill identifies *Beowulf* as courtly 'literature for entertainment' intended for a court audience of aristocratic warriors, 'though there is nothing in it to worry a court cleric'.[102] He suggests that the poem had its origins in the reign of Offa of Mercia (r. 757–796), and though it was not necessarily a traditional mirror for princes composed to instruct a ruler's son, it served to encourage and reassure its royal patron that 'the [Christian] virtues he was familiar with were also practised in an earlier time by his pagan ancestors: in brief, that he need not be ashamed of them but rather take courage from their example'.[103] The heroes of the poem, he argues, are 'the embodiment of the Christian kingly virtues and at the same time of those traditional pagan kingly virtues that were compatible with Christianity': justice, wisdom, piety, loyalty, faithfulness, peace, fatherliness, prudence, modesty, and so on.[104] Kingship in *Beowulf*, therefore, 'is no exhibition of blind, unbridled courage and fierce wrath, but something much nearer the ideal of Augustine, Gregory the Great, Pseudo-Cyprian, and Isidore' — quite a familiar list of sources by now![105]

The conception of *Beowulf*-as-*speculum* has, as noted above, received little critical attention. Yet it is not unknown in current discourse. Even Peter Brown, in his magisterial *Rise of Western Christendom*, states quite simply that 'Beowulf was very much a moral handbook'.[106] Thijs Porck, too, in his recent work on old age in

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[100] Schücking, 'Ideal', pp. 39*ff.*

[101] Wormald and others have also made the argument for later Anglo-Saxon kingship as a 'pastoral kingship': Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', p. 75. On this, see more below, Chapter 4.

[102] Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charlemagne and Offa', p. 121. Schücking ('Wann Entstand', p. 406) argues instead that the poem was commissioned by a ninth-century Scandinavian king in the Danelaw as a guide for his children, and as a means for them to learn the Anglo-Saxon language: '*Es ist durchaus denkbar, ohne daß man nähere anhaltspunkte finden könnte, daß in der folgezeit auf diesem boden ein skandinavischer fürst einen ihm bekannt gewordenen, berühmten englischen dichter aufforder, für seinen hof, möglicherweise im besondern hinblick auf seine in angelsächsischer Sprache zu unterrichtenden kinder, ein epos zu verfassen*'. ('It is quite conceivable, without one being able to find further evidence, that at this time in this place a Scandinavian prince had invited a prominent English poet, who had become known to him, to write an epic for his court, possibly in particular to instruct his children in the Anglo-Saxon language'.)

[103] Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charlemagne and Offa', p. 122.

[104] Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charlemagne and Offa', pp. 121–122.

[105] Wallace-Hadrill, 'Charlemagne and Offa', p. 122.

[106] Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 479.

Anglo-Saxon culture, argues that *Beowulf* should be read specifically as a 'mirror of elderly kings'.[107] Like Schücking, Porck places *Beowulf*'s composition in the reign of Offa, and proposes that the poem 'should be read within the historical context of the political problems that faced elderly kings in the early middle ages', and that it particularly addresses two models of elderly kingship: the passive, embodied by Hrothgar; and the active, embodied by Beowulf.[108] Whether or not this dating to Offa's reign is correct, this reading of *Beowulf* as a guide for aged kings does provide a possible explanation for why it may have been copied during the (notably lengthy) reign of Æthelred.[109] Porck's conclusions about *Beowulf* as a *speculum* for elderly kings, or any interpretation that posits the poem as having royal moral-instructional value, might therefore provide a model for understanding the wider genre of Old English 'heroic' texts as moral-didactic works, not only for kings but for the wider Christian Anglo-Saxon warrior-aristocracy overall.

It is, moreover, possible to envision moral instruction as an underlying purpose for the 'heroic' poetry of the various major Anglo-Saxon manuscripts beyond *Beowulf*. The poems of the *Beowulf* manuscript, for instance, have many linking characteristics, including comparisons between Good and Evil, and Self and Other, and good and bad kingship specifically.[110] The Exeter Book seems to have an overarching theme of instruction too, and the riddles may be evidence of — or indeed a *part* of — the 'continuous fascination with linguistic details' that characterizes Anglo-Saxon poetry.[111] Both the riddles and the poems can therefore easily be seen as a useful didactic tool to sharpen the reader's mind and instil concepts of right Christian behaviour. That behaviour expected of aristocratic men in 'heroic' poetry is the subject to which the remainder of this chapter now turns.

Christian Aristocratic Masculinity in 'Heroic' Poetry

The mead-hall has often been seen as the embodiment of Anglo-Saxon 'heroic' culture, and is perhaps the best place to start when investigating aristocratic

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[107] See particularly the chapter '*Ealde eðelweardas*: *Beowulf* as a Mirror of Elderly Kings', in Porck, 'Growing Old Among the Anglo-Saxons'.
[108] Porck, 'Growing Old', p. 187.
[109] Porck, 'Growing Old', pp. 213–214.
[110] See, for instance, Viljoen, '*Beowulf* Manuscript Reconsidered', which addresses the codex's theme of otherness and identity, and that theme's importance for the later Anglo-Saxon audience.
[111] Patrizia Lendinara, 'The World of Anglo-Saxon Learning', *CCOEL*, pp. 295–312.

masculinity in Old English poetry.[112] As the communal meeting-place of the ring-giving lord and his warband, the smoky hall full of warrior-thanes echoes in the popular mind with the din of drinking and the boasts of heroes. Heorot, 'high-timbered and gold-gabled, the most splendid building under the heavens', is quite literally at the heart of *Beowulf*: as centre of the community, Hrothgar's great hall is thus also the target of the stalking monster Grendel.[113] The *meadu-healle* also symbolises everything the speaker of *The Wanderer* laments losing: the *sela-dreamas* ('hall-joys') of the treasure-giver, the bright cup, the mailed warrior, and the chieftain's splendour.[114] In a memorable story from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, too, an unnamed thegn of Edwin, king of Northumbria (r. 616–633), tells the gathered men that the life of man is like a sparrow that flies in one open door, enjoying respite from the cold and snow and storms outside, before flying out again into the night, with the hall characterised by its warmth, safety, and community.[115] As one scholar has noted, 'The fellowship and commensality of hall-meetings, the opportunity to display membership of a community, was the whole point of them'.[116] It has even been proposed that the mead-drinking ritual within the hall — seen especially in the passing of the mead-cup around Heorot by Hrothgar's wife Wealhtheow — was part of a long-standing pre-Christian tradition, extending from the Iron Age to the Viking Age, that served to create a 'fictive family', with a lord and his cup-bearing wife becoming symbolic parents to their warrior sons.[117] The hall is thus a place built around the Anglo-Saxon lord-retainer bond, and aristocratic masculine behaviour more generally.[118]

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[112] Stephen Pollington, 'The Mead-Hall Community', *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), 19–33 (p. 19); Stephen Pollington, *The Mead-Hall: The Feasting Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England* (Hockwold-cum-Wilton: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2003); Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Barbara Raw, 'Royal Power and Royal Symbols in *Beowulf*', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. by M. O. H. Carver (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992), pp. 167–174 (pp. 168–169). Note, however, that Pollington is a problematic scholar who was formerly a trustee of a right-wing English nationalist organisation, and has worked on a number of books on Anglo-Saxon 'runecraft', magic, and paganism.
[113] *Beowulf* 307–311: '*Hy sæl timbred, geatolic ond goldfah ongyton mihton; þæt wæs foremærost foldbuendum receda under roderum, on þæm se rica bad; lixte se leoma ofer landa fela*'.
[114] *Wanderer* 93.
[115] Bede, *HE* II.10.
[116] Pollington, 'Mead-Hall Community', p. 29. Pollington is a problematic scholar at best, but he seems correct in this view, which is also a main theme in Magennis, *Images of Community*.
[117] Michael J. Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996).
[118] There are other obvious examples of masculine spaces, of course: the battlefield, the hunt, and, later, the medieval guildhall. On the connection between the mead-hall and the battlefield, see below.

Relatively little has been written on the mead-hall as a gendered space, however, and especially what it can say about Anglo-Saxon aristocratic masculinity. Probably the most significant work on the subject is a 1983 article by James W. Earl, in which he proposes a Freudian psychoanalytical approach to the 'ritual space' of the men's hall, and its role in creating an early Anglo-Saxon communal superego.[119] He sees the hall as a place embodying higher-status, masculine 'warrior' (and, importantly, 'civilized') culture on one hand, contrasted with the more feminine, 'primitive' world of the 'hut' outside.[120] Much of Earl's article, like much of the rest of the book in which it was reprinted, is quite problematic, with reviewers offering criticisms calling it everything from 'old-fashioned' to 'annoying', and noting Earl's 'breathtaking inexperience' with Norse sources (which 'the reader is advised simply to ignore') and especially his disregard for more recent theoretical trends that critique Freudian psychoanalytical approaches.[121] Nevertheless, Earl has certainly picked up on a number of important topics, not least of which is the parallel between the insular, masculine, ritualised space of the hall in 'heroic' culture, and the same insular, masculine, ritualised space of the Christian monastery.[122]

It must be noted, of course, that this simple dichotomy of the hall as an exclusively male space ignores the (often significant) place of women in the cultural world of the hall. Queens like Wealhtheow, for example, were expected to serve an important function not only as hostess, but as a 'peace-weaver' and a 'peace-builder of peoples'.[123] The Exeter Book poem *Maxims I*, too, specifically lays out the

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[119] James W. Earl, 'The Role of the Men's Hall in the Development of the Anglo-Saxon Superego', *Psychiatry* 46:2 (1983), 139–160; reprinted as '*Beowulf* and the Men's Hall' in James W. Earl, *Thinking About Beowulf* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 100–136.

[120] Earl, *Thinking*, pp. 114–124. Pollington echoes many of Earl's sentiments, and attempts to connect the dichotomy to a shift from a kin-based society to an oath-based society, which he likens to 'Vanir-worshipping agriculturalists and artisans' versus 'Æsir-worshipping leaders' (Pollington, *Mead-Hall*, pp. 108–109). Shift from kin- to oath-based society or not, Pollington's use of these Norse pantheons in talking about Anglo-Saxon society is particularly problematic, ahistorical, and, I would argue, quite unfounded.

[121] Lois Bragg, review of *Thinking about 'Beowulf'*, by James W. Earl, *South Atlantic Review* 60:3 (1995), 113–116; T. A. Shippey, review of *Thinking about 'Beowulf'*, by James W. Earl, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 96:2 (1997), 248–251; John M. Hill, review of *Thinking about 'Beowulf'*, by James W. Earl, *Modern Language Review* 92:1 (1997), 160–162. Eileen Joy has also recognised many of the book's faults, but acknowledges it still has many uses, particularly in the way Earl shows us that *Beowulf* 'presents and re-presents itself in past and present cultural contexts'; Eileen A. Joy, 'James W. Earl's *Thinking About Beowulf*: Ten Years Later', *The Heroic Age* 8 (2005).

[122] Earl, *Thinking*, pp. 124–129.

[123] *Beowulf* 1943, for instance, tells how Modthrytho was unqueenly because she had men killed rather than being a '*freoðuwebbe*' ('peace-weaver'), while the good queen Wealhtheow was the '*friðusibb folca*' (*Beowulf* 2017). This role has been explored more fully in Kathleen Herbert, *Peace-Weavers and Shield Maidens: Women in Early English Society* (Little Downham: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1997).

importance and place of the woman in the hall, with lord and wife sharing status as 'both possessors of the home together':

> *Bu sceolon ærest*
> *geofum god wesan.   Guð sceal in earle*
> *wig geweaxan,   ond wif geþeon*
> *leof mid hyre leodum,   leohtmod wesan,*
> *rune healdan,   rumheort beon*
> *mearum on maþmum,   meodorædenne*
> *for gesiðmægen   symle æghwær*
> *eodor æþelinga   ærest gegretan,*
> *forman fulle   to frean hond*
> *ricene geræcan,   ond him ræd witan*
> *boldagendum   bæm ætsomne.*[124]

So while the hall should thus not be conceptualized as a place featuring *only* men, it nevertheless remains a space centred around the political bonds of male lord and retainer, and one of the spaces in which male homosocial relationships were created and displayed through masculine performance.

The performance of aristocratic masculinity in 'heroic' poetry seems to revolve around one predominant activity: drinking. It is the drinking of mead in particular that appears to bond the lord and retainer (as well as the wife), even if Enright's thesis is not entirely believed.[125] The hall itself is often rendered specifically as the 'mead-hall', and the *god cyning* Scyld Scefing gained renown as plunderer of *meodosetla* ('mead-benches') from many peoples, indicating the close connection between place/space and culture.[126] Drinking accoutrements appear in a number of high-status male graves as well: Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo, for instance, contained two large drinking horns along with a large number of cups and a matching wooden bottle, while the probably contemporaneous Taplow burial also featured nearly twenty vessels for feasting and drinking.[127] It was also from a *gebeorscipe* ('beer-ship', 'drinking-party') that Cædmon escaped before being struck by divine inspiration, and the same kind of feasting was, in the Old English version of Bede's *Historia*

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[124] *Maxims I* 82–92: 'Both must above all be generous in gifts. Battle and war must flourish in the man, and the woman must thrive beloved among her people. She must be of bright manner and keep counsel, and she must be liberal with horses and treasures; in counsel over the mead among the band of warriors she must always and everywhere greet the leader of the noblemen first, immediately present the cup to her lord's hand; and she must understand what is wise for both of them together as possessors of the hall'. Trans. Hugh Magennis, 'Gender and Heroism in the Old English *Judith*', *Writing Gender and Genre in Medieval Literature: Approaches to Old and Middle English Texts*, ed. by Elaine Treharne (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), p. 6.

[125] Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup*.

[126] *Beowulf* 5.

[127] Pollington, *Mead-Hall*, pp. 145–146.

ecclesiastica, the setting for the aforementioned sparrow allegory. The drinking of mead is also closely associated with the related masculine performance of boasting, connecting the mead-hall with the battlefield as it is the place where a heroic warrior would make claims and oaths regarding coming conflict. The young warrior Ælfwine memorably rouses his companions in *The Battle of Maldon*, for instance, by encouraging them to

> 'Gemun[aþ] þa mæla   þe we oft æt meodo spræcon,
> þonne we on bence   beot ahofon,
> hæleð on healle,   ymbe heard gewinn;
> nu mæg cunnian   hwa cene sy.'[128]

Masculine performance in the mead-hall then, including drinking, is therefore explicitly connected to masculine performance on the battlefield.

And yet in early medieval Christian texts, strictures against drinking and drunkenness are commonplace. The *Paenitentiale Umbrense*, probably the earliest version of the *Paenitentiale Theodori* (or *Canones Theodori*), opens with a section *De crapula et ebrietate* ('On over-drinking and drunkenness'), which details the punishments to be meted out to both religious and lay violators. For laymen, the penitential recommends

> *Si fidelis laicus pro ebrietate uomitum facit, XV dies peniteat. Qui uero inebriatur contra domini interdictum, si uotum sanctitatis habuerit, VII dies in pane et aqua uel XX sine pinguidine peniteat; laici sine ceruisa. Qui per nequitiam inebriat alium, XL dies peniteat. Qui pro satietate uomitum facit, tribus diebus peniteat. Si cum sacrificio commonionis, VII dies peniteat. Si infirmitatis causa, sine culpa est.*[129]

Drunkenness seems to have been a preoccupation for the homilists of the late tenth century as well.[130] In his Mid-Lent Sunday homily discussing the eight major sins, in the second series of *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric frames the discussion of *gifernys* ('greed') in terms of gastronomic overindulgence:

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[128] *The Battle of Maldon* 212–215: 'Remember the speeches that we often at mead spoke, / when we on the bench loudly raised boasts, / heroes in the hall, about hard battle: / Now may we prove who is truly brave!' Old English text from Donald G. Scragg, ed., *The Battle of Maldon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981); translations mine unless otherwise noted.

[129] *Paenitentiale Umbrense* I.5–9: 'If a faithful layman vomits from drunkenness, let him do penance 15 days. He, especially, who gets drunk against the prohibition of his lord, if he has sacred vows, let him do penance 7 days on bread and water, or 20 days without oil; if he is of the laity, without beer. He who out of being glutted vomits, let him do penance three days. If it is during sacrament of communion, let him do penance 7 days. If it is because of sickness, he is without blame.' Text from 'The *Iudicia Theodori*', ed. by Michael D. Elliot, *Anglo-Saxon Canon Law* <http://individual.utoronto.ca/michaelelliot/manuscripts/texts/transcriptions/pthu.pdf> [accessed 13 August 2018].

[130] Elaine Treharne, *Gluttons for Punishment: The Drunk and Disorderly in Early English Homilies*, 24th Brixworth Lecture (Brixworth: Friends of All Saints' Church, 2007).

Gifernys bið þæt se man ær timan hine gereordige. oððe æt his mæle to micel ðicge, mid oferflowendnysse. ætes oððe wætes; Of ðisum leahtre beoð acennede. oferfyll. and druncennyss. and unclænnys lichaman. and modes unstæððignys. and ydel gaffetung. and fela oðre unðeawas. ðe woruldmen to nanum laðe ne taliað. oð þæt hi on ende hi eft gemetað.[131]

In his sermon for the first Sunday of Advent in the first series of *Homilies*, too, he writes that:

Druncennys is cwylmbære þing. 7 galnysse antimber; Salomon cwæð; Ne bið nan þing digele. þær ðær druncennys rixað; On oþre stowe beweop se ylca apostol. ungemetegodra manna lif. þus cweðende; Heora wamb is heora God. 7 heora ende is forwyrd. 7 heora wuldor on gescyndnysse.[132]

On the surface, Ælfric's view on the dangers of drinking, presumably shared by his contemporaries, seems quite clear.

Other texts by Ælfric and his contemporaries seem to show, on the other hand, that the drinking of alcoholic beverages in general was not necessarily frowned upon. In his *Colloquy*, for example, the character of the teacher asks his students about their drinking habits:

7 hwæt drincst þu? / Ealu, gif ic hæbbe, oþþe wæter gif ic næbbe ealu. / Ne drincst þu win? / Ic ne eom swa spedig þæt ic mæg bicgean me win; 7 win nys drenc cilda ne dysgra, ac ealdra 7 wisra.

Et quid bibis? / Ceruisam, si habeo, uel aquan si non habeo ceruisam. / Nonne bibis uinum? / Non sum tam diues ut possim emere mihi uinum; et uinum non est potus puerorum siue stultorum, sed senum et sapientium.[133]

Even for young boys, then, the drinking of ale (or other alcoholic beverages) was normal and commonplace, not something to be punished. Even the old and the wise, presumably including abbots and other senior monastics since these are students in a monastery, were not unaccustomed to drink, though their tastes seem to have been more refined. (Of course, wine would have been a centrally important part of Communion as well.) A famous, albeit later, entry from the *Abingdon Chronicle* also

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[131] Ælfric, *CH* II.12: 'It is greediness when a man takes food before his time, or at his meals eats too much, with overflowing of food or drink. Of this are born gluttony and drunkenness, and uncleanliness of body, and unsteadiness of mind, and idle obscenity, and many other vices, which worldly men account as no sin, until they at the end meet them again.'

[132] Ælfric, *CH* I.39, 79–82: 'Drunkenness is a death-bearing thing, and the material of libidinousness. Solomon said, "Nothing is secret where drunkenness reigns." In another place the same apostle bewailed the life of intemperate men, thus saying, "Their belly is their God, and their end is perdition and their glory in pollution."'

[133] Ælfric, *Colloquy* 298–302: 'And what do you drink? — Ale, if I have it, or water if I don't have ale. — Do you not drink wine? — No, I am not so rich that I can buy myself wine, and wine is not a drink for boys or fools, but for old and wise men'. Text from *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. by G. N. Garmonsway, revised edition (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1978).

appears to back up this notion that drinking was not totally disallowed by monastic reformers. During Æthelwold's tenure as abbot of Abingdon, the *Chronicle* says,

> *Ad mensuram potus monachorum vie venerabilis Atheluuoldus quadam assisam, non ultra rationabilem usfficientiam progredientem, nec citra deficientem, constitutuendam perutile fore dijudicavit. Constituit itaque scyfum quondam magnum, flasconem et dimidium, scilicet duas caritates, et eo amplius, in se plearie continentem; quem scyfum antique Bollam Atheluuoldi vocabant.*[134]

This was not the great reformer's only association with drink either, and further evidence that drinking was not necessary frowned upon by these leading churchmen comes directly from Wulfstan Cantor's *Vita Æthelwoldi*. On the occasion of a royal visit to Æthelwold's abbey of Abingdon, the hagiographer recounts, Eadred was greeted with a great party, and ordered '*abunde propinare hospitibus ydromellum*'; no matter how much the entourage drank over the course of a whole day (and the hagiographer specifically notes how much the Northumbrians in the party happily indulged), the supply never ran low — thanks, one assumes, to the divine favour of Æthelwold.[135]

It seems thus that, in most cases, Ælfric and other Christian writers are not so much opposed to drinking as to a *lack of moderation* in drinking, especially amongst the laity, and specifically (in the sources at least) lay *men*, though women almost certainly took part too. At the end of his letter to Sigeweard of Asthall, for instance, the homilist notes that, on a previous visit to his estate, the nobleman encouraged him to drink more than he was used to, and roundly chastises him for such encouragement:

> *Du woldest me laðian þa þa ic wæs mid þe þæt ic swiðor drunce swilce for blisse ofer minum gewunan. Ac wite þu leofman þæt se þe oðerne neadað ofer his mihte to drincenne þæt se mot aberan heora begra gild gif him ænig hearm of ðam drence becymð. Ure Hælend Crist on his halgan godspelle forbead þone oferdrenc eallum gelyfedum mannum. Healde se ðe wille his gesetnysse. Þa halgan lareowas æfter þam Hælende aledon þone unðeaw þurh heora lareowdom and tæhton þæt man drince swa swa hi ne derede. Forðan þe se oferdrenc fordeð untwilice þæs mannes sawles and his gesundfulneysse. Unhæl becymð of þam drence.*[136]

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[134] *Abingdon Chronicle*: 'The venerable Æthelwold decided it would be quite expedient to establish a certain ration for the monks' drink, not excessive beyond reason — but not too little either. So he set up a certain great vessel holding fully a gallon and a half, two *caritates* or more. In the old days they called this vessel "Æthelwold's bowl."' Text and translation from David W. Porter, 'Æthelwold's Bowl and *The Chronicle of Abingdon*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 97:2 (1996), 163–167 (p. 164).

[135] Wulfstan of Winchester, *Life of St Æthelwold* 12: The king ordered that 'the guests be served with lavish draughts of mead'.

[136] Ælfric, *Letter to Sigeweard*: 'You wished to invite me, when I was with you, that I drink more for pleasure beyond my want. But know, my beloved man, that he who compels another to drink beyond his strength, that one bears the cost of both if any harm comes of that drinking. Our Saviour Christ in his holy gospel forbade over-drinking to all those who believe. Let he who wishes to uphold this decree. The holy teachers, after the Saviour, set down the sins through their teaching and taught that

This passage seems to imply that it was not drinking itself that Ælfric opposed, but drinking *too much*. Drinking, therefore, was acceptable and normal practice, within reasonable limits: problems only arise, that is, when drinkers are immoderate.

Despite the apparent centrality of mead-drinking amongst aristocratic males in 'heroic' poetry, the promotion of moderation in drinking is in fact common throughout the corpus of Old English poetry too.[137] The Exeter Book wisdom poem *Vainglory*, which contrasts the life of the good, wise man with that of the evil, immoral one who is termed 'the devil's own child', specifically frames the evil one as a drunkard whose words are full of boastful, violent rhetoric:

> *Siteþ symbelwlonc   searwum læteð*
> *wine gewæged   word ut faran;*
> *þræfte þringan   þrymme gebyrmed,*
> *æfæstum onæled,   oferhygda ful,*
> *niþum nearowrencum.   Nu þu cunnan meaht,*
> *gif þu þyslicne   þegn gemittest*
> *wunian in wicum.   Wite þe be þissum*
> *feawum forðspellum   þæt þæt biþ feondes bearn*
> *flæsce bifongen,   hafað fræte lif.*[138]

The deadly results of drunkenness and the immoderation it causes are also obvious in *The Fortunes of Men*:

> *Sumum meces ecg   on meodu-bence*
> *Yrrum ealo-wosan   ealdor oþþringeð*
> *Were win-sadum   bið ær his worda to hræd*
> *Sum sceal on beore   þurh byreles hond*
> *Meodu-gal mæcga   þon he gemet ne con*
> *Gemearcian his muþe   mode sine*
> *Ac sceal ful earmlice   ealdre linnan*
> *Dreogan dryhten-bealo   dreamum biscyred*
> *7 hine to sylf-cwale   secgas nemnað*
> *mænaþ mid muþe   meodu-gales gedrunc.*[139]

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man should drink so as not to injure himself. For over-drinking doubtless destroys a man's soul and his health. Illness comes from drinking'.

[137] Anglo-Saxons were not the only group to identify the connection between drunkenness and a loss of mental capacity. The Old Norse *Hávamál*, recorded in the late thirteenth-century Codex Regius, includes several stanzas (*Hávamál* 12–15, 19) that reference the problems of ale-drinking, many especially related to its deleterious effects on mental state. Carolyne Larrington, 'Sayings of the High One', *The Poetic Edda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[138] *Vainglory* 40–48: 'He sits, ebullient with feasting; overcome with wine, he artfully lets words go forth, push pugnaciously, engorged with violence, afire with spite, evils, treacherous tricks; full of pride. Now you can recognise him, if you meet such a man dwelling in the places people reside. Know by these few words of instruction that that one is the devil's child enclosed in flesh, and that he has a shameful life'.

[139] *Fortunes of Men* 51–57: 'Sometimes the sword's edge steals the life / of an ale-drinker or a wine-weary man /at the mead-bench. His words are too quick. / Another drinks beer from the cup-bearer's hand, / grows drunk as a mead-fool, forgets to check / his mouth with his mind, seeks

The framing device of this poem is that it is the role of parents to 'cuddle and coax' their child, 'teaching him and train him', until he must go out and find his fate, and it notes specifically the problems of the drunken mead-fool.[140]

Here, *Fortunes* follows a relatively widespread theme of *parental* instruction that is apparent in other places as well.[141] A similar take on the dangers of over-drinking is evident in the poem *Precepts*, discussed above in Chapter 1.[142] Previously given the title '*A Father's Instruction to His Son*' by Thorpe in the mid-nineteenth century, *Precepts* — along with other homiletic poems like *The Gifts of Men* and *Vainglory* — is set within the Exeter Book between two of the best-known elegiac poems of the Anglo-Saxon corpus, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, but has attracted far less attention. Indeed, earlier twentieth-century scholarship found the poem to be of little interest, calling it simply an 'uninspired admonition' full of 'platitudinous advice' dredged up from 'the debris or spoil heaps of the monastic tradition'.[143] More recent scholars, though, have begun to see *Precepts* as something rather more worthy of study. In the poem, the wise father (OE '*frod fæder*') addresses his son on ten occasions, exhorting him each time to follow a series of virtues that include religious piety, generosity, and temperance. (It should perhaps be noted, of course, that a number of scholars have interpreted this relationship as not one between a biological father and son, but between a wise abbot and his monastic son/monk; whether or not this interpretation is correct, it does not detract from its general use as a moral-didactic text set specifically in a parental, or even paternal, context.)[144] The father of *Precepts* addresses drunkenness specifically in the fifth conversation with his son:

> *Fiftan siþe   fæder eft ongon*
> *breostgeþoncum   his bearn læran:*
> *'Druncen beorg þe   ond dollic word,*

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suffering, / finds fate, life's joyless end. / Men call him a mead-wild self-slayer, / give him an unholy name in words'. (Trans. Williamson.)

[140] *Fortunes* 4.

[141] Elaine Tuttle Hansen, 'Hrothgar's Sermon in *Beowulf* as Parental Wisdom', *ASE* 10 (1991), 53–67; E. T. Hansen, '*Precepts*: An Old English Instruction', *Speculum* 56:1 (1981), 1–16.

[142] Benjamin Thorpe, ed., 'A Father's Instruction to His Son', *Codex Exoniensis: A Collection of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Pickering, 1842), pp. 301–305.

[143] Stanley B. Greenfield, *A Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 202; Morton Bloomfield, 'Understanding Old English Poetry', *Annuale Medievale* 9 (1968), 5–25 (p. 17).

[144] Sandra McEntire, 'The Monastic Context of Old English "Precepts"', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 91:2 (1990), 243–249; Michael D. C. Drout, 'Possible Instructional Effects of the Exeter Book "Wisdom Poems": A Benedictine Reform Context', in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence*, ed. by Patrizia Lendinara, L. Lazzari, and M. A. D'Aronco (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 447–466.

> *man on mode   ond in muþe lyge,*
> *yrre ond æfeste   ond idese lufan*
> *[…]   Wes þu a giedda wis,*
> *wær wið willan   worda hyrde.'*[145]

Ælfric makes the same connection, too, in a homily for the second Sunday after Pentecost, where he discusses the nobles' *gebeorscipe* and their resulting 'injurious' words, which he says must be punished 'through righteous retribution': '*hit is gewunelic þæt ða welegan on heora gebeorscipe begað deriendlice gaffetunge; þa wæs seo tunge þurh rihtwisnysse edlean teartlicor gewitnod for his gegafspræce*'.[146] This passage appears to be an expansion of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16:19–31, which condemns the arrogant rich man for his greed.[147] There is a twist, however: the biblical passage never actually makes mention of feasting and rather, in the original version, the rich man begs for the poor Lazarus to cool his tongue with water. The connection between (male) aristocrats, the *gebeorscipe*, and their mocking words, seems to be an Anglo-Saxon, perhaps even Ælfrician, invention, and is yet another indication of the connection these tenth-century writers drew between aristocratic drunkenness, immoderation, and immorality.

Accusations of arrogant and immoderate behaviour, and their use as indicating wrong or bad masculinity, appear elsewhere in Old English 'heroic' poetry too. In his challenge to the eponymous hero, Unferð, the *þyle* of Hrothgar, criticises Beowulf's foolhardy, youthful arrogance:

> *Eart þu se Beowulf   se þe wið Brecan wunne*
> *on sidne sæ   ymb sund flite,*
> *ðær git for wlence   wada cunnedon*
> *ond for dolgilþe   on deop wæter*
> *aldrum neþdon?*[148]

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[145] *Precepts* 32–42: 'A fifth time, the father began / from his breast-coffer to teach his son: / 'Shelter yourself from drunken and daft words, / malicious in your mind, and lying in your mouth — / anger and spite and lechery for the ladies. / […] Always be wise of your reasons, / wary against your desires, a warden of your words'.

[146] Ælfric, *CH* I.23, 69–71: 'It is usual that the wealthy, in their feasts, practice injurious mocking; thus was his [the rich man's] tongue, through righteous retribution, more harshly punished for his mocking speech'.

[147] Malcolm Godden, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary, and Glossary*, EETS S.S. 16 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 183; Jane Roberts, '"Consider Lazarus": A Context for Vercelli Homily VII', in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. by Stuart McWilliams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 75–86 (p. 81–82).

[148] *Beowulf* 506–510: 'Are you that Beowulf who strove against Breca, on the wide sea striving in swimming, where you two in arrogance tempted the waters and in foolish pride on the deep sea risked your life?'

Beowulf responds with a series of accusations of his own, about Unferð's drunkenness, boastfulness, and cowardice:

> *Hwæt þu worn fela,   wine min Unferð,*
> *Beore druncen,   ymb Brecan spræce*
> […]
> *Secge ic þe to soðe,   sunu Ecglafes,*
> *þæt næfre Grendel swa fela   gryra gefremede*
> […]   *gif þin hige wære*
> *sefa swa searogrim   swa þu self talast.*[149]

Karin E. Olsen has recently argued that these charges are aimed at discrediting Unferð's 'personal integrity', but that unlike similar Scandinavian and Irish contests, neither speaker in the Anglo-Saxon poem makes any explicit charges of effeminacy. [150] But moderation — involving temperance, control of emotion, moderated speech, and so on — seems to be a trait clearly connected with right masculine behaviour. As such, accusations of effeminacy need not be made explicitly, because the real insult is that the target is not behaving *as a man should* in general.

This connection between drunkenness, immorality, and masculinity is most evident — perhaps surprisingly — in Anglo-Saxon treatments of the deuterocanonical Old Testament story of Judith. In the original Old Testament story, the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar desires to bring the whole world under his control, and sends out his general Holofernes to conquer near and far, defeating every nation and throwing down their religious sites. When the commander finally comes to the Israelite city of Bethulia, the fearful inhabitants beg the town's leaders to surrender, and they agree to do so if God has not delivered them in five days. The virtuous widow Judith, however, refuses to surrender; she shames the leaders of the town, arguing that the Bethulians should 'set an example for [their] kindred', and vows to end the conflict. She prays to God for strength, makes herself beautiful in her finest clothes and jewellery, and departs for the Assyrian camp, accompanied by her handmaiden who carries wine, oil, and food. Beguiling Holofernes, Judith waits for him to drink himself into a stupor, then beheads him with his own sword when he falls asleep. She escapes in the night, directing the men of Bethulia to hang the

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[149] *Beowulf* 530–531, 590–594: 'So! Many things have you, my friend Unferð, drunk on beer, said about Breca. […] I say to you in truth, son of Ecglaf, that never would Grendel so many atrocities have committed if your heart were as you yourself tell it, your spirit so battle-grim'.
[150] Olsen, *Conceptualizing the Enemy*, p. 211.

Assyrian's head from the wall and to prepare for battle the following morning. When the enemy army discover their commander's death, they panic, and are then cut down and destroyed by the men of Bethulia accompanied by hosts from the other Israelite cities.

The story seems to have been a popular one in the later Anglo-Saxon period, appearing twice in the writings of Ælfric and serving as the inspiration for the (now incomplete) 'heroic' *Judith* poem in the Nowell Codex. This interest is perhaps unsurprising, especially during the later years of the tenth century, as a story in which the primary conflict is that between the salvific power of God against the military might of a foreign, heathen army.[151] While much of the scholarship on the Judith story focuses on her as a woman carrying out masculine duties, it is not inconceivable to read Ælfric's text and the Judith poem as masculine moral-didactic texts too. Ælfric, for his part, seems to have had little problem using Judith as a role model for both men and women. His homily on Judith appears to have been directed primarily to a monastic audience of nuns, and as a virtuous widow woman, particularly one whose primary feature is her '*clænnysse*' ('chastity'), Judith would certainly have been a fitting model.[152] On the other hand, Ælfric's other use of the book, in a letter to the thegn Sigeweard of Asthall, is directed specifically at lay aristocratic men. He writes there that '*Seo ys eac on englisc on ure wisan gesett eow mannum to byrne baet ge eowerne eard mid waemnum bewerian wið onwinnendne here*'.[153] Despite having a specifically female protagonist, the story nonetheless has a masculine moral-didactic purpose, spurring those warrior-aristocrats to defend their besieged homeland just like the virtuous widow Judith in the homily.

Moreover, if Anglo-Saxon men were expected to act like the heroic Judith, defending their lands from foreign hosts, perhaps, too, they were also expected to reject the immoral behaviour of Holofernes, who, in the poem, is, interestingly, described like any 'good' Anglo-Saxon lord.[154] Holofernes, the Assyrians' '*goldwine*', holds a great feast for all his warriors, '*wlance to wingedrince*' ('bold in wine-drinking'),

[151] Zaine Ridling, ed., 'Introduction to Judith', *The Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books – New Revised Standard Version* (1989).

[152] Stuart D. Lee, *Ælfric's Homilies on* Judith, Esther, *and* Maccabees (1999), <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/ kings/main.htm> [accessed 11 September 2018]

[153] Ælfric, *Letter to Sigeweard*, 361–363: 'It is also translated into English in our way as an example for you men, that you eagerly guard with weapons against the attacking army'.

[154] R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, 'Biblical Literature', in *A History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 106–119 (p. 117).

with full cups for all those on his mead-benches.[155] He becomes overjoyed in drinking ('*on gytesalum*'), and embodies the dangerous, immoral drunkenness mentioned above: laughing, bellowing, and storming about, before finally ordering Judith be brought to his tent, where, unbeknownst to him, his drunkenness would soon lead to his own destruction.[156] More interestingly, Holofernes is transformed from a general in the OT book to a king in the OE poem, though unlike the wise Hrothgar in *Beowulf*, he certainly is not a *god cyning*. Instead, his drunkenness — that is, his immoderate behaviour — is the very thing that brings about his own death, as well as the collapse and defeat of his entire army. Judith, who refuses to take part in drinking and feasting (even to the point of bringing her own food into the camp), thus remains virtuous — and more importantly, in the end, victorious.[157]

In many of these Old English texts, a connection regarding improper masculine behaviour is drawn specifically between drunkenness and unregulated or otherwise impulsive speech. The main problem of drunkenness is not the consumption of alcohol in and of itself, but the effects of over-drinking and drunkenness on the mind of the drinker, leading to the inability to control one's behaviour, embodied in a tendency toward rash or boastful speech.[158] Moderation in speech and action, conversely, is promoted in a number of 'heroic' texts, even passages not related to drunkenness. In a famous passage from *The Wanderer*, for instance, the exiled speaker intones:

> *Ic to soþe wat*
> *þæt biþ in eorle   indryhten þeaw,*
> *þæt he his ferðlocan   fæste binde,*
> *healde his hordcofan,   hycge swa he wille.*[159]

He further advises that

> *Forþon ne mæg weorþan wis   wer, ær he age*
> *wintra dæl in woruldrice.   Wita sceal geþyldig,*
> *ne sceal no to hatheort   ne to hrædwyrde,*
> *ne to wac wiga   ne to wanhydig,*
> *ne to forht ne to fægen,   ne to feohgifre*

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[155] *Judith* 17.

[156] *Judith* 21–32; 34–37.

[157] Indeed, Judith's characteristic *clænnysse*, or chastity, may well have been another trait the poet, and Ælfric, intended their masculine audiences to emulate, on which see more below, Chapter 4.

[158] Boasting in *Beowulf* has been discussed in a number of articles; see, for example: Dwight Conquergood, 'Boasting in Anglo-Saxon England: Performance and the Heroic Ethos', *Literature and Performance* 1:2 (1981), 24–35; Marie Nelson, '*Beowulf*'s Boasting Words', *Neophilologus* 89 (2005), 299–310.

[159] *Wanderer* 11–14: ' […] I know it truly, // that it is in a man / a noble custom // that he bind fast / his soul-enclosure // Hold tight his thought-hoard, / however he may feel'.

> *ne nǽfre gielpes to georn,   ǽr he geare cunne.*[160]

The wise father of *Precepts*, too, specifically tells his son that '*Hǽle sceal wisfǽst // ond gemetlice, / modes snottor, // gleaw in gehygdum, / georn wisdomes*'.[161] Moderation is not only important in itself, then, but also serves as a marker of wisdom. It is this Christian wisdom that, in fact, appears to be a key virtue in a number of Old English 'heroic' poems. Moreover, this connection between moderation and wisdom, and drunkenness as the opposite, had a longstanding tradition in Christian writings, perhaps most notably in the work of the late-antique writer John Cassian. In the twelve books of his *Institutes* (*De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis libri XII*), the monk and theologian explores the eight principal sins, of which gluttony is the first and most common.[162] As Elaine Treharne, amongst others, has shown, Cassian's concern with gluttony is 'intimately allied with all other aspects of immoderate behaviour — and particularly lust and wantonness'.[163] This Christian concern for self-control against lust will be further explored in Chapter 4 below, but is yet another example of a widely-held notion, in early medieval Europe and Anglo-Saxon England in particular, of drunkenness and its associated behaviour as a sins to be corrected.[164]

The Wanderer, usually considered one of the most specifically 'heroic' of the Anglo-Saxon vernacular poems, is on its surface a poem about the sufferings of a man who has outlived his lord and kinsmen, and who now lives the solitary life as a wanderer; he treads the exile's path ('*wræclastas*') and laments the loss of his old (aristocratic, warrior) life, which appears in his dreams only to fade away again each morning. The poem follows two strands, however: the first-person account of the wanderer himself, musing on the loss of all those 'heroic' traits of lord, hall, and treasure; and third-person gnomic passages describing universal truths. As Bjork has

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[160] *Wanderer* 69–74: 'Thus a man may not be wise before he's had his share / Of winters in the worldly. A wise man must be patient / And must not be too hot-headed, nor too hasty to speak / Nor too weak a warrior, nor too reckless / Nor too fearful, nor too cheerful, nor too greedy of wealth, / Nor eager of boasting, before he knows things clearly'.

[161] *Precepts* 86–88: 'A wise warrior must be moderate, keen of mind, perceptive in his thoughts, eager for lore'.

[162] Iohannis Cassiani [John Cassian], *De Institutis Coenobiarum et de Octo Principalium Uitorium Remediis Libri XII*, ed. by M. Petschenig, CSEL 17 (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1888).

[163] Treharne, *Gluttons for Punishment*, pp. 6–9.

[164] On Cassian in (early) Anglo-Saxon England, see Stephen Lake, 'Knowledge of the Writings of John Cassian in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 32 (2003), 27–41; on Cassian, sex, and ascetic masculinity, see Conrad Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', in Hadley, *Masculinity*, pp. 103–120.

argued, the poem also follows the eponymous wanderer on a journey to understand those sorts of truths: a journey from 'a troubled soul […] who is subject to the vagaries of the world' to one '*snottor on mode* ('wise in mind') who has managed to move from his personal problems to a universal, eschatological vision bespeaking an absolute hope'.[165] The speaker is, in a way, coming to terms with his status as exile (i.e., being removed from the 'heroic' world of the lord-retainer bond), but Bjork goes on to suggest that this development is part of the speaker leaving behind his pagan world-view of the *comitatus* and joining a Christian world of wisdom, even transforming 'the relatively helpless *anhaga*, trapped in his earthly, cultural surroundings, into the sage who transforms the inferior, world-bound, essentially hopeless exile track of the Germanic world into the superior, heaven bound, hope-filled exile track of the Christian faith'.[166] There is little reason to think of these poems as discussing Anglo-Saxon paganism in itself, though, as this chapter has shown. It is perhaps better, then, to think of the transition within the poem as not one from pagan to Christian, but instead from a position of (secular) ignorance to one of (Christian) wisdom. The poem's entire (somewhat enigmatic) structure may, in fact, even be based on Christian scriptural tradition, and specifically with the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes.[167] In both theme and structure, *The Wanderer* seems to mirror the Old Testament book, both fitting in with the wider genre of wisdom literature:

> It is fruitful to realise that the poet knew about the non-New Testament wisdom books, their philosophy, aspects of their imagery, and aspects of their structure (especially that of *Eccles'*). With this knowledge taken into account, the enigma of the sudden change in tone can be satisfactorily accounted for: the Anglo-Saxon poet was following a structural precedent, emulating a well-known work of the same genre. [168]

Moreover, de Lacy argues, it is 'this expert fusion of Bible-derived philosophy and structure with traditional elements that has caused so much confusion, and eluded explanation for so long', though it should be clear by now that such a fusion was in

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[165] Robert E. Bjork, '*Sundor æt rune*: The Voluntary Exile of The Wanderer', *Neophilologus* 73 (1989), 119–129 (p. 119).
[166] Bjork, '*Sundor æt rune*', p. 126.
[167] Paul de Lacy, 'Thematic and Structural Affinities: *The Wanderer* and *Ecclesiastes*', *Neophilologus* 82 (1998), 125–137.
[168] De Lacy, 'Thematic', pp. 133–134.

no way unthinkable.[169] This knowledge, and use, of proverbs and wisdom texts is not exclusive to *The Wanderer*, however, and is widespread in the 'heroic' tradition.[170]

Perhaps the most famous example of this type of wisdom literature in Old English poetry is the *Beowulf* passage now generally known as 'Hrothgar's Sermon' (ll. 1699–1784). The passage has often been considered somewhat of an anomaly. After the heroic successes of Beowulf and the freeing of Heorot from the scourge of Grendel and his vengeful mother, one would expect celebration and feasting, but instead, the hall falls silent and the wise old king intones a long moralistic proclamation on the evils of pride and the value of wisdom. The end of Hrothgar's sermon makes the moral of the story clear:

> *Bebeorh þe ðone bealocið,   Beowulf leofa,*
> *secg betsta,   ond þe þæt selre geceos*
> *ece rædas;   oferhyda ne gym*
> *mære cempa.*[171]

By this point in the poem, Beowulf has thrice been recognized as the son that Hrothgar wanted, both by Hrothgar himself and his wife. This passage must therefore, Hansen argues, be 'recognized as the conventional admonitory address of a wise king and father to a young prince, a "set piece" of wisdom literature' found throughout a wide variety of early European sources.[172] This theme of parental instruction in wisdom literature is most obvious, of course, in *Precepts*, the opening and closing lines of which stress the importance of wisdom to a young man:

> *Þus frod fæder   freobearn lærde,*
> *modsnottor mon,   maga cystum eald,*
> *wordum wisfæstum* […]
> 　　　　　　　*'Swa þu, min bearn, gemyne*
> *frode fæder lare   ond þec a wið firenum geheald.'*[173]

Moreover, the father tells his son how one might achieve such wisdom, in words that closely echo the monastic ideals discussed here and above in Chapter 2:

> *'Snyttra bruceþ   þe fore sawle lufan*
> *warnað him wommas   worda ond dæda*

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[169] De Lacy, 'Thematic', pp. 134.

[170] See for instance Susan E. Deskis, *Beowulf and the Medieval Proverb Tradition* (Tempe: University of Arizona Press, 1996), esp. 139–157.

[171] *Beowulf* 1758–1761: 'Protect yourself from such wickedness, beloved Beowulf, best warrior; and choose the better: eternal counsels. Care not for pride, great champion!'

[172] Hansen, 'Hrothgar's Sermon', p. 61.

[173] *Precepts* 1–3, 93–94: 'Thus the aged father taught his free-born son, a man wise in mind, old in the virtue of his people, with these wise words […] "So, you, my boy, mind the teachings of your wise old father, and keep yourself from wickedness."'

> on sefan symle   ond soþ fremeð;
> bið him geofona gehwylc   gode geyced,
> meahtum spedig,   þonne he mon flyhð.'[174]

The advice here — that wisdom protects one from wickedness — would not be out of place in the writings of Ælfric, or indeed in *De XII*. As Pseudo-Cyprian specifically notes in his section on the *senex sine religione* ('old man without religion'), for instance:

> *Plus enim omnibus religioni operam dare senibus competit quos praesentis saeculi florida aetas transacta deserit. Cavendae sunt ergo homini duae particulae, quae in illius carne non veterescunt et totum hominem ad peccandum trahunt, cor videlicet et lingua, quia cor semper novas cogitationes machinari non desinit, lingua impigre loquitur quodcumque cor machinari senserit. Caveat ergo senilis aetas, ne istae iuvenescentes particulae totam sibi harmonium decipiant illudant.*[175]

Like the 'heroic' poetry above, Pseudo-Cyprian connects control over one's tongue, with its penchant for idle and immoderate talk, with wisdom.

The focus on manly moderation in 'heroic' poetry seems to run counter to one other central 'heroic' trait: the focus on gaining undying fame. Yet as with drinking, despite the genre's seeming obsession with glory and fame, many 'heroic' poems in fact seem to argue *against* the importance of such things. The famous '*Ubi sunt*' passage from *The Wanderer*, in fact, stresses how easily the trappings of the heroic life might be lost:

> *Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago?   Hwær cwom maþþumgyfa?*
> *Hwær cwom symbla gesetu?   Hwær sindon seledreamas?*
> *Eala beorht bune!   Eala byrnwiga!*
> *Eala þeodnes þrym!   Hu seo þrag gewat,*
> *genap under nihthelm,   swa heo no wære.*[176]

By the end of the poem, the speaker of *The Wanderer* in fact comes to the opposite conclusion to that of the *Maxims* writer, who said that 'glory is best', and finds that all things are *læne* ('fleeting'), and in vain:

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[174] *Precepts* 78–82: 'He enjoys wisdoms, who — for the love of his soul — always guards himself against disgrace of words and deeds in his self-keeping, and performs the truth; every gift will be augmented for him, profitable in power, when he flies away from wickedness'.

[175] *De XII* III.36–37, III.55–62: 'For it is fitting that old men should cultivate holiness and devotion more than other men, since the flowering time of this world has left (them). […] A man must beware of two things which never age in his flesh, which draw the whole body into sin, that is to say, the heart and the tongue. For the heart never ceases to imagine new thoughts and the tongue is always swift to give utterance to whatever the heart imagines. Therefore, let him who is old beware lest these youthful members disrupt the whole harmony of his body and through foolish actions degrade and scorn the dignity of the rest of the body'.

[176] *The Wanderer* 92–96: 'Where now has the horse gone? Where now the rider? Where now the treasure-giver? Where now the feasting-seats? Where now the hall's revels? Alas the bright cup! Alas the mailed warrior! Alas the proud prince! How that time has passed away, dark under night's helm, as though it never were'.

> *Her bið feoh læne,   her bið freond læne,*
> *her bið mon læne,   her bið mæg læne,*
> *eal þis eorþan gesteal   idel weorþeð!"*
> *Swa cwæð snottor on mode,   gesæt him sundor æt rune.*[177]

Fame, friendship, feasting-halls: all of these worldly things, keystones of the 'heroic' life, pass away, and all that is left is the man; he can only be remembered for living rightly, and should he fail to do that, is forced to live the life of the *anhaga*. This recognition of the transience of worldly goods might be read as an echo of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, which contrasts the earthly city with the divine City of God. The wise man, like Augustine, sees the conflict between the two, and concludes that, above all, man's eyes should be firmly turned toward the heavenly world. The passage also seems to echo a similar one from Boethius's *De consolatio philosophiae*:

> *Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,*
> *   quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?*
> *Signat superstes fama tenuis pauculis*
> *   inane nomen litteris.*
> *Sed quod decora novimus vocabula*
> *   num scire consumptos datur?*
> *Iacetis ergo prorsus ignorabiles*
> *   nec fama notos efficit.*
> *Quodsi putatis longius vitam trahi*
> *   mortalis aura nominis,*
> *cum sera vobis rapiet hoc etiam dies*
> *   iam vos secunda mors manet.*[178]

Barbara Yorke has recently demonstrated, though, that the Alfredian translation of Boethius, which also interestingly substitutes Weland for Fabricius (probably through connection with the Latin *faber*, 'smith'), actually concludes the opposite: That worldly fame can *never* be lost.[179] As she continues though, the OE Boethius's Weland is described as 'wise' (OE '*wisan*'), and remembered because of his 'skill' (OE '*cræft*'), a word that is often used to gloss the Latin word '*virtus*'. The term '*virtus*' has

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[177] *Wanderer* 108–111: 'Here money is fleeting, here friendship is fleeting, here man is fleeting, here family is fleeting; all this world's foundation shall fall empty. Thus spoke the man wise in mind, alone in counsel'.

[178] Boethius, *De consolatio philosophiae* II.7: 'Where are Fabricius's bones, that honourable man? What now is Brutus, or unbending Cato? Their fame survives in this: it has no more than a few slight letters shewing forth an empty name. We see their noble names engraved, and only know thereby that they are brought to naught. Ye lie then all unknown, and fame can give no knowledge of you. But if you think that life can be prolonged by the breath of mortal fame, yet when the slow time robs you of this too, then there awaits you but a second death'. Text from Boethius, *Philosophiae Consolatione*, ed. by Guilelmus (Wilhelm) Weinberger, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 67 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Timpsky, 1935); trans. by W. V. Cooper (London: J. M. Dent and Company, 1902).

[179] Yorke, 'King Alfred and Weland'.

etymological roots connecting it originally to both strength ('*vis*') and masculinity ('*vir*').[180] By the early middle ages, *virtus* had developed more specifically Christian overtones, and was associated in hagiography with the performance of miracles, following from an interpretation of a passage in Mark 5:25–34 which connects the two.[181] *Virtus* can thus be read not only as 'skill', but also as something that is the product of devotion, granted to the believer or saint according to his (or her) merit.[182] The Old English translation of Boethius also uses the same word to describe the *cræft* of a king and the 'tools and resources' he needs to 'virtuously and worthily guide and direct the authority which is entrusted' to him.[183] It is thus perhaps wrong to say that Christian theology might be opposed to the idea that 'glory is best', provided that that glory or fame is derived not from worldly goods and achievements, but from wisdom, virtue, and moral rectitude.

This connection certainly helps explain how glory and fame might survive in 'heroic' poetry of the Christian era, but does lead to one other conundrum. The 'heroic' king is not only a political and military leader, after all, but also his followers' *goldwine* and *beahgifa*, in return for which generosity his retainers pledge their loyalty even to the point of death. The role of the king as gold-giver is even his defining feature in the gnomic wisdom of *Maxims II*:

> *Draca sceal on hlæwe,*
> *frod, frætwum wlanc.   Fisc sceal on wætere*
> *cynren cennan.   Cyning sceal on healla*
> *beagas dælan.*[184]

Just as it is normal for the dragon (a proud or perhaps even 'arrogant' creature) to hoard its treasure in its habitat, a fish in its proper place increases its following; the king here, the opposite of the greedy wyrm, increases his following by giving out treasure rather than hoarding it. For scholars attempting to find a Christian world-view in *Beowulf*, this seeming obsession with wealth and treasure has been a difficult thing to reconcile. This relationship seems to run counter to the Christian notion of leaving behind the worldly in exchange for eternal life; Christ, after all, famously told

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[180] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XI.17. '*Homo*', Isidore says, is from *humus*, or 'the earth', from which mankind was born, while a man, on the other hand, is called '*vir*' because 'in him resides greater power (*vis*) than in a woman', who is named for her softness ('*mulier*' coming from '*mollior*', or 'softer').
[181] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 155–156.
[182] Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, p. 156.
[183] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 132.
[184] *Maxims II* 26–29: 'A dragon must abide in the barrow, / Wily, and proud with treasure. A fish must in water / Spawn its kin. A king must in his hall / Deal out rings'.

his followers in the Gospel of Matthew that it is 'easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven', and biblical texts are replete with warnings against earthly greed.[185] How, then, can this interest — or even obsession — with treasure in 'heroic' poetry be reconciled with a Christian world-view? The passage from *Maxims II* is perhaps helpful in making a distinction here: the dragon, an arrogant beast and one not to be emulated, hoards its gold in the barrow, while the king in his hall, though just as wealthy, *distributes the treasure* rather than keeping it for himself. The having of wealth is not the problem; it is the *hoarding* of it for one's self that is troublesome. The Bible, after all, never says that money is the root of all evil, as is so often (mis-)quoted; it is in fact 'the love of money' that is the root of all evil.[186] Christian writers of the early medieval period often wrote similarly.[187] Pseudo-Cyprian, for instance, argues that

> *Quartus abusionis gradus est dives sine elemosyna, qui superflua conversationis suae quae custodienda in posterum recondit indigentibus et nihil habentibus non distribuit. […] Non ergo dormiat in thesauris tuis…*[188]

It is thus reasonable to read this as an argument that, by giving out one's wealth, one earns the love of neighbours, and perhaps even the support of loyal men. Ælfric's translation adds that there are many ways for a man to give alms: not only giving the poor food and drink and clothing, or giving hospitality to strangers, but also giving 'advice to someone who is in need of advice; or if one pardons someone who offended one', or by punishing the wicked man because 'he practices mercy if he corrects the man'.[189]

Joseph E. Marshall's recent article on the subject of Christianity and Anglo-Saxon gift-giving also argues quite convincingly as well that having treasure *and distributing it* is not necessarily an un-Christian or immoral trait. Previous critics' arguments about the concept of avarice and greed in *Beowulf*, and presumably other 'heroic' works, miss the mark: Beowulf may want to defeat the dragon and take its

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[185] Matthew 19:24.

[186] 1 Timothy 6:10: 'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains'.

[187] This is the central point of Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, The Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[188] *De XII* 105–114: 'The fourth step of abuse is a rich man without almsgiving, who hoards up for the future the surplus of his material acquisitions, which he does not need, for safekeeping, distributing nothing to the poor or needy. Thus whilst he guards with diligence the things he has acquired upon Earth he forfeits the everlasting treasure of the heavenly home. […] Do not, therefore, let that treasure lie dormant…'

[189] Ælfric, *De XII* IV.40–54; Clayton, *TÆT*, pp. 118–119.

treasure, but the poet insists he is taking that treasure to give to his people, not to hoard for himself. And though he dies in the venture, the eponymous hero is not interred with all of his riches like the often-compared Sutton Hoo king, and instead leaves everything to Wiglaf, and to his people. Marshall argues that, in fact,

> The same sources that critics use to denounce Beowulf, namely patristic writings and the Bible, show that treasure, in Christian doctrine and in *Beowulf*, is not inherently evil or good by itself but merely an instrument that can be used to benefit others or enjoyed selfishly for its own sake.[190]

The giving of worldly wealth is also common theme in Anglo-Saxon charters, particularly with regard to land granted to churches in exchange for prayers or heavenly reward. The proem of a charter of 982, in which Æthelred grants ten hides at Rodbourne, Wiltshire, to Abbot Æthelweard and Malmesbury Abbey, for instance, records that the king bestowed that land '*aeterna caducis mercari cupiens*'.[191] Æthelred's famous 'penitential' charter of 993, restoring the rights of Abingdon, blames the misfortunes of the kingdom on the '*philargiria*' (greediness) of his counsellors, but it too makes its concessions in exchange for God's mercy. A similar sort of theory might also be applied to Æthelstan's relic-collecting; indeed, as Julia Smith has shown, his purchasing of relics — using transitory treasures to purchase everlasting ones — was both an indicator of pious generosity as well as a shrewd political tool that could be used to convert 'economic capital into symbolic capital'.[192] Thus the 'heroic' ideal of the gold-giving king — like much of the material of 'heroic' poetry — is not far removed from Christian ideals either, and in fact was a crucial aspect of rulership in the tenth century.[193]

Conclusions

While not written explicitly as a record of Anglo-Saxon social norms, Old English poetry has much to say about masculine aristocratic expectations. For over a century, scholars have used these texts to paint a picture of the 'heroic' world of Anglo-Saxon England in the context of a wider early medieval 'Germanic' cultural practice. Yet as this chapter has shown, these texts, read and copied into their

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[190] Joseph E. Marshall, '*Goldgyfan* or *Goldwlance*: A Christian Apology for Beowulf and Treasure', *Studies in Philology* 107:1 (2010), 1–24 (pp. 23–24).

[191] S 841: 'desiring to purchase things eternal with transitory things'.

[192] Julia M. H. Smith, 'Rulers and Relics c. 750–c. 950: Treasure on Earth, Treasure in Heaven', *Past & Present* 26 Supp. 5 (2010), 73–96 (p. 73, 76).

[193] On this, see also Jos Bazelmans, *By Weapons Made Worthy: Lords, Retainers and Their Relationship in Beowulf* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 149–192.

present form during tumultuous decades either side of AD 1000, perhaps say just as much, or more, about the sensibilities of the monastic writers of this era.[194] These writers, as Wormald and others have shown, had no problem drawing on their own lay, aristocratic backgrounds, or writing in such a way as to pique the interest of the various audiences — both secular and monastic — they might have reached.

Moreover, it is easily possible to read these poems as social and morally instructional, teaching those audiences right behaviour. The Benedictine movement that emerged in the period was, after all, concerned nearly as much with reforming lay behaviour as it was with monastic behaviour. The reform's promulgators, and their royal and aristocratic associates, viewed the troubles of the later tenth century as punishment for national sin, and did much in the period to try to provide models of behaviour that might help mitigate that punishment through correcting bad behaviour. These 'heroic' texts, regardless of the dates of their original composition, were copied with a Christian (or, at least, Christianity-friendly) moral message that fits easily within the late tenth-century campaign of national religious reform, equivalent to and concurrent with Ælfric's and Wulfstan's homilies, possibly directed at the same lay aristocratic audiences.

The masculine virtues on display in this poetry are not exactly those that one might have originally expected, of course. They certainly do not condemn violence, and the centrality of the 'heroic' virtue of loyalty and the lord-retainer bond is apparent throughout. But neither of those is an explicitly un-Christian virtue. Moreover, the stereotypical models of violent, boastful masculine behaviour, on both the battlefield and in the mead-hall, that are initially apparent in the texts are not, on closer examination, necessarily the most valorised models of masculine performance: that is, brute strength and military conquest are not all-important. For all his success in battle, Beowulf is not an ideal king.[195] Instead, these poems promote moderation and, through it, Christian wisdom as the key features of proper masculine behaviour. This should not, of course, be too surprising. The scribes who wrote the *Beowulf* manuscript, the Exeter Book, and the other 'heroic' vernacular texts were not mead-

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[194] Chris Bishop, 'The "Lost" Literature of England: Text and Transmission in Tenth-Century Wessex', in *Text and Transmission in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Chris Bishop (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 76–126 (p. 78).

[195] Indeed, as Elizabeth Howard has argued, the *Beowulf* poet's use of '*god cyning*' (to describe three kings in three different situations throughout the poem) occurs with increasing irony; Elizabeth Howard, 'Beowulf Is Not *God Cyning*', *Geardagum: Essays on Old and Middle English Language and Literature* 30 (2009), pp. 45–68.

drinking *scops* composing heroic lays in fire-lit halls of pagan kings, but more likely were members of the Christian, probably monastic (albeit still often aristocratic) communication community as the writers discussed in the previous chapter. In those texts, the Christian ideal of kingship was based on a devotion to wisdom as well, and in correcting behaviour throughout the kingdom. These vernacular poems implore their male, aristocratic audiences to embrace the same models of behaviour, and connect that model with explicitly masculine spaces (e.g., the mead-hall and battlefield). As Hrothgar sermonises, aristocratic men must protect themselves from the 'wickedness' of the hunger for glory, and instead seek eternal wisdom.

Whether or not actual men in later Anglo-Saxon England did so in their actual practice of masculinity and kingship, though, is a different question. We cannot know, in any case, whether or not the descriptions of masculine behaviour in the mead-hall and on the battlefield that are depicted in 'heroic' poetry conform to what would have happened in actuality. We can, however, see a number of changes in the performance of royal masculinity in the course of the long tenth century; that is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

PERFORMING MASCULINITY AND PERFORMING KINGSHIP

Igitur cum adolescentiae vires increvissent, et iuvenili in pectore egregius dominandi amor fervesceret, tunc valida pristinorum heroum facta reminiscens, veluti ex sopore evigilatus, mutata mente, adgregatis satellitum turmis, sese in arma convertit.

Now when his youthful strength had increased, and a noble desire for command burned in his young breast, he remembered the valiant deeds of heroes of old, and as though awaking from sleep, he changed his disposition and gathering bands of followers took up arms.

(Felix, *Vita sancti Guthlaci* XVI)

The previous two chapters examined kingship and aristocratic masculinity in tenth-century Anglo-Saxon Latin and Old English sources. While these two traditions have often been seen as different or indeed even contradictory, these chapters have shown that they should instead be read with an eye toward similarities, and that, in particular, the Old English 'heroic' sources may contain as much of a 'Christian' vision of right aristocratic, masculine behaviour as a supposed 'pagan' or 'Germanic' one. Just as the moral-didactic sources of Chapter 2 focus on the king as a corrector of wrongs, beginning with his own, tenth-century poetic sources also stress self-control and moderation in their presentations of the 'heroic' life. Another key feature these sources have in common is that they focus more on ideal than on reality; whether homiletic or literary in nature, these sources might be read as more about behaviour as it *should be* rather than as it actually *was*. As Janet Nelson has written regarding such gender ideals as expressed in medieval texts, 'Were I a literary scholar, I might leave it there'; the historian, on the other hand, must go further, and show how these written sources might help us understand how men actually lived.[1]

While it seems quite certain now that members of the Anglo-Saxon court like Æthelwold or Wulfstan were familiar with these moral-didactic sources, used these ideals in the writing of sermons and law-codes, and may even have personally instructed kings in their themes, it is impossible to know whether Æthelred or any other tenth-century kings actually read any of these sources. But as Katherine Lewis has recently argued in regards to late medieval English kingship and masculinity, 'the chief means by which high status young men more generally learned their roles (especially with respect to warfare) was via observation of their elders and the practice of appropriate skills, not from reading books'.[2] This is likely to have been true in early medieval England as well, particularly in a period when written materials (and literacy) were perhaps even more rare. This final chapter, therefore, seeks to establish the actual performance of masculinity by men (and especially by princes and kings as men) in the long tenth century, and to explore what these actions can say about the relationship between masculinity and kingship in the period.

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[1] J. L. Nelson, 'Monks, Secular Men, and Masculinity', in Hadley, *Masculinity*, pp. 121–142 (p. 138).

[2] Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 18. Though of course remember Asser's descriptions of Alfred and his brothers learning to read from books, and Alfred's education of his own children, both of which have been discussed above.

Masculine practice or performance can take a variety of forms.[3] But as Vern Bullough has succinctly argued, 'though what constitutes manhood has varying definitions according to a society or culture or time period, the most simplistic way of defining it is as a triad: impregnating women, protecting dependents, and serving as provider to one's family'.[4] Despite moral-didactic and 'heroic' sources' focus on correction, wisdom, and moderation as markers of right masculinity, manhood in Anglo-Saxon England was probably not much of an exception to Bullough's model. As Sarah Foot notes, for example, 'as well as book-learning, Æthelstan would have been taught to cultivate the behaviour deemed appropriate for royal and noble circles, and engaged in a range of noble pursuits including hunting and hawking, as well as training in the use of arms and the conduct of warfare', though he is somewhat of a notable exception when it comes to impregnating women.[5] This chapter follows Bullough's model, and focuses on how tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings and princes performed those three practices of masculinity through warfare, hunting, and sex. It will begin with an examination of what one particularly useful type of contemporary source — wills — can say about the lives of tenth-century aristocratic and royal men, and then examine how the three characteristics of masculinity identified by Bullough can be viewed in the lives of kings and in relation to their kingship.

Anglo-Saxon Wills and Royal Masculine Performance

In her recent study of Anglo-Saxon wills and will-making, Linda Tollerton has observed a number of ways in which these documents have been used by historians over the last century or more: as studies of land-transmission, as evidence of women's roles and power, as supplements for archaeological and art-historical investigation, and as indicators of lay literacy and communication. [6] These documents also have value as 'social document[s]', particularly within and 'generated by a specific concatenation of political, economic and social

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[3] On the performative nature of gender, see the work of Judith Butler, and particularly Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[4] Vern Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in Lees, *Medieval Masculinity*, p. 34. Bullough here follows David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 223.
[5] Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 36–37; on Æthelstan's celibacy, see more below.
[6] Linda Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2011), pp. 3–5.

circumstances' in the long tenth century.[7] Using this conception of wills as social documents, it is possible to get an idea about the types of activities Anglo-Saxon aristocratic men participated in, as well as the connections they had with other men.

Some sixty-eight vernacular wills survive from the Anglo-Saxon period, primarily from the tenth century, with most housed in monastic or religious archives in later copies.[8] Most are aristocratic, from ealdormen or thegns, though there are many from religious men and quite a few from (higher-status) women. Very few royal wills survive from the long tenth century, however, and the evidence is limited to the will of Alfred the Great (in two manuscript copies) and that of Eadred (in one much later copy).[9]

Perhaps the most famous Anglo-Saxon will, though, and a particularly useful one for understanding the life of a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon prince, is that of Æthelstan 'Ætheling', oldest son of Æthelred, discussed briefly above in Chapter 1.[10] After the restoration of his father to the throne in 1014, Æthelstan fell ill; he composed his will around 25 June, and died shortly thereafter. While the most important beneficiaries of the will are the prince's father Æthelred and various religious institutions, as might be expected, a long list of lands, objects, and other funds are bequeathed to a variety of recipients. These include Æthelstan's brothers (though, perhaps understandably, not his half-brothers) and several other important aristocratic men (his peers or friends), as well as his 'foster-mother' Ælfswith and a number of other (non-aristocratic) members of his household. The bequests themselves include vast tracts of land throughout the southeast, the Midlands, and slightly further afield; money; precious devotional objects; no fewer than eleven swords (including one that had belonged to 'Offa'); armour and shield; a drinking-horn; and a silver-coated trumpet, amongst other things.

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[7] Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making*, p. 2, p. 282. As Tollerton notes, the Anglo-Saxon will-writing tradition seems to have mostly disappeared after the conquest of Cnut in 1016, and further after the Norman Conquest of 1066, both of which served to break aristocratic familial ties (of the type that might necessitate written records) and to redistribute land outside the hands of Anglo-Saxon aristocratic families.

[8] On the chronological and spatial distribution of these wills, see Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making*, p. 10–22 (esp. 10–13).

[9] Alfred's will (S 1507) survives in the early eleventh-century New Minster *Liber Vitae* (BL Stowe 944), as well as the fifteenth-century *Liber de Hyda* or *Liber Abbatiae* (BL Add. MS 82931), which also contains the single extant copy of Eadred's will (S 1515).

[10] S 1503 (*ASW* XX). Æthelstan's will survives in a number of copies, including several from the eleventh and twelfth centuries (e.g., BL Stowe Charters 37; Canterbury DC H 68; BL Add. 15350; and BL Add. 15350).

Familial relationships are central in Æthelstan's will. He affirms at the end of the will that his donations to the Church are made not only for the protection of his own soul, but also for those of his father and his grandmother Ælfthryth, whom (alongside his 'foster-mother' Ælfswith) he seems to remember fondly, even well into adulthood. Æthelstan also left land and goods to his surviving full brothers Edmund and Eadwig — Ecgberht, Edgar, and Eadred having predeceased him — but he seems to have entirely left out his half-brothers and his stepmother Emma of Normandy, perhaps indicating a cool relationship with his father's second wife and family.[11] It is tempting to see this as recognition of the threat such an arrangement might pose to Æthelstan's own hopes for succession; such a challenge had occurred before at the succession of the first Æthelstan in 924, after all, and would happen again in the knot of marriage ties between Æthelred, his first wife Ælfgifu of York, his second wife Emma, her second husband Cnut (after Æthelred's death), and Cnut's other wife Ælfgifu of Northampton and their children in the following generation. This spurning of half-brothers could perhaps also be read in the context of the disputed succession between Edward the Martyr and Æthelred a generation earlier too, and especially the eventual accusations of treachery against Edward at the hands of Æthelred's mother Ælfthryth.

The items bequeathed in Æthelstan Ætheling's will can also say much about the interests and roles of tenth-century aristocratic young men. The prince was, above all, a major landholder, with estates across the South East, East Anglia, and Mercia. He was served by a sizeable court, with a number of followers and supporters from the upper echelons of society, including influential thegns like Sigeferth and possibly the future earl Godwine.[12] Recent work on Æthelstan's will has done much to show how the relationships between these household members — both military retainers as well as huntsmen, craftsmen, and domestic assistants — can help in evaluating the prince's status.[13] David McDermott has recently shown,

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[11] Æthelstan also ignores his numerous sisters, and it is intriguing that he appears not to have had a wife or children, despite being well into adulthood.

[12] Æthelstan's will grants to '*Godwine Wulfnoðes suna þæs landes æt Cumtune þe his fæder ær ahte*' ('Godwine, son of Wulfnoth, the lands at Compton [Sussex] that his father previously held'), with his father possibly being the Wulfnoth Cild, thegn of Sussex, who had betrayed the king in 1009 (ASC D/E 1009), and who would go on to be a leading ealdorman under Cnut and the father of Harold, Edith, and the rest of the Godwinson family; Ann Williams, 'Godwine', *WBEASE*, pp. 217–218.

[13] David McDermott, '*Æthelings* and their Entourages in Late Anglo-Saxon England: The Households, Retinues, and Networks of Two Sons of King Æthelred the Unready', in *Royal and Elite Households in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: More than Just a Castle*, ed. by Theresa Earenfight (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 73–94; see also McDermott's PhD dissertation: David McDermott, 'Æthelinghood,

for instance, that the 'offices' on display in Æthelstan's will and similar documents can say much about how an *ætheling* viewed his own status and what aspirations he might have, if not necessarily providing evidence of how a retinue or household was actually structured.[14] The other follower-beneficiaries in the will of Æthelstan Ætheling speak to a number of non-martial interests and duties of a tenth-century prince, including a '*discþegn*' ('dish-thegn', i.e., seneschal) to look after his house and a mass-priest to see to his spiritual needs. The importance of religious devotion more broadly is also apparent in the huge grants of land, and thus commensurate wealth, bequeathed to the Church. These religious bequests include hundreds of mancuses worth of land to various major ecclesiastical centres, as well as smaller grants to specific foundations, including land and goods to Nunnaminster and the New Minster, Winchester (both of which had been founded by his dynasty); food-rent and money to the community at Ely; and money to the new foundation devoted to the Holy Cross and St Edward the Martyr (Æthelstan's own uncle) at Shaftesbury. A mass-priest in the employ of the *ætheling* is a somewhat unusual case though; they rarely feature in equivalent high-status aristocratic households (though are more common in those of aristocratic women), but do feature prominently in the households of kings, perhaps indicating some preparation by Æthelstan for his future expanded royal court.[15]

Besides two tracts of land (in East Anglia and at the unidentified *Peacesdale*) granted to Edmund 'Ironside', the bequests left to Æthelstan's brothers overwhelmingly consist of military gear: three swords, including a silver-hilted one and the one that supposedly belonged to Offa, along with a blade and a silver-inlaid trumpet.[16] Æthelstan's will in fact includes eleven swords in total, and aside from those left to his brothers, many were also bequeathed to members of his household, including his mass-priest Ælfwine and Ælfnoth, his 'sword-polisher' ('*Ælfnoðe minon swurdhwitan*'), and to aristocratic supporters. The *ætheling*'s household thus appears to have been a military one, built around weaponry and, perhaps as importantly,

Succession and Kingship in Late Anglo-Saxon England, with Specific Reference to Edmund II Ironside' (PhD diss., University of Winchester, 2017).

[14] McDermott, '*Æthelings* and their Entourages', p. 76.

[15] McDermott, '*Æthelings* and their Entourages', pp. 79–81.

[16] Historians have been tempted to identify this sword with the one of Avar craftsmanship given to Offa by Charlemagne, or perhaps even a sword of the pre-migration king Offa of Angeln; see, for instance, Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 34–35. Dawn Hadley rightly stresses caution in making such an assumption, though: D. Hadley, 'Masculinity', *HASS*, p. 122.

military networks and relationships between lord and retainer.[17] Swords appear in a number of other high-status wills of the tenth-century. When he died between 1002 and 1004, Wulfric Spot (the Midlands aristocrat, patron of Burton Abbey, and brother of the ealdorman Ælfhelm of Northumbria) left to his lord '*twa hund mancessa goldes. 7 twa seolforhilted sweord. 7 feower hors. twa gesadelode. 7 twa ungesadelode. 7 þa wæpna þe þærto gebyriað*'.[18] A generation earlier, Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex and father-in-law of the later ealdorman Byrhtnoth (of Maldon fame), left 'two swords with sheaths', three spears, and three shields, as well as a sword given to him by King Edmund — worth 'two hundred and twenty mancuses of gold' with 'four pounds of silver on the sheath' — given up for the right to compose a will before he died (c. 946–951).[19]

Swords have consistently been associated with masculinity, especially in archaeological investigations, where the presence of swords (or other weapons) in the 'grave kits' of inhumation burials is often taken as evidence of both male sex and masculine gender.[20] This methodology has been questioned in recent years for a number of reasons, however, not least of which are the problematic (and oftentimes unquestioned or unprofessional) means by which bodies in inhumations have been sexed. In many cases, bodies with weapons have been identified as male solely through the inclusion of those 'masculine' items without any forensic or genetic examination of the skeletons themselves to conclusively prove their biological sex. As much recent work has shown, though, a number of early medieval bodies from England and beyond interred with so-called 'masculine' grave kits (including, e.g., weapons) were in fact anatomically and/or genetically female.[21] These findings do

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[17] McDermott, '*Æthelings* and their Entourages', p. 77 and p. 92; Stafford, 'The Reign of Æthelred', in Hill, *Ethelred*, p. 35; Williams, *World Before Domesday*, p. 110. McDermott also notes that even non-military household members might have also been of thegnly rank.

[18] S 1536 (*ASW* XVII): 'Two hundred mancuses of gold, and two silver-hilted swords, and four horses – two saddled and two unsaddled – and those weapons that are due with them'.

[19] S 1483 (*ASW* II).

[20] See, for instance, Heinrich Härke, '"Warrior Graves"? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite', *Past & Present* 126 (1990), 22–43, and Nick Stoodley, *The Spear and the Spindle: A Critical Enquiry into the Construction and Meaning of Gender in the Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1999). Sex, here, refers to anatomical/biological features (e.g., male or female), while gender refers to social perception of gender roles (man or woman, masculine or feminine). Scholarship has long problematised binary notions of gender and now generally accepts transgender and other queer identities, but recent scholarship has further problematized even the binary view of biological sex, noting that, like gender, sex too falls on a spectrum rather than a single binary categorization, at both the physiological and genetic level.

[21] See, for example, Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, *et al.*, 'A Female Viking Warrior Confirmed by Genomics', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 164:4 (2017), 853–860. Note, of course, a number of criticisms of this article by, e.g., Judith Jesch and Howard Williams, who point out, amongst other things, burial with weapons does not automatically mean the interred was a 'warrior'. Judith Jesch, 'Let's Debate Female Viking Warriors Yet Again', *Norse and Viking Ramblings*, 9 September 2018

not necessarily prove the existence of 'women warriors', but they do show that earlier methodologies were flawed to infer sex based solely on grave contents, and that the strict association of weapons burials, violence, and masculinity must be nuanced. Work is now being done to reassess gendered burials and grave kits, but because of the complexity of the material, must be set aside in the present work.[22]

Of course, this archaeological connection between swords and masculinity is based largely on evidence from far earlier than the tenth century. Evidence of swords in later Anglo-Saxon aristocratic and royal wills, however, suggests a role as indicators of lordship and as 'symbols of office' in the later period as well.[23] Swords were a central component of the heriot (OE *heregeatu*) payment owed to the king at the death of a thegn, for instance. These swords and other war-gear left by followers represented their duties and responsibilities as landholders, and by the late Anglo-Saxon period, may have ensured that the king would honour the deceased's bequests. Even powerful religious magnates were not exempt. The will of Bishop Ælfwold of Crediton, written sometime between 1008 and 1012, mentions a heriot payment consisting of horses, shields, spears, helmets, byrnies, and even a fully-equipped ship, amongst other war-gear left to followers.[24] Archbishop Ælfric of Canterbury similarly left his best ship to the king, along with enough armour for sixty men, as well as other ships, to the people of Kent and another to Wiltshire, alongside many other bequests.[25] Some of Cnut's law-codes, probably written by Wulfstan, standardize the payments owed as heriot based on social status, from earl to king's thegn to lower-level thegns, though some, like Nicholas Brooks, have argued

<http://norseandviking.blogspot.com/2017/09/lets-debate-female-viking-warriors-yet.html> [accessed 21 September 2018]; J. Jesch, 'Some Further Discussion of the Article on Bj 581', *Norse and Viking Ramblings*, 18 September 2017 <http://norseandviking.blogspot.com/2017/09/some-further-discussion-of-article-on.html> [accessed 21 September 2018]; Howard Williams, 'Viking Warrior Women: An Archaeodeath Response', Parts 1–6, *Archaeodeath: The Archaeology and Heritage of Death and Memory*, 14 September 2017–14 March 2018 <https://www.howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com> [accessed 21 September 2018]. The possibility of intersex or transsexual individuals must also be considered, as a number of other critiques of the Birka article have argued.

[22] See, for instance, Katherine Fliegel's forthcoming PhD dissertation (Manchester) on possible instances of cross-gendered graves in early Anglo-Saxon England, which refutes earlier conclusions by Härke, Stoodley, and others.

[23] Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making*, p. 195–196; on the association of swords with status, see also Ann Williams, *The World Before Domesday: The English Aristocracy 900–1066* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 107–111.

[24] S 1492; Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making*, pp. 214–216; Richard Abels, 'Heriot', *WBEASE*, pp. 240–241; Keynes and Love, 'Earl Godwine's Ship', pp. 187–190. This is somewhat reminiscent of the post-Conquest reference to 'ship-sokes' (*sipessocna*), land-divisions based on the provisioning of ships. On this subject, and more generally the relationship between ships and lordly power, see the chapter on 'Organization and Equipment: Maritime' (pp. 141–176) in Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars*.

[25] S 1488 (*ASW* XVIII).

that this innovation may have originally been the product of Æthelred and his circle.[26] In his will, Æthelstan Ætheling bequeathed to his father a silver-hilted sword (which had belonged to Ulfkytel, possibly the thegn from East Anglia who later died at *Assandun*), as well as a byrnie and two horses. While these items are not described as a formal heriot payment, the bequest does align somewhere between the prescribed heriot for a middling ('*medemre*') thegn (one horse, its gear, and a personal weapon) and that of a king's thegn (four horses, two swords, four spears, four shields, a helmet and byrnie, and gold) in the lawcode *II Cnut*.[27] As with the position of princes in charter witness-lists noted in Chapter 1, this might be read (cautiously, of course) as a possible reference to a prince's relative social status, somewhere in the upper middle strata of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, with all of the social expectations of that status. If swords are both indicators of masculinity and indicators of social status, it thus seems quite apparent that there must have been a strong connection between masculinity and lordly status by the tenth century.

The picture painted by Æthelstan's will is perhaps not a surprising one in many ways.[28] His life appears to have been dominated by martial matters, with his wealth based on a significant number of valuable arms, armour, and horses, not to mention the followers (grooms, retainers, etc.) to oversee them all. The types of followers mentioned in his will, as well as in the documents connected to his younger brother Edmund Ironside, place the princes along similar lines as rich aristocrats, or indeed even the king, possibly preparing themselves for the sort of court they would oversee after accession.[29] These items and followers were essential in performing two of the most important activities that defined medieval masculine aristocratic life, which Bullough enumerates as 'protecting dependents, and serving as provider to one's family': warfare and hunting.[30]

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[26] Nicholas Brooks, 'Arms, Status, and Warfare in Late Saxon England', in Hill, *Ethelred*, pp. 81–103; see also Pauline Stafford, 'The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo-Saxon Royal Promises', *ASE* 10 (1982), 173–190; and Dorothy Whitlock, 'Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut', *EHR* 63:249 (1948), 433–452.

[27] II Cnut 71 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, pp. 356–359).

[28] It is surprisingly, however, in that Æthelstan still appears to be unmarried, with no mention of a wife at all; on this, see more below.

[29] Though note, of course, that the æthelings are also missing a number of other royal officials within their retinues, including the offices of *scriptor* ('scribe'), *cubicularious/bedþegn* (chamberlain), *thesaurarus* (treasurer), *hrælðegn* (keeper of the king's robes), *pincerna* (butler), and *propincernarius* (cup-bearer); McDermott, '*Æthelings* and their Entourages', p. 83–84.

[30] Bullough, 'On Being a Male', p. 34.

Warfare, Kingship, and Masculinity

It perhaps goes without saying that warfare is the activity most closely associated with both masculinity and the early medieval aristocracy, the *bellatores* of the so-called 'three orders'. [31] Mentions of aristocratic masculine activity exist through the range of Anglo-Saxon written sources, even hagiographical. Guthlac, a saint who was 'of distinguished Mercian stock' and descended from 'famous kings' all the way back to the dynastic founder Icel of Angeln seems to have been a relatively well-known or popular saint by the tenth century, particularly for aristocratic patrons.[32] At least two manuscripts of Felix's Latin *Vita Guthlaci* survive from the middle to end of the century, and an eleventh-century version reproduces the text in the Old English vernacular, two chapters of which appear in the Vercelli Book.[33] Guthlac is also famously the subject of two 'heroic' poems (*Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*) from the Exeter Book, itself (as noted previously) probably dating to the reign of either Æthelred or Cnut. *Guthlac B* describes the saint as '*godes cempan*' ('God's soldier'), and as one whom other Christians might emulate through reading about him.[34] Felix notes, too, in a famous passage, that the saint partook in traditionally 'manly' activities: far from being a life-long hermit and monk, Guthlac in fact began his young adulthood as an aristocratic warlord:

> *Igitur cum adolescentiae vires increvissent, et iuvenili in pectore egregius dominandi amor fervesceret, tunc valida pristinorum heroum facta reminiscens, veluti ex sopore evigilatus, mutata mente, adgregatis satellitum turmis, sese in arma convertit.*[35]

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[31] Cf. Stone, Morality and Masculinity, pp. 69–71. Note, however, that medieval women were equally capable of carrying out violence in the earlier middle ages, though Gradowicz-Pancer argues we should remove gender as a central concept in understanding female violence, in favour of concepts of power and honour, at least in some cases: Nina Gradowicz-Pancer, 'De-gendering Female Violence: Merovingian Female Honour as an "Exchange of Violence"', *EME* 11:1 (2001), 1–18 (p. 18)

[32] Felix, *Vita S Guthlaci* I–II: His father was '*de egregia stirpe Merciorum*', and '*Huius etiam viri progenies per nobilissima inlustrium regum nomina antiqua ab origine Icles digesto ordine cucurrit*' ('Moreover the descent of this man was traced in set order through the most noble names of famous kings, back to Icel in whom it began in days of old'). Text and translation from Bertram Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956). Guthlac has further royal connotations: his *vita* was commissioned by King Ælfwald of East Anglia, and the saint's homes at Repton and Crowland were further associated with royal power and royal visits.

[33] The Latin versions are CCCC MS 389 (a 'beautifully written' manuscript in insular minuscule later found at St Augustine's, Canterbury) and BL MS Royal 13.A.xv (possibly written at Worcester or Ramsey); Colgrave, *Felix's Life*, pp. 27–30. The OE version is British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D.xxi. The Vercelli fragment version is Homily XXII (Biblioteca Capitolare di Vercelli MS CXVII, f. 133v–135v).

[34] *Guthlac B*, l. 889b; L. M. C. Weston, 'Saintly Lives: Friendship, Kinship, Sexuality and Gender', *CHEMEL*, p. 392.

[35] Felix, *Vita S Guthlaci* XVI: 'Now when his youthful strength had increased, and a noble desire for command burned in his young breast, he remembered the valiant deeds of heroes of old, and as though awaking from sleep, he changed his disposition and gathering bands of followers took up arms'.

Even after his 'retirement' from secular life to Repton and (later) Crowland, Guthlac's spiritual struggles are presented in a martial manner; as L. M. C. Weston writes, Guthlac's 'career as a spiritual warrior against the devil conflates the warrior archetypes of the Latinate *miles Christi* with the traditional gender and behaviour models of the aristocratic Anglo-Saxon world'.[36] As noted in Chapter 3 above, one should perhaps not make too much distinction between 'Christian' and 'pagan' traditions in Anglo-Saxon literature, but this episode is further evidence that these martial activities were considered normal, and perhaps expected, for an aristocratic, adolescent male, even one who would go on to become a pious saint.

Unfortunately, relatively little evidence survives specifically regarding the preparation of boys for war. In an article that purports to explore how aristocratic Anglo-Saxon boys were trained for war, Hilda R. Ellis Davidson rarely discusses Anglo-Saxon boys themselves, and must (rather problematically) rely on evidence from Roman sources, Irish myths (particularly the Cú Chulainn stories), and Scandinavian sagas, none of which, arguably, say that much about Anglo-Saxon England, and particularly England of the tenth and early eleventh centuries.[37] Crawford's *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England* has done much to collate the various types of sources available as well, from both textual and archaeological sources, but still must rely on a broad spectrum of material from throughout the Anglo-Saxon period (i.e., all the way from the fifth century until the Norman Conquest), and from outside England as well.[38] Rituals involving the investment of boys with their first weapons feature in a number of sources, including Tacitus and Paul the Deacon, who recounts a tradition amongst the Lombards that a son could not join his father at the table unless he had been invested with weapons by a foreign king, but as with the material above, many of these references are likely irrelevant to any tenth-century Anglo-Saxon historian.[39]

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[36] Weston, 'Saintly Lives', p. 391.

[37] Hilda R. Ellis Davidson, 'The Training of Warriors', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 11–23; cf. my criticism of using these Roman and 'Germanic' sources to discuss later Anglo-Saxon England above, Chapter 3.

[38] Crawford, *Childhood*.

[39] *Germ* 13; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I.23 (MGH SS rer. Lang., p. 61): '"*Scitis,*" inquit, "*non esse aput nos consuetudinem, ut regis cum patre filius prandeat, nisi prius a rege gentis exterae arma suscipiat*"' ('"You know," he said, "that it is not in our tradition that the son of a king may dine with his father, unless he first has received arms the king of a foreign people"').

Whether or not a connection can be made between warfare and male coming-of-age traditions, the *Vita Guthlaci* does show the centrality of warleadership to the adolescent aristocratic male lifestyle. Warfare continued to form a key aspect of masculine performance later in life, too. Bede's famous story of the saintly East Anglian king Sigeberht (r. c. 629–634) shows that even retirement to a monastery might not guarantee retirement from military activity. Sigeberht, for the love of God, handed power over to his kinsman Ecgric, and '*accepta tonsura pro aeterno magis regno militare curare*'.[40] However, after some time the kingdom was threatened by Penda of Mercia, and his people '*rogauerunt Sigberctum ad confirmandum militem secum uenire in proelium*'.[41] The former king was not so easily convinced, however:

> *Illo nolente ac contradicente, inuitum monasterio eruentes duxerunt in certamen. […] Sed ipse professionis suae non inmemor, dum opimo esset uallatus exercitu, nonnisi uirgam tantum habere in manu uoluit: occisusque est una cum rege Ecgrice, et cunctus eorum, insistentibus paganis, caesus siue dispersus exercitus.*[42]

Fisher and Pettit both argue that this story shows an 'apparent incompatibility of the roles of secular warrior and spiritual monk'.[43] (Bede would perhaps agree, and centres his praise of Sigeberht on his patronage of the Irish saint Fursey and the educational reform the king undertook with the assistance of Kentish bishop Felix, rather than his return to the battlefield.) However, the tradition of Anglo-Saxon kings retiring to monasteries — 'kings who opted out', in Clare Stancliffe's memorable wording — is well attested.[44]

Moreover, the presence of a number of early medieval ecclesiastical warrior-bishops and warrior-monks seems to indicate that this 'incompatibility' is more

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[40] *HE* III.18: '… accepting the tonsure, undertook to fight instead for the heavenly kingdom'.

[41] *HE* III.18: 'asked Sigeberht to come with them in battle to embolden the army'.

[42] *HE* III.18: 'Him not wishing to and refusing, they dragged him unwilling to the battle. […] But not forgetting his profession even while surrounded by a great army, he refused to carry anything but a staff in his hand; he was killed together with king Ecgric, and their whole army was killed or dispersed by the heathen attacks'.

[43] Fisher, 'Muscular Sanctity', p. 26; Emma Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity in Aldhelm's *Opus Geminatum De Virginitate*', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. H. Cullum and K. J. Lewis (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p. 8.

[44] Clare Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil-Blackwell, 1983), pp. 154–176; Barbara Yorke, 'The Adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts to Christianity', in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, 300–1300*, ed. by Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 243–258 (pp. 245–248). More recently, see Nicholas J. Higham, 'The Shaved Head Shall Not Wear the Crown', in *Royal Authority in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), pp. 7–16.

apparent than actual.[45] The *vitae* of Guthlac, Wilfrid, and Cuthbert show monks could still be thought of as warriors, and the Chronicle, Bede, and other sources are full of references to Anglo-Saxon churchmen actively leading armies, and, if deaths in battle are any evidence, even doing so from the front lines.[46] Daniel Gerrard has recently argued that we should not see religious figures fighting in war as any part of a formal system — indeed, he says, they were essentially '*ad hoc*' arrangements dependent on individual circumstances — but in any case, a monastic or clerical vocation, in other words, did not necessarily override the masculine and lordly ability or requirement to lead armies, for kings (or other noblemen) who had opted out, or for more traditional religious figures.[47]

The personal links of lordship were still an integral part of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kingship, and despite a shift in the practice of lordship with the arrival of bookland and the political changes of the tenth century, 'the royal host never ceased being the king's following arrayed for war'. [48] Personal leadership of armies by kings could thus be seen as imperative to their success; as *Maxims II* intones, after all, '*Geongne æþeling scelon / gode gesiðas // byldan to beaduwe / and to beahgife*'.[49] An army raised by Edmund Ironside in 1016 to repel the forces of Cnut and the traitorous Eadric Streona, it seems, fell apart because '*ne onhagode him buton se cyng þære wære*'.[50] (Unfortunately for Æthelred, when he did appear to lead the army later that year, '*ne beheold hit naht þe ma þe hit oftor ær dyde*', and he returned to London fearing betrayal.)[51] The *Brunanburh* poem from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, too, stresses the military success of Æthelstan and his younger brother Edmund, in the style of Anglo-Saxon epic 'heroic' poetry:

> *Her Æþelstan cing,*   *eorla drihten,*
> *beorna beahgyfa,*   *7 his broðor eac,*
> *Eadmund æþeling,*   *ealdorla[n]gne tir*
> *geslogon æt sæcce*   *swurda ecgum*

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[45] Craig M. Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England, 1000–1250: Theory and Reality* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016); Daniel M. G. Gerrard, *The Church at War: The Military Activities of Bishops, Abbots and Other Clergy in England, c. 900–1200* (Abingdon: Clarendon, 2017).

[46] See, for instance, Janet L. Nelson, 'The Church's Military Service in the Ninth Century: A Contemporary Comparative View', in *Studies in Church History* 20 (1983), 15–30; and Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, pp. 43–46 (and *passim*.).

[47] Gerrard, *Church at War*, p. 20.

[48] Richard Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 96.

[49] *Maxims II* 4–15: 'Good companions should encourage a prince / To be a battle-warrior and a ring-giver'.

[50] ASC 1016: 'nothing would satisfy them unless the king was there with them'.

[51] ASC 1016: 'it did not achieve any more than it often did before'.

embe Brunnanburh.[52]

The ring-giving king and his noble brother lead the West Saxons and Mercians to a great victory over the combined forces of the Hiberno-Norse, the Scots, and the Britons of Strathclyde, who are forced to flee or are left as carrion for the traditional poetic 'beasts of battle': the raven, the eagle, and the wolf.[53] Interestingly, the *Brunanburh* poet also notes of the princes' martial undertakings that '*swa him geæþele wæs fram cneomægum þæt hi æt campe oft wið laþra gehwæne land ealgodon, hord 7 hamas*'.[54] Here, '*geæþele*' has the sense of something being inborn or natural, in this case because of the princes' heritage ('*cneomægum*'), suggesting, it seems, that it was right for them to take part in such battle, and also that it was a trait of their forebears.

Warfare, including warleadership, thus appears to have been a task specifically meant for men, and particularly important for kings, especially those of Alfred's line, who were meant to lead their armies into battle against their enemies. There has thus been some argument that contemporary criticism of Æthelred perhaps resulted from him rarely leading armies in the field. Was Æthelred's poor reputation derived from a view that he was shirking his royal duty? And if martial action is a hallmark of masculinity as well as kingship, could Æthelred's failure to lead armies perhaps be read not only as his failure as a king, but a failure *as a man*? As Nelson's article on ninth-century aristocratic male anxiety notes, giving up the sword could be read as emasculating, and a king giving up the sword must have been even more problematic.[55] There is some evidence too, particularly from archaeology, of the increased militarisation of aristocratic culture in the later tenth century, which could only compound problems. While 'the importance of weapons, armour, and hunting to lordly status was scarcely an innovation', Hadley argues, 'there is nothing inevitable about the appearance' of weaponed warriors on stone sculpture of the

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[52] ASC (C) 937 'Here Æthelstan king, lord of nobles, ring-giver to men, and his brother too, Edmund ætheling, earned eternal glory by sword's edge, in battle around Brunanburh.'

[53] The classic study of the theme is Francis P. Magoun, Jr., 'The Theme of the Beasts of Battle in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 56:2 (1955) 81–90; more recently, though, see Thomas Honegger, 'Form and Function: The Beasts of Battle Revisited', *English Studies* 79:4 (1998), 289–298, which specifies the instance of the theme in *Brunanburh* as a 'naturalistic' use, in comparison to the 'conventional' poetic use or any more 'creative' ones. Niles thinks of the use in *Brunanburh* as exultant and celebratory, rather than the theme's usual 'grimly ironic' use: Niles, 'Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief', *CCOEL*, pp. 127–128.

[54] ASC (C) 937: 'so was it natural for them, from their heritage, that they often defended in battle against every evil their land, and treasure, and homes'.

[55] Nelson, 'Monks, Secular Men, and Masculinity'.

period.[56] This change, then, must be read within the wider shift in understandings of gender (and aristocratic) roles during the tenth century.

Æthelred probably did lead military forces on several occasions, however, though admittedly not very successfully. According to the *Chronicle*, in the year 1000 he 'went into Cumberland and ravaged nearly all of it', though his navy was unable to rendezvous with him because of a secondary expedition to ravage Mann. (Andreas Lemke reads this punitive expedition as an assertion of royal authority over peripheral regions that regularly gave sanctuary and support to Hiberno-Norse raiders into Æthelred's kingdom, and as echoes of imperial claims like those made by Edgar and Æthelstan in the previous century.)[57] In 1009, Æthelred was also present with his new great fleet off Sandwich; as a result of the betrayal of Wulfnoth Cild and ensuing chaos, however, the king and his counsellors abandoned the fleet and returned to London. The memory of this perhaps came to mind again when he came to lead the army in 1016 before abandoning it to return to London, as noted above. None of these events present a particularly positive view of Æthelred as a military commander, but the 1016 passage from the Chronicle seems to indicate that the warriors assumed the king would be with them; Æthelred's lawcode issued at Enham in 1008 (V Æthelred), too, seems to indicate that the king would, or at least *should*, be regularly in attendance with his armies, decreeing that 'If one leaves the army without permission, if the king is with them, it is at the peril of his life and all his estate', but that if the king is not with the army, he the deserter shall only pay 120 shillings.[58]

Other contemporary evidence, however, seems to argue that, by the mid-tenth century, it was permissible for Anglo-Saxon kings to delegate royal duties, including both the dispensation of justice and leadership of armies. Laws from the reign of Edmund I (r. 939–946), Trousdale has argued, co-opted local authority and centred it on the king's own royal authority through the delegation of legal proceedings to local bishops, comparable with Charlemagne's use of his *missi dominici* after c. 800.[59] The Ælfrician text now known as *Wyrdwriteras*, written in the reign of

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[56] Hadley, 'Warriors, Heroes, and Companions', p. 277, though note that these sculptures Hadley discusses are specifically associated with Anglo-Scandinavian aristocratic men.

[57] Lemke, 'Voices from the Reign of Æthelred', p. 21–23.

[58] V Æthelred 28 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, pp. 236–247).

[59] Alaric A. Trousdale, 'Being Everywhere at Once: Delegation and Royal Authority in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), pp. 275–296.

Æthelred, also argues specifically that it is permissible for kings to delegate duties in war, using examples from Roman and Christian/biblical history.[60] '*Wyrdwriteras us secgað*', Ælfric writes, that kings of old might '*heora byrðena alihtan*' by appointing generals to represent them in war.[61] Clemoes has argued that *Wyrdwriteras* is perhaps the surviving fragment of a letter from Ælfric to Æthelred, written c. 1002–1005, possibly in support of the (newly-appointed?) abbot's patron Æthelmær.[62] Braekman suggests, however, that the text may have been a more general reaction to criticism of Æthelred not leading armies.[63] Whether or not Ælfric was speaking the majority view in the kingdom is impossible to know, but it certainly reads as a defense against possible rumblings of popular discontent at the king's actions — or rather, inaction — on occasions like the 1066 Chronicle entry when he was not in command.

It has long been assumed that Æthelred's policy of paying *gafol* ('tribute') to the viking invaders of his later reign was an unpopular, even shameful, means of avoiding warfare as well.[64] And yet even these payments should probably not be read as a stain on Æthelred's kingship, or his masculinity. Not even the relevant Chronicle entries, composed in Cnut's reign and never particularly positive towards of Æthelred, criticise the paying of tribute in and of itself. At one of the low points of Æthelred's reign, when the overrunning of much of the country in 1011 is blamed on '*unrædas*', the Chronicler clarifies that this 'ill counsel' involved the enemy neither having been met in battle nor paid off in time ('*a timon*'), not that the paying of tribute was itself ill-advised.[65] Keynes has also persuasively argued that, on the evidence of the raising of tribute by secular and ecclesiastical leaders during his reign, 'the policy was not merely the defeatist reaction of an individual (King Æthelred) shirking his responsibilities, but rather was the reaction of the whole nation to the military

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[60] W. Braekman, '*Wyrdwriteras*: An Unpublished Ælfrician Text in Manuscript Hatton 115', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 44:3 (1066), 959–970 (pp. 963–964).

[61] Ælfric, *Wyrdwriteras* 1, 3 (Pope XXII): 'Chroniclers tell us' that kings could 'lighten their burdens'. Latin text from John C. Pope, ed., *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, 2 vol., EETS S.S. 259–260 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. II.726–732.

[62] Peter Clemoes, 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), pp. 212–247 (p. 241).

[63] Braekman, '*Wyrdwriteras*', pp. 963–964.

[64] Keynes, 'Declining Reputation', p. 239; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 202; Leonard Niedorf, '*II Æthelred* and the Politics of *The Battle of Maldon*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 111:4 (2012), 451–473 (pp. 453–455). Abels, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 141–142, also notes the modern historiographical tendency of associating tribute with poor leadership, cowardice, and disaster.

[65] ASC (C) 1011: '*Ealle þas ungesælða us gelumpon þuruh unrædas þæt man nolde him a timan gafol beodon oþþe wið gefeohtan.*' ('All of these disasters befell us through poor advising, that they were neither offered tribute on time or fought against.')

predicament of the day'.[66] Moreover, the paying of tribute, and the arranging of treaties and 'ceasefires' in general, was not a new development of Æthelred's calamitous reign. Alfred had used the tactics throughout his reign, most notably in his treaty with Guthrum but at other points as well, with seemingly no ill repute derived therefrom, and probably following earlier Frankish/Carolingian precedent in any case.[67] Elsewhere in the tenth century, Eadred's will seems to have allotted money to be used 'for the good of his people', including paying off the heathen army.[68]

The search for new, non-military, means of handling the viking threat by Æthelred and his court are uniquely visible in the coinage of his reign. Æthelred's reign saw the continuation of monetary regulation that had begun in Edgar's reign, and over the course of Æthelred's time the iconography of coins underwent periodic redesign and reissue, including a number of designs bearing either crosses or the Hand of God. Through the first decade of the eleventh century, the predominant coinage was the *Helmet* type (issued c. 1003–1009), bearing a portrait of the king in military headgear. In the autumn of 1009, however, the short-term issue of a new coin-type took place at a number of mints throughout England: the so-called *Agnus Dei* type, bearing the image of the Lamb of God on the obverse, and the dove of the Holy Spirit on the reverse. Very soon thereafter, a new standard design (the *Last Small Cross* type) replaced both the *Helmet* and *Agnus Dei* types. As Keynes and Naismith have argued, it is likely that this new *Cross* design, to replace the *Helmet* type, was already under consideration by 1008–1009, but the events of those years, including the invasion of Thorkel the Tall, may have spurred the decision to rush through a new, temporary *Agnus Dei* design.[69] In the midst of invasion and conquest, the king and his moneyers replaced a specifically military design with the most pious iconography yet to appear in his reign. This coinage is a highly visible example of Æthelred's reform policy in the catastrophic later years of his reign, publically turning to God to find salvation from earthly threat.

As the last generation or so of Æthelredian scholarship is careful to remind, though, the main accounts of his troubles or even unsuitability mainly survive in

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[66] Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 202–203.
[67] Abels, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 141–143;
[68] S 1515; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 202 (n. 181).
[69] Simon Keynes and Rory Naismith, 'The *Agnus Dei* Pennies of King Æthelred the Unready', *ASE* 40 (2012), 175–223 (p. 187).

sources that were not necessarily written in his favour, particularly the Chronicle. As Alice Sheppard argues, the author she calls the 'Æthelred-Cnut annalist' was writing from a post-Æthelredian point of view, with the benefit of hindsight and, ultimately, as 'a history for Cnut'.[70] She further theorising that there are, in fact, different models of writing in the tenth and eleventh centuries, specifically homiletic and hagiographic, which take opposite points of view on whether or not it behoved a king to fight himself, or if delegation was acceptable.[71] She argues, however, that the Æthelred-Cnut annals (alongside some of the works of Ælfric and Wulfstan) should instead be read as part of the broader genre of 'salvation history', using texts like Pseudo-Cyprian's *De XII*, amongst others, as a means of judging the king, and placing the blame for national tragedy on his sins.[72] In this model, it is not whether or not Æthelred chose not to fight that damns him — negotiation was a valid alternative, after all — but that he failed at both on account of his poor behaviour. In failing to defend the kingdom, he is shown to be a *rex iniquus*, failing in a Christian sense as well as in his dynastic duty, but beyond this, because of the centrality of protecting one's family to masculinity, he might be viewed as a failed man as well. This may well have been the case for chroniclers writing in the years after the death of Æthelred and his sons, but, as has been shown above, the reality 'on the ground' in the late tenth and early eleventh century was considerably more fluid, with a variety of opinions both on the necessity of royal military leadership and on the success of Æthelred's reign more generally. Warfare, however, is not the only masculine and royal trait that seems to have undergone a transformation over the court of the long tenth century.

Hunting and Aristocratic Masculinity

Hunting is regularly associated as one of the key practices of aristocratic and royal men in the middle ages, probably second only to warfare itself. Indeed, both activities share common equipment (e.g., spear, bow, and horse) and tactical themes, alongside their masculine elite connotations. Matthew Bennett has called hunting 'both an introduction to, and a substitute for, war itself', which instilled in hunters a sense of small-group loyalty and cooperation that 'helped to produce in military

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[70] Sheppard, *Families*, p. 112.
[71] Sheppard, *Families*, pp. 80–84.
[72] Sheppard, *Families*, pp. 84–92.

males the required skills, attitudes and bonds of affection which would stand them in good stead in war'.[73] Barlow notes, too, that still in the twelfth century, hunting

> taught boys and youths how to move in company across the countryside, instilled in them the arts of scouting and selecting a line of advance, and gave excellent training in arms, the bow against many running animals and the sword and spear against the wild boar.[74]

Hunting, like warfare, also stands at an uneasy intersection in masculine performance. Warfare can be protective, as with Æthelstan and Edmund's hereditary tendency towards protecting their 'hoards and homes' in *Brunanburh*, but also carries, in some cases, 'toxic' preoccupation with violence; hunting, too, can be done either for subsistence (as in Bullough's triad of masculine actions), or, increasingly in the central and later middle ages, as a leisure activity for the upper classes. Barlow suggests, in fact, that while there were, by the twelfth century, a number of different types of hunts practised by the 'royalty, nobility, and military aristocracy', from the casual (including boyhood hunts to practice military manoeuvres) to the formal (involving dogs and specially-planned traps and deer-parks), hunting nevertheless retained some of its 'utilitarian and economic aspects'.[75] Both must be kept in mind when discussing hunting as masculine performance.

Many kings of the earlier middle ages are specifically associated with hunting. Perhaps most obviously amongst these royal figures is the aptly-named Henry I 'the Fowler' of East Francia (r. 919–936), whose epithet is based on a (probably apocryphal) story, first written down in the twelfth-century *Annales Palidenses* (or *Pöhlder Annalen*), in which he is informed of his election as king while setting nets and snares for hunting.[76] While not attributing his later nickname to the king, Widukind of Corvey's earlier description of Henry's 'manner of life' in his tenth-century *Res Gestae Saxonicae* already notes the king's love for, and skill at, hunting, in a passage that echoes other early medieval depictions of kings and hunting:

> *Et cum ingenti polleret prudentia sapientiaque, accessit et moles corporis, regiae dignitati omnem addens decorem. In exercitiis quoque ludi tanta eminentia superabat omnes, ut*

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[73] Matthew Bennett, 'Military Masculinity in England and Northern France, c. 1050 – c. 1225', in Hadley, *Masculinity*, pp. 73–74.

[74] Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 23.

[75] Barlow, *William Rufus*, p. 123.

[76] *Annales Palidenses* s.a. 924 (MGH SS 16, pp. 61): '*Iste est primus Heinricus post Karolum, cognominatur auceps, pro eo quod venatu semel in curia sua Dinkelere, brumalem declinans intemperiem, cum pueris lascivis aviculas inlaqueavit.*'

> *terrorem caeteris ostentaret. In venatione tam acerrimus erat, ut una vice quadraginta aut eo amplius feras caperet.*[77]

Similar, too, is Einhard's depiction of Charlemagne, who 'constantly exercised by riding and hunting' (which Einhard calls the 'national habit' of the Franks) and who died after a long hunting trip well into old age.[78] Charlemagne also, Einhard notes, made his sons, 'as soon as their age permitted it, learn to ride like true Franks, and practice the use of arms and hunting'.[79] The West Frankish king Carloman II must have followed that same national habit, too, until his untimely death at the hands — or rather, tusks — of a boar in 884.[80] Across the Channel (and Conquest), William Rufus famously suffered a similar fate as well, shot with an arrow by one of his own men while hunting in the New Forest in 1100.[81]

Despite older assertions that recreational hunting did not arrive in England until after the Conquest, a number of primary sources show that, in fact, hunting was a common aristocratic activity from at least the middle or later Anglo-Saxon period.[82] The concept of the royal deer-park (OE *haga*, 'enclosure') was probably established before the Conquest, and hunting stags in these enclosed areas was 'a popular, if exclusive, late Anglo-Saxon activity'.[83] Remember, too, that a stag-huntsman (OE *headeor hunton*) appears in the list of retainers in the will of Æthelstan Ætheling, and in it, he is rewarded for his services with a stud farm at '*Colungahrycge*' (Coldridge, near Ludgershall, Wiltshire, according to Whitelock). Similar officials (*venatores*) also appear in charters of Eadwig and Æthelred, and receive gifts of land as well.[84] A later story recounted in the *Chronicle of Worcester*, which may be a later

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[77] Widukind of Corvey, *Res Gestae Saxonicae* 39, ed. by Paul Hirsch and H. E. Lohmann, MGH SS rerum Germanicarum 60 (Hannover: Hahn, 1935): 'Henry was characterized by outstanding prudence and wisdom. He had, in addition, a powerful body that completed the adornment of his royal dignity. He was so much superior to everyone else in military exercises and games that he terrified them. He was so skillful in the hunt that one time he killed more than forty wild beasts'. Translation from Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach, ed. and trans., *Widukind of Corvey – The Deeds of the Saxons* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), p. 58.

[78] Einhard, *Vita Karoli* 22, 30.

[79] Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, 19.

[80] Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, s.a. 884. Regino adds that some say the king's death was the result of an accident, 'wounded by one of his men using his weapon carelessly'. Simon MacLean, ed. and trans., *History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe: The* Chronicle *of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[81] ASC (E) 1100.

[82] On this debate, see Tim Flight, 'Aristocratic Deer Hunting in Late Anglo-Saxon England: A Reconsideration, Based upon the *Vita S. Dvnstani*', *ASE* 45 (2016), 311–331 (pp. 311–313).

[83] Flight, 'Aristocratic Deer Hunting', p. 331. See also D. Hooke, 'Pre-Conquest Woodland: Its Distribution and Usage', *Agricultural History Review* 37:2 (1989), 113–129; Alban Gautier, 'Game Parks in Sussex and the Godwinesons', *ANS* 29 (2006), 51–64.

[84] S 637 and S 867; see also McDermott, '*Æthelings* and their Entourages', p. 82–83.

fabrication but could also provide genuine memory of an event not recounted in the main Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, also notes that the treacherous Eadric Streona arranged the murder of a rival ealdorman, Ælfhelm, in an ambush during a hunt in 1006, before blinding Ælfhelm's sons Wulfheah and Ufegeat.[85]

The Continental examples of hunting kings above also have echoes in Asser's depiction of Alfred, where he notes the king's skill at hunting alongside his oft-cited love of wisdom and penchant for poetry:

> *In omni venatoria arte industrius venator incessabiliter laborat non in vanum; nam incomparabilis omnibus peritia et felicitate in illa arte, sicut et in ceteris omnibus Dei donis, fuit, sicut et nos saepissime vidimus.*[86]

Asser further lists 'pursuing all manner of hunting [and] giving instruction to […] falconers, hawk-trainers, and dog-keepers' as some of Alfred's most prominent pursuits, after 'directing the government of the kingdom' amidst viking attacks and the sufferings caused by his mysterious illness.[87] Interestingly, it was also on a hunting excursion to Cornwall, Asser says, that Alfred detoured to a church containing the tomb of St Gueriir, and later St Neots, and found himself cured of his more serious ailment in exchange for a lesser one.[88] Asser also notes that Alfred's son Æthelweard was amongst a group of young boys who were already 'most studious and intelligent students of the liberal arts' before they had the strength for 'manly arts such as hunting and other skills which are befitting aristocrats', explicitly connecting the activity with both masculine and royal performance.[89] A few decades later, or so the *Vita sancti Dunstani* says, it was on a stag-hunt in the forest near the royal lodge at Cheddar that Edmund nearly died. His dogs chased his quarry off the cliff of the Gorge, and his reins snapped while trying to halt his horse from carrying him over the edge after them. At that moment, he remembered his ill treatment of the holy man Dunstan, and miraculously the horse stopped right at the edge of the cliff. The king immediately returned to the palace, apologised, and appointed

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[85] R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk, ed. and trans., *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, Vol. II: The Annals from 450 to 1066* (Oxford; Clarendon, 1995), pp. 456–459.

[86] *VÆlf* 22: 'An enthusiastic hunter, he strives ceaselessly in every venatorial art; for no one else could approach him in skill or luck in that art, just as in all the other gifts of God, as we have often seen'.

[87] *VÆlf* 76: '*Interea tamen rex, inter bella et praesentis vitae frequentia impedimenta, necnon paganorum infestationes et cotidianas corporis infirmitates, et regni gubernacula regere, et omnem venandi artem agere, aurifices et artifices suos omnes et falconarios et accipitrarios canicularios quoque docere.*'

[88] *VÆlf* 74.

[89] *VÆlf* 75: '*… ut antequam aptas humanis artibus vires haberent, venatoriae scilicet et ceteris artibus, quae nobilibus conveniunt, in liberalibus artibus studiosi et ingeniosi viderentur.*'

Dunstan abbot of Glastonbury in recompense.[90] While obviously hagiographical, it is not inconceivable that the king might have had a similar mishap during hunting, or that the king would be hunting in the first place.

The connection between aristocratic masculinity and hunting is most prominent, of course, in Anglo-Saxon literature. Hrothgar's *Heorot* is, after all, literally named after the 'hart', or male red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), one of the most popular and venerated quarries of the middle ages. Some scholars have subsequently attempted to read the hall's name as evidence of an Anglo-Saxon 'pagan stag cult', drawing a 'link between the pagan Danes and worship of the Celto-Germanic fertility god Cernunnos/Herne'.[91] This interpretation is problematic for a number of reasons, not least of which is an otherwise total lack of evidence for anything approaching this cult in any Anglo-Saxon sources.[92] If nothing else, William Perry Marvin argues, 'the old venison-economy of Germanic hunting bands' connected the mead-hall (and its idealised version Heorot) to the hart through a redistribution of wealth between lord and thegn.[93] (He notes, of course, there is no evidence for this in pre-Conquest English sources, but supposes cognate examples from later medieval French, English, and German sources are relevant.) Whether or not he is correct in his reading of Heorot as a symbolic venison-sharing representation of lordship, he is surely correct to read it as a masculine, gendered space, as noted in the previous chapter, with its role of providing for family and followers once again linking lordship and masculinity.

The view of hunting as an exclusively masculine, aristocratic practice must be questioned, of course, and work on later medieval hunting has critiqued this essentialist view of hunting as inherently masculine and even inherently elite. Richard Almond, for instance, has done much to argue for the role of women in hunting and their depiction in related art and literature.[94] Almond, in fact, concludes that, at least in the late middle ages, 'hunting was universal and widely practiced by

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[90] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Vita s. Dunstani* 17, in *Eadmer of Canterbury: Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald*, ed. and trans. by Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006); see also 'B', *Vita s. Dunstani* 13, in *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, ed. and trans. by Michael Winterbottom and Michael Lapidge (Oxford: Clarendon, 2011).

[91] William Perry Marvin, *Hunting Law and Ritual in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), p. 17.

[92] See Chapter 3 above on the problems of reading paganism in later Anglo-Saxon texts.

[93] Marvin, *Hunting Law*, p. 31.

[94] Richard Almond, *Medieval Hunting* (Stroud: History Press, 2011); Richard Almond, *Daughters of Artemis: The Huntress in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009).

members of all classes, and both sexes'.[95] Nicholas Orme, too, notes that hunting was widely practiced by women as well as men, and by members of social classes from royalty all the way down to the gentry.[96] Could the same be said for Anglo-Saxon conceptions of hunting?

For sure, only one group seems to have been specifically excluded from hunting: churchmen. Wulfstan's *Canons of Edgar* notes a prohibition against clerical hunting as part of a series that also include gambling, drinking, and fighting, though of course, as discussed previously, prohibitions against both drinking and warfare do not seem to have stopped churchmen from partaking in either activity at any point in the middle ages.[97] Other references to hunting in a range of texts from the long tenth century do show an involvement by other non-aristocratic figures, including the lower social classes and, indeed, women. Ælfric's *Colloquy*, for example, features a hunter in its list of occupations.[98] The hunter is a commoner, yet is apparently skilled in a wide range of venatorial arts, and describes hunting with nets and traps as well as with hounds, and that he catches harts, bears, does, goats, and some hares. He is also respected for his bravery, for he stands against the wild boar alone as his dogs drive the beast towards him. The hunter is not, however, doing so for his own subsistence or enjoyment, and notes that he hunts in the service of the king, and is fed and clothed in exchange for the products of his labour (whenever he does not have to work on his lord's estate in other, unspecified, roles).

Other evidence can perhaps help further elucidate the connection between hunting and social class. In a recent study using zooarchaeological analysis to trace changes in social status throughout the Anglo-Saxon period through deer hunting and consumption, Naomi Sykes finds a significant shift in the 'luxury' status of venison and thus of hunting from the early Anglo-Saxon period to the late.[99] While earlier centuries seem to confirm that hunting was primarily for subsistence, by the middle period finds of deer bones are spread throughout elite, religious and rural (i.e., low-status) sites: a distribution that, she argues, is evidence of a growing social hierarchy. High-status sites from the period, on one hand, tend to overwhelmingly

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[95] Almond, *Medieval Hunting*, p. 167.

[96] Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066–1530* (London: Methuen, 1984), p. 191–193.

[97] Wulfstan, *Canons of Edgar* 65: 'And it is right that a priest not be a hunter or a hawker or a gambler, but entertain himself with his books in keeping with his status'. Trans. Rabin, *Political Writings*, p. 98.

[98] Ælfric, *Colloquy* 53–85.

[99] Naomi Sykes, 'Deer, Land, Knives and Halls: Social Change in Early Medieval England', *The Antiquaries Journal* 90 (2010): pp. 175–193.

contain heads, while the meat-heavy portions of the carcass seem to be found in religious and rural settlements. Sykes suggests this is evidence of meat distribution in the period: elites keeping the 'trophy' portions while giving the meat to others as an indicator of social status and hierarchical relations. In the later period, however, the evidence shows a radical shift in all types of deer bones towards elite sites, and low-status finds fell by half from the middle to late Anglo-Saxon period.[100] Venison became a 'luxury' good, and Sykes notes that this shift suggests 'privatization and elite monopolization of the landscape and its resources'.[101] I would argue, too, that this might also correspond with the rise of hunting as a leisure activity, rather than as a primarily subsistence-based activity.

If hunting did indeed become, over this period, an elite activity, there remains the question of whether or not (elite) women were involved in aspects of Anglo-Saxon hunting. There is, unfortunately, much less evidence for women as hunters in the Anglo-Saxon period than in the periods that Almond discusses in his aforementioned studies, and most of them are scattered and oblique references. In one late tenth century will, for instance, a couple named Brihtric and Ælfswith bequeath '*twegen hafocas 7 ealle his headorhundas*' ('two hawks, and all of his staghounds') to the king, alongside a heriot consisting of gold, swords, and horses.[102] While the will seems to be for both partners, the possessive '*his*' (the masculine singular) probably indicates that the hounds were specifically Brihtric's, rather than theirs ('*heora*') together, though Ælfswith may yet have been involved. In another relatively contemporary late tenth century will (S 1497), though, an unidentifiable but presumably aristocratic woman named Æthelgifu leaves a number of items to her lord, the king, including '.*xxx. mancessa goldes. 7 twegen stedan þe him to beodonne bioð 7 mine headerhundas*', so perhaps women could be involved in hunting, or at least in owning stag-hounds.[103] Post-Conquest evidence supports this idea as well, as the unnamed widow of Godric the Sheriff from Hendred (Sutton, Berks) is recorded in the Domesday Book of having held one hide of land from Edward the Confessor

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[100] Sykes, 'Deer', p. 187.
[101] Sykes, 'Deer', p. 189.
[102] S 1511 (*ASW* XI).
[103] S 1497 (*ASW* VIII): '30 mancuses of gold, and two stallions that must be offered to him, and my stag-hounds'. This translation based on Flight, 'Aristocratic Deer Hunting', p. 326, which follows Dorothy Whitelock, ed. and trans., *The Will of Æthelgifu: A Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Manuscript* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1968), p. 6.

'because she was rearing his hounds'.[104] In sum, this evidence seems to show that women could be involved in aspects of hunting (particularly in the rearing of hunting dogs), but is not entirely convincing as evidence that women might have participated in hunts themselves. If any did, it is probably not surprising to assume it would have been solely aristocratic women, participating in a developing model of social stratification.

Far from being an aristocratic practice throughout the earlier middle ages, archaeological evidence seems to support the idea that hunting (especially for prestige quarry like stags) gradually developed by the later Anglo-Saxon period from a commonplace, though probably masculine, activity into an aristocratic leisure activity that might have been undertaken by elite women as well. What began as a subsistence activity by men of all classes fell under the increased centralisation and stratification of the growing state, and became regulated through royal action, and particularly the enclosing of deer parks for elite hunts, as the domain of elites. As Bullough notes, 'providing' for one's family is one of the three primary characteristics of manhood; in the development of hunting as a royal and aristocratic leisure activity in the tenth century (and beyond), kings thereby appear to have seized on a traditionally masculine action as part of aristocratic practice.

Sex, Celibacy, and Royal Masculinity

As Ruth Mazo Karras has asserted, 'fatherhood formed a central component of the medieval ideology of manhood'.[105] Moreover, as Victor Seidler argues, throughout history, 'potency becomes a sign of virility, so that childlessness renders men incomplete if they have not been able to father children'.[106] Royal procreation is perhaps even more necessary, in order to ensure stable dynastic succession. The anxiety of not possessing a living, legitimate male heir is well attested, probably most famously in the case of Henry VIII before the birth of the future Edward VI by his

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[104] Greater Domesday Book (Phillimore 1,38): '*Aluricus de Taceham dicit se vidisse breven Regis quod eam dederat feminare Godrici in dono eo quod nutriebat canes suos*'. The verb '*nutriebat*' could perhaps simply mean 'fed' here, but seems to have more of a connotation of raising or rearing more broadly. This woman, therefore, was taking part in an essential aspect of the hunt in raising dogs specifically for the practice. On Anglo-Saxon hunting dogs, see T. Flight, 'Aristocratic Deer Hunting', pp. 325–331.

[105] Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 16.

[106] Victor J. Seidler, 'Masculinities, Histories and Memories', in *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. by John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 433–452 (p. 444).

third wife, in the case of Henry I after the death of his son William Adelin in the White Ship disaster, and in the three successive marriages of Æthelred's and Cnut's contemporary, Robert II 'the Pious' of France. The same was almost certainly true for Anglo-Saxon kings too, as succession challenges could (and indeed, did) arise from brothers, cousins, or other members of collateral branches of the royal line.

The necessary precondition of producing an heir is, of course, sex. What, then, should be made of childless kings, or, perhaps even more problematic, celibate ones? Anglo-Saxon kings, like other rulers of the early middle ages, were forced to balance the necessity of procreation with a long Christian tradition supporting the opposite: chastity and celibacy.[107] Both were certainly viable, but elite clerical writers of the middle ages seem to have agreed that there was a 'hierarchy' in forms of sexual behaviour, with chastity at the top as the most esteemed behaviour, followed by sex within marriage as 'a respectable alternative', and all extramarital sex regarded as illicit.[108] This promotion of chastity, within marriage and without, was not a new view in Christian theology, of course; as early as Paul's epistles from the New Testament there are Christian writings against fornication, and promoting celibacy.[109] Nevertheless, the middle ages certainly saw a definitive increase in the church's promotion of celibacy.

Jo Ann McNamara has argued that the medieval promotion of celibacy, which see sees as beginning in the eleventh century, was calamitous for contemporary conceptions of masculinity, and that as a result, 'manhood itself was at stake.'[110] In her view, gender was destabilized by the rise of a new celibate priestly class 'institutionally barred from marriage', which brought with it the question: 'If a person does not act like a man [by deploying the most obviously biological attributes of manhood], is he a man?'[111] While this anxiety may have been true in the later period, it was not necessarily the case in the earlier middle ages. Prior to the so-called Gregorian reforms of the central middle ages, celibacy was rarely enforced in

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[107] Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Sexuality of Chastity', in *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 36–78. For a good overview of Christian views on marriage and celibacy, see Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 10–15.
[108] Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Sexuality in the Middle Ages', in *The Medieval World*, ed. by Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 279–293 (pp. 282–283); Karras, Unmarriages, p.
[109] See, for instance, 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8.
[110] Jo Ann McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050–1150', in Lees, *Medieval Masculinities*, pp. 3–28 (p. 8).
[111] McNamara, '*Herrenfrage*', p. 5.

practice, even for churchmen. Clerical marriage was commonly practiced in England, and Europe more broadly, throughout the later first millennium, and indeed well beyond; Barstow, for instance, has gone so far as to claim that the tenth century was 'the high point of clerical marriage' in the Latin West. [112] The coming of the millennium did little to change that either. Wulfstan, in his early-eleventh-century *Institutes of Polity*, still rails against the practice, implying that it must have been relatively widely practiced the early decades of the eleventh century.[113]

Clerical marriage was not without theoretical limits, of course. Higher ranks of clergy (i.e., deacons, priests, and especially bishops) were specifically forbidden to marry in the earlier medieval period, as they were envisioned as taking the church as spouse instead, and only lower orders were permitted marriage and perhaps even intramarital sex. Even then, a man who was already married could later be ordained as a member of the higher ranks, though the newly-ordained ecclesiast would be required to live a chaste life within his marriage. (There is debate as to whether the couple could remain together or should live separately, the wife then being required to take a vow of celibacy as well.) It was not until much later, at least the thirteenth century, that proscriptions against clerical marriages were more widely enforced.[114] Moreover, it was only after the reforms of the Fourth Lateran Council (AD 1215) that universal clerical celibacy became the norm, and then only through quite a slow process downward through the church hierarchy.[115]

Despite this long development, the church's promotion of chastity certainly began before the eleventh century. Perhaps the most famous promoter of the virtues of celibacy in the early middle ages was Aldhelm, the Anglo-Saxon abbot and Bishop of Sherborne, and one of the most learned and prolific writers of the eighth century. One of his most famous works is *De virginitate*, which has been lauded as perhaps the second most influential text of the early middle ages in northern Europe after Bede's

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[112] Anne L. Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-Century Debates* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), p. 35.
[113] Wulfstan, *I Pol* XXII.
[114] Catherine Cubitt, 'Images of St Peter: The Clergy and the Religious Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Paul Cavill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 41–55 (p. 50); Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest: Clerical Celibacy, Masculinity, and Reform in England and Normandy, 1066–1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 41*ff.*; see also the (now quite dated) Henry C. Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, 2 vol. (New York: MacMillan, 1907).
[115] Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest*.

Historia ecclesiastica.[116] Two versions were composed, one prose and one verse, the former of which was written for the Abbess Hildelith and her community of nuns at Barking.[117] Far from calling celibacy an unmasculine behaviour, both versions of Aldhelm's work portray the internal struggle for piety, including chastity, as (what Emma Pettit has called) a 'ceaseless battle against personified and animalistic vices', to be solved through use of masculinized violence, with the Christian virtues taking on the language of martial attire and action.[118] According to Aldhelm, then, giving up sexual intercourse (amongst other masculine activities forbidden to ecclesiastical and religious figures) was not an *abandonment* of masculinity, but a *transformation* of it. Indeed, Pettit posits that in *De virginitate*, Aldhelm is demonstrating to his — male, monastic — audience that they were still masculine and that, in fact, 'the spiritual life of the cloister provided an alternative yet equally authoritative form of masculinity'.[119] (This masculine practice of virtue is not limited to males, but as Pettit points out, female saints used as exempla in *De Virginitate* are still presented as inferior to their male counterparts.)[120]

Celibacy and virginity were of central concern to later Anglo-Saxon writers as well. In Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, for instance, the homilist almost always defines his female saints by their virginity. The only exception — and quite an exception at that — seems to be St Mary of Egypt, who in her old age relates to the Abbot Zosimus how she spent seventeen years of her youth in fornication, having 'polluted her virginity' and 'continued in subjection to sinful lusts', before repenting of that life of debauchery in Jerusalem and becoming an ascetic and hermit in the wilderness.[121] The *vita* of the married Saints Julian and Basilissa also provides an interesting example, in that the two saints were forced to marry, but both preferred to remain celibate throughout their marriage and became the leaders of communities of nuns and monks.[122]

Perhaps the most famous chaste figure in Ælfric's *oeuvre*, though, is Judith. As noted in Chapter 3 above, the Old Testament figure was the subject of three Old English vernacular texts: the well-known anonymous poetical version in the *Beowulf*

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[116] Thomas Cramer, 'Containing Virginity: Sex and Society in Early Medieval England', *Haskins Society Journal* 21 (2009), 47–66 (p. 47).
[117] Lapidge, 'Aldhelm', *WBEASE*, pp. 27–29.
[118] Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity', pp. 11–12.
[119] Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity', p. 18
[120] Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity', pp. 13–16.
[121] Ælfric, *LS* XXIIIb (Skeat II:1–53).
[122] Ælfric, *LS* IV (Skeat I:90–115).

manuscript, as well as two versions by Ælfric in the form of a homily (written c. 1000) and a translation of the biblical book in his letter to Sigeweard of Asthall (c. 1005). In each version, the heroine devotes herself to a life of chastity (OE *clænnysse*) after the death of her husband, and that chasteness becomes her defining trait, in contrast to the lascivious, drunken violence of the antagonist Holofernes. In all of these cases, both Aldhelm and Ælfric tend to focus their writings on virginity of women and monastic figures. As noted above, though, these writers found little problem in using monastic or female virgins as moral exemplars for lay aristocratic men; indeed, Ælfric's letter to Sigeweard specifically mentions that Judith's story has been 'translated into English in our way as an example for you men', presumably to inspire (or shame) those who were struggling to defend their kingdom from the Danish attacks of Æthelred's reign.[123]

These figures, of course, are those who might, as saints and widows, be expected to undertake a celibate life. Or celibate kings? One of Ælfric's two examples of a royal, secular male saint also indicates a preference for masculine chastity as well. As Ælfric's *Passio sancti Eadmundi regis et martyris* from the *Lives of Saint* recounts, the East Anglian king was martyred at the hands of viking invaders and his head thrown into the forest but eventually found with the assistance of a protective wolf.[124] When Edmund's body was translated to a new church (at present-day Bury St Edmunds) some years later, he was found incorrupt; his undecayed body, Ælfric says, shows '*þæt he butan forligre her on worulde leofode*.'[125] All of these lives, though, are still hagiographic, and perhaps tell us more about the ideals of tenth-century monastics than anything else. A historical examination of a series of kings from the tenth century, however, can show the range of interactions between Christian ideals of celibacy and the requirements of masculinity within the office of kingship.

Much has been written on Alfred the Great's famous illness, usually in the form of what might called historical pathology: identifying Alfred's symptoms, and attempting to match them with a known disease.[126] But diagnosing the malady, whatever it may have been, ignores a more important point: his illness's possible

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[123] Ælfric, *Letter to Sigeweard* 361–63: '*Seo ys eac on englisc on ure wisan gesett eow mannum to byrne þæt ge eowerne eard mid wæmnum bewerian wið onwinnendne here.*'

[124] Ælfric, *LS* XXXII (Skeat II:314–35); Ælfric's *vita* is probably based on a Latin hagiography composed by Abbo of Fleury at the commission of the monks of Ramsey.

[125] Ælfric, *LS* XXXII (Skeat II:328–29): '…that he lived without fornication here in this world, and passed to Christ by means of a chaste life.'

[126] See, for instance, G. Craig, 'Alfred the Great: A Diagnosis', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 84 (1991), 303–305.

association with sexuality. Asser writes that '*in primaevo iuventutis suae flore, antequam propriam coniugem duceret, mentem suam propriam in Dei mandatis stabilire vellet, et se a carnali desiderio abstinere non posse cerneret*', and his ailment was the means by which God assisted him.[127] The second malady struck on his very wedding night, and continued at least until the time of Asser's writing in the last decade of the ninth century. According to Asser's account, then, Alfred's illness is associated with two particular points in Alfred's life in which sexuality was a central part. If we accept Asser as an accurate source on information about Alfred's life, these episodes seem to show a deep, personal anxiety about sex on behalf of the king. Alfred was not alone in suffering from such anxieties related to sex, of course. As Nelson has shown, there is considerable evidence that other secular elite men of the ninth century (including Charles the Fat and Gerald of Aurillac) shared such conditions resulting from sexual anxieties.[128] She proposes that the most significant connection is these men's uncertain status as secular heirs, and their 'difficulty in living out assigned roles' when situations changed.[129] Alfred's status as youngest of several sons meant a slim chance of succession, and thus a case in which a life of chastity would have been acceptable and, indeed, useful, eliminating the possibility of succession crisis between rival branches of the royal family. But when forced into the role of king by the circumstances of the 860s and early 870s, Alfred's self-imposed celibacy suddenly became a problem, and his desire to maintain purity, as stressed by the Church, came into conflict with the necessity of procreation for the secured continuation of his family line. Nevertheless, and despite a condition that continued to plague him for decades, he eventually produced a number of children, in the form of Edward the Elder and, additionally, at least four daughters. Edward seems to have had little anxiety about marriage and reproducing (on which see below), but his son and heir makes another interesting case for the connection between kings and celibacy.

Æthelstan, the son of Edward who was probably fostered by Æthelflæd and Æthelred in Mercia, reigned for some fifteen years beginning in 924, but never produced any children and, as far as sources can say, never even married.[130] Rather than displaying anxiety at weighing procreation against chastity, as his grandfather

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[127] *VÆlf* 74: 'in the first flowering of his youth, before he entered the marriage state, [Alfred] wished to strengthen his mind in observance of God's commandments, for he perceived that he could not abstain from carnal desire'.

[128] Nelson, 'Monks, Secular Men, and Masculinity', pp. 135–138.

[129] Nelson, 'Monks, Secular Men, and Masculinity', pp. 138–140.

[130] Remember, of course, that not all historians are convinced (e.g., Dumville); see above, Chapter 1.

Alfred had, Æthelstan appears to have adopted celibacy intentionally and with little reservation. Unfortunately, little concrete information about Æthelstan's life survives, and historians are thus left to speculate as to why (or if) he should consciously choose to remain without wife and issue. He certainly knew the political value marriage could bring: four of his sisters were given in marriage to important insular and Continental rulers, three presumably by arrangement by Æthelstan himself, in order to build political alliances.[131] And yet strangely he never contracted any marriage for himself.

Sarah Foot has suggested that Edward the Elder perhaps planned to marry Æthelstan to his Mercian cousin, Ælfwynn, the daughter of Æthelflæd, and that the months after the dispossession of her lands and authority would have been the prime moment to arrange such a marriage.[132] This marriage did not take place, however, and moreover, as Foot admits, the marriage would have been in violation of church doctrine on allowable degrees of marriage between cousins anyway (a subject that would come up only a generation later, on which more below). There have also been suggestions that Æthelstan's perpetual bachelorhood and his apparent 'preference for the company of men' might be read as evidence of homosexuality. This is certainly a possibility and should not be discounted to readily, though as Foot notes, the most that could be said is that though his interests 'might have tended towards same-sex relations', there is 'no mechanism by which to test such a proposition'; it may simply have been, she awkwardly admits, that he simply had a 'predilection for male conversation and manly pursuits' without any sexual connotations.[133]

Assuming this was not the case, there are certainly other possibilities for the king's lack of a marriage and heirs. One is that Æthelstan's lifelong celibacy was the result of a political agreement, however formal, derived from the struggles that characterised the early days of his reign. It is unclear if Edward intended Æthelstan

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[131] Eadgifu was married to Charles the Simple, king of West Francia (and Lotharingia), Eadhild to Hugh the Great, duke of the Franks, and Eadgyth to Otto I, king of the East Franks and eventual Holy Roman Emperor (albeit after Eadgyth's death). Another sister, probably named Edith, was married to Sitric Cáech, the viking king of Dublin and Northumbria, presumably as part of Æthelstan's program of incorporating the northern territories more fully into his realm. Simon MacLean has recently argued, though, that the marriage connections between Æthelstan's England and the Continent were perhaps more complicated; rather than simply embodying political alliances, they were a point of 'symbolic communication' used to bolster claims to Carolingian legitimacy in the success crises of the 920s. Simon MacLean, 'Cross-Channel Marriage and Royal Succession in the Age of Charles the Simple and Æthelstan (c. 916–936)', *Medieval Worlds* 2 (2015), 26–44.

[132] Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 59. This is assuming, of course, that Jayakumar's extremely speculative proposal that Ælfwynn was eventually married to Æthelstan 'Half-King' is incorrect; see above, Chapter 1.

[133] Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 59–60.

and Ælfweard (his younger half-brother) to rule jointly, or if one son was preferred as Edward's heir. Æthelstan was the elder son, but Ælfweard was the oldest son from Edward's second, perhaps more 'legitimate', marriage. Ælfweard's death soon after their father's helped to resolve the issue, but nevertheless there seems to have been some resistance by elites from Winchester and Wessex to the rule of the (Mercian-backed) Æthelstan, whom the author of the Mercian Register says was 'chosen by the Mercians as king' but who had to wait until the following year to be consecrated more widely.[134] Because of these challenges to his rule, it has been argued that Æthelstan's avoidance of marriage and issue was a political tool meant to sooth those troubles by promising the throne to one of his younger half-brothers rather than a son, 'a family pact whereby an older man ruled as a kind of stake-holder for younger half-brothers', in order to ensure a lack of rival claimants, as had also happened with Edward's own succession dispute with his cousin Æthelwold after Alfred's death in 899.[135]

It is also entirely possible that Æthelstan's celibacy was not primarily derived from political decisions at all, but was instead the result of a genuine, 'religiously motivated determination on chastity as a way of life'.[136] Some (admittedly rather circumstantial) evidence may support this theory. A later eleventh-century manuscript of Aldhelm's *De virginitate*, for instance, has been appended with a list of relics donated to Exeter by Æthelstan, while another copy of the prose *De virginitate* appears in a near-contemporary manuscript from the first quarter of the tenth century, probably from Winchester or Canterbury and possibly written by the same scribe who was commissioned to produce another manuscript presented by the king to the cult of St Cuthbert at Chester-Le-Street.[137] Moreover, Aldhelm's complicated 'hermeneutic style', which is especially apparent in *De virginitate*, seems to have had a profound influence on the literary culture of Æthelstan's reign. The anonymous scribe commonly known as 'Æthelstan A', in whose hand a number of significant charters survive from between 928 and 935, adopted a similar hermeneutic style, and seems to have paraphrased from the prose *De virginitate* at least twenty times

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[134] ASC (MR) 924: '*7 Æþelstan wæs of Myrcum gecoren to cinge*'.
[135] Janet Nelson, 'Rulers and government', *NCMH* III, p. 104. See also Dumville, *Wessex and England*, p. 151; Sean Miller, 'Æthelstan', *WBEASE*, p. 18.
[136] Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 249.
[137] BL MS Royal 6.B.vii, f. 54v; BL MS Royal 7.D.xxiv, cf. CCCC MS 183; Simon Keynes, 'King Æthelstan's Books', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 143–201 (p. 184).

throughout his corpus.[138] So, even if it cannot be conclusively proven that Æthelstan himself had read Aldhelm's writings on virginity, copies of it nevertheless circulated within his circle, and it had a significant influence on a senior figure in the court of a king who — whether out of political motivations or religious ones, if not both — remained unmarried and (presumably) chaste for the entirety of his life.

When Æthelstan died, he was succeeded in turn by his two half-brothers, Edmund and Eadred. The latter died at only thirty-two, never having married or fathered any heirs, though both may be attributable to the illness his is said to have suffered from in his later years.[139] His successor, however, took a somewhat different view of appropriate sexual behaviour for an Anglo-Saxon king. The reign of Eadwig, son of Edmund, was relatively short, and is perhaps best known for a scandalous scene from a later *vita* of Dunstan. According to that story, during Eadwig's coronation feast, the Archbishop Oda noted the newly-crowned king's absence and sent Dunstan (then only an abbot) to find him. When he did, it was in bed with a young woman (possibly his cousin and future wife Ælfgifu) and her mother. The story was well known within a few centuries, and William of Malmesbury repeats it, embellishing the original by calling Eadwig 'a wanton youth, and one who misused his personal beauty in lascivious behaviour' by taking a woman 'to whom he was closely related', and whom William goes so far as to call a 'doxy' and a 'concubine', as his wife.[140] Admittedly, it is quite possible that the story may have been an invention by the hagiographer serving to explain the origins of the conflict between king and (future) saint Dunstan — a conflict that would eventually result in Dunstan's exile to the Continent, the annulment of Eadwig's marriage on the grounds of consanguinity, and, by 957, the division of the kingdom between Eadwig and his younger brother Edgar, who took control of all the lands north of the Thames with the support of Dunstan and the thanes of Mercia and Northumbria.

Ælfgifu's status as a member of a (dispossessed) branch of the royal family, and the king's third cousin, surely would have been known at the time of their marriage in 956.[141] The author of the D-text of the Chronicle, too, already knew that

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[138] Ben Snook, *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: The History, Language and Production of Anglo-Saxon Charters from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), p. 104 and 157.

[139] 'B', *Vita s. Dunstani* 20.

[140] William of Malmesbury, *GRA* II.147: '*Edwius… petulans adolescens et qui spetiositate corporis in libidinibus abuteretur. Denique proxime cognatam inuadens uxorem eius form deperibat, sapientium consilia fastidiens.* […] *Dunstanus* […] *per Odonem archiepiscopum pelicem repudiare coactum, perpetuum sibi inimicum fecit.*'

[141] Simon Keynes, 'Eadwig', *ODNB*.

'*Oda arcebiscop totwæmde Eadwi cyning 7 Ælgyfe forþæm þe hi wæron to gesybbe*'.[142] The story of the debauched scene during the coronation feast may thus be the way Dunstan's hagiographer chose to present the beginnings of a relationship that Oda and Dunstan opposed, and a means of providing justification for the latter's annulment of said marriage. Sean Miller has argued moreover that the annulment was surely 'a political rather than a religious move', and it may have also been an attempt to rein in royal authority that had been (based on the evidence of the unprecedented number of charters issued in Eadwig's reign) growing through the promotion of new men, many of them also cousins of the royal line.[143] In the hagiography as well as in the realm of tenth-century political manoeuvring, Eadwig's illicit sexual relations could be used as a political weapon to undermine secular royal authority by the Benedictine reformers who opposed him, exactly the opposite of the way other kings' celibacy could be used to stress their self-control and, therefore, royal suitability. This may, then, give us some indication of new attitudes towards sexual mores developing under the reformers, as well as these reformers' early attempts to influence and correct kings and other secular rulers. But did these attitudes hold out over the following generation, or influence the ways in which Æthelred, the king most directly educated by them, behaved?

Æthelred, for his part, seems to have had few qualms about sex. Compared to other tenth-century English kings he was particularly prolific, and fathered perhaps thirteen children over the course of his two marriages. With his first wife Ælfgifu (of York) he sired probably three daughters alongside six sons, four of whom (Æthelstan, Ecgberht, Eadred, and Edgar) predeceased him; the other two, Edmund Ironside and Eadwig, died within a few years of their father, Edmund soon after making peace with Cnut in 1016, and Eadwig at the Scandinavian conqueror's hands in 1017. With his second wife Emma of Normandy, Æthelred produced two more sons: the future king Edward the Confessor, and Ælfred 'Ætheling', who was betrayed, captured, and fatally blinded by Earl Godwin of Wessex on the prince's return to England to claim his throne after Cnut's death in 1035.

This serial monogamy, and bearing of children with a number of successive wives, was nothing new, of course, and fits with a general pattern of Anglo-Saxon

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[142] ASC (D) 958: 'Archbishop Oda separated Eadwig the king and Ælfgifu because they were too closely related'.
[143] Sean Miller, 'Eadwig', *WBEASE*, pp. 155–156.

royal marriage customs dating back to at least the late ninth century.[144] As Levi Roach has recently noted, the making and breaking of marriages for aristocrats of the period was nothing special, and this sort of serial monogamy was commonplace for both the Anglo-Saxons and their continental contemporaries.[145] While Edward the Elder married his first wife (the mother of Æthelstan, later named as Ecgwynn by William of Malmesbury) in around 893, she was either dead or replaced by 899 when Edward succeeded Alfred and took Ælfflæd as his second wife. Later writers have thus tended to portray Edward's first wife as a concubine or otherwise as an illegitimate (or at least, not sufficiently elite) wife, though this debate should perhaps be read in the context of Æthelstan's disputed succession rather than that of the late ninth century.[146] The same pattern held true under Edgar, too, who married (or at least had children by) three women in succession.[147] While his first wife Æthelflæd, about whom not much is known, was legitimate enough to have given birth to a future king (Æthelred's half-brother Edward the Martyr), she either died or was set aside at some point during his reign; she was followed soon after by Wulfthryth, possibly a nun from Wilton, and mother of the future abbess Edith. It was Edgar's third wife, Æthelred's mother Ælfthryth, who would be crowned queen (a first in English history) and go on to become a powerful figure in her own right during the reigns of Edgar's sons.

However, the New Minster Refoundation Charter of c. 966 perhaps provides more nuance in understanding how the status of these wives and sons might have worked in practice. In its witness-list, Ælfthryth attests as '*Ælfðryð legitima prefati regis coniuncx*', and Edmund, her first son by Edgar who would predecease his father by 971, is '*Eadmund clito legitimus prefati regis filius*'.[148] Edward, on the other hand, the

[144] Indeed, Margaret Ross connected Anglo-Saxon concubinage to Tacitean 'Germanic' practices, and posits its continuation throughout the early Anglo-Saxon period, until church teachings moved to stop the practice: Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage in Anglo-Saxon England', *Past & Present* 108 (1985), 3–35. Remember, of course, the problems discussed in Chapter 3 above about using these 'Germanic' models to understand Anglo-Saxon England.

[145] Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 43–45.

[146] Barbara Yorke, 'Edward as Ætheling', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 25–39 (pp. 33–34). Note too that Sara McDougall's recent work problematises this strict dichotomy between 'legitimate' marriages and concubinage: Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800–1230* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 49–57. Ruth Mazo Karras's work on the types of sexual unions in the early middle ages is also relevant here: Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Men, Women, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[147] On this, see in particular Yorke, 'The Women in Edgar's Life', *passim*.

[148] New Minster Refoundation Charter (S 745): 'Ælfthryth, the legitimate wife of the aforementioned king' and 'Edmund Ætheling, legitimate son of the aforementioned king'. Latin text from Alexander

king's eldest son by his first wife, attests only as '*Eadweard eodem rege clito procreatus*', which clearly seems to be a lower-status description.[149] As Barbara Yorke has also discussed, the crosses beside the names of Edmund and Ælfthryth are filled with gold, while Edward's is simply left as an unfilled outline.[150] Yet when Edgar died, this same Edward would go on to succeed him. McDougall's work has done much to show that our assumptions about the importance of legitimacy in marriage (and, thereby, the legitimacy of children from those unions) has been largely influenced by the writers of the twelfth century, and that tenth-century cases might exhibit much more fluidity of practice; more should be made of the social status of the women concerned, and their use in times of dynastic crisis, than of their marriages in terms of Christian legitimacy.[151] We should be careful, in other words, of ascribing too much to the notion of these early wives as 'concubines', a word that is seldom used for them, and therefore also how these marriages influence our understanding of Anglo-Saxon kings' relationships to sexual unions.

Of course, these early, and serial, marriages, if not concubinage itself, were not exclusive to the Anglo-Saxons. The most famous case in the earlier medieval world is almost certainly that of Lothar II of Lotharingia. Lothar, a Carolingian prince in line for the throne of the middle successor kingdom in the mid-ninth century, was originally married to an aristocratic woman named Waldrada; when he succeeded his father in 855, however, Lothar disposed of her and married Theutberga, the daughter of a more powerful Lotharingian noble family. Within a few years, though, Lothar seems to have wished to return to Waldrada, and attempted to divorce his new, more 'legitimate' wife. This attempted divorce was contested, and turned into a massive power struggle that drew in four kings, two popes, and innumerable bishops and aristocrats, with accusations of incest and sodomy hurled at Theutberga, and provided the impetus for the writing of Hincmar of Rheims's famous account of the proceedings, *De divortio*.[152] As Ruth Mazo Karras

R. Rumble, ed. and trans., 'IV. A.D. 966 Refoundation Charter of the New Minster Granted by King Edgar', in *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester: Documents Relating to the Topography of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman City and its Minsters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 65–97.

[149] S 745: 'Edward Ætheling, begotten by the same king'.

[150] Yorke, 'The Women in Edgar's Life', p. 480.

[151] McDougall, *Royal Bastards*, pp. 108–115; for a broader overview of the range of 'unequal unions', see Karras, *Unmarriages*, pp. 68–73*ff*.

[152] Hincmar's text has most recently been edited and translated in Rachel Stone and Charles West, ed. and trans., *The Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga: Hincmar of Rheims's* De divortio (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016). For a gendered reading of the event, see Airlie, 'Private Bodies and the Body Politic'.

has recently argued, these earlier partners (often termed concubines by later writers) and their families may not have considered these unions to be temporary or lower-status. Moreover, though, she notes, this case marked a turning point in western Christian perceptions of marriage, and established a tradition, by the tenth century, that proper Christian marriage was the only legitimate one.[153] Yet as this chapter has noted, situations on the ground may not have always echoed theoretical guidelines, and considerable fluidity, with changes due to individual circumstances, must have existed, including in the case of Edward succeeding Edgar despite Æthelred being the son of the 'legitimate' later wife.

Considering both Edgar and Æthelred's 'early and often' approach to marriage, it is quite interesting that Æthelred's sons, already adults in the last decade of their father's reign, appear never to have married at all. Might Æthelred have tried to prevent his sons from marrying during his lifetime? It is certainly plausible, and would have made political sense. If Æthelstan Ætheling, his original heir presumptive, had married beforehand and then contracted a more advantageous match after accession as many members of his dynasty had done, it might mean an increased threat of succession crises in the future, the results of which Æthelred would have keenly remembered. It is also quite possible that such a demand by the king to his sons, to delay marriage until after accession, may help explain Edmund Ironside's actions in 1015, stealing the lands of the recently-slain Sigeferth and Morcar and taking the former's wife Ealdgyth 'against the king's will'.[154] Only the renewed threat of Cnut's invasion around the same time seems to have prevented this event from turning into what could have been an all-out rebellion. It could be argued, then, that while Æthelred did not adopt the same sort of policy of celibacy that some of his predecessors had, he certainly understood the value of keeping his sons' marital status under close guard, for political reasons if nothing else. As in so many other aspects of his reign, though, he was again unsuccessful, and his inability to control his son could have led to disaster had another bigger catastrophe not interrupted it. It is also worth wondering, though, if Æthelred's potential control of his sons marriages, if that were the case, might also have been tied to his return to

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[153] Karras, *Unmarriages*, 38–45. On the language of 'illegitimate' unions in medieval texts, see McDougall, *Royal Bastards*, pp. 59–64, and on concubinage in the Carolingian world, pp. 66–93.

[154] ASC (C) 1015: '*ofer ðæs cynges gewil*'. It is presumed that Ealdgyth was the mother of Edmund's sons, Edward the Exile and Edmund Ætheling, who were forced into exile, though the time between Edmund's taking of Ealdgyth in 1015 and his death in 1017 would have been quite short to produce two sons. If they were the sons of a previous wife or 'concubine', that has not been recorded.

the teachings of Æthelwold in his later years, and his insistence (as the *Agnus Dei* coinage above demonstrated) on right behaviour as a means of countering the catastrophes of his reign.

Cnut, like many of his predecessors on the English throne, followed similarly serial marriage practices. His first marriage, to Ælfgifu of Northampton, was arranged early in Sweyn's conquests, and helped secure loyalty in northern England through her family, who had suffered at the hands of Æthelred for disloyalty.[155] (Her father had been killed and her brothers blinded in 1006, though her uncle Wulfric Spot remained an exceptionally wealthy magnate with territory in Mercia and further north, at least as far as Wirral and '*betwux Ribbel 7 Mærse*'.)[156] On the death of Æthelred and Edmund Ironside, Cnut married Æthelred's widow Emma of Normandy. Ælfgifu of Northampton continued to exercise power in Cnut's name in Scandinavia, though, alongside their sons Swein and Harold Harefoot, and does not seem to have died until well after her husband. Cnut's two marriages thus went far beyond the (apparently commonplace) serial monogamy, and perhaps even crossed the line into polygamy.[157] Indeed, they seem to have violated laws against polygyny (or at least concubinage) issued in Cnut's own name.[158] This was certainly a violation of Church teachings as well, and possibly too was his second marriage to Emma in itself, as widows were typically expected to remain celibate, if not retire to a nunnery.[159] Nevertheless, the marriage took place, and all too predictably, the coming decades saw renewed tensions between the various heirs who resulted from this web of marriages: exactly the result that celibacy, or regulated marriage, had been used to try to prevent over the course of the tenth century.

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[155] On Ælfgifu specifically, see Timothy Bolton, 'Ælfgifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great's Other Woman', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* LI (2007), 247–268.

[156] Will of Wulfric Spot (S 1536): '…between the Ribble and the Mersey'.

[157] Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers*, pp. 73–74, cf. Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, pp. 267–268; Eric John, 'The End of Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 214–239 (p. 214).

[158] II Cnut 54.1 (Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, pp. 348–349): '*7 se ðe haebbe rihtwif 7 eac cifese ne do him nan preost nan þæra gerihta, þe man Cristenum men don sceal, ærþam he geswice 7 swa deope gebete, swa bisceop him tæce, 7 æfre swylces geswice*' ('And if anyone has a lawful wife and also a concubine, no priest is to do for him any of the offices which must be done for a Christian man, until he desists and atones for it as deeply as the bishop instructs him, and desists from such forever'); Ross, 'Concubinage', pp. 13–14.

[159] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 74–75, which cites V Æthelred 21.1 and II Cnut 73 as specific examples of chaste widowhood in contemporary law.

Conclusions

While celibacy was not a requirement for right Christian behaviour, medieval Christian kings were theoretically placed in the position of striving to maintain purity of body while also guaranteeing the succession of their line. Kings, as other men (including, perhaps, married clerics) were permitted sex within marriage, but those who were anointed and consecrated and sincerely sought to follow the Church's followings, and to avoid becoming a *rex iniquus*, must have suffered some amount of anxiety in balancing these two points of view. This conflict must surely have been even more of a concern for a king like Æthelred, who had no surviving throne-worthy brothers or nephews, and who already had the added pressure of external threats weighing on him and the teachings of Benedictine reformers to tell him that total devotion to Christian right behaviour was the only way to save his realm. This was not always the case, though, and royal attitudes towards sex seem to have varied throughout the long tenth century. While some kings had no trouble fathering multiple children, others seem to have had more conflicted beliefs, and others still seem to have declined sex and procreation entirely. In McNamara's estimation, the eleventh-century 'celibate clerical hierarchy reshaped the gender system to assure male domination in every aspect of the new public sphere'.[160] There was surely already a reshaping of gender systems happening in the earlier middle ages in connection with church-defined sexual relations (and male domination certainly never diminished), but it might be argued that, in the later Anglo-Saxon world this did not so much mean that manhood was 'at stake', but undergoing a period in which multiple interpretations of masculinity could be made, including one that embraced masculine celibacy, no matter if it were for political or genuinely pious reasons.

Similar changes are also apparent in attitudes towards royal participation in warfare during the same period. Success in battle and military leadership had always been, and remained, an important aspect of Anglo-Saxon, and especially West Saxon, kingship and masculinity. Victory (usually) ensured loyalty from followers, and also guaranteed the kingdom would remain safe from foreign enemies, as *Brunanburh* recounted. In 'heroic' poetry as well as in material culture, amongst other places, the bearing of weapons became an increasingly potent symbol of masculinity,

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[160] McNamara, '*Herrenfrage*', p. 11.

and probably of lordship as well. Edgar's reign, the high water mark of the Benedictine reform and cooperation between the reformers and the political elite, was one of great peace and stability, but as the hardships that troubled Æthelred's reign mounted, the king and his *witan* sought new ways to protect the kingdom. As the second chapter of this dissertation noted, one of these ways monastic and ecclesiastical writing proposed to do so was through an extreme promotion of righteousness, derived from wisdom and correction, to ensure the success of the nation in tandem with to the piety and justice of the king. By the first decade of the new millennium, the apocalypse seemed to still be eminent, and new measures were taken by the king along just such lines. Like Christian heroes and virtuous Old Testament kings of old, Æthelred left the battlefield in the hands of commanders and took his own role as 'prayer-in-chief', even so far as implementing a new iconography on coinage that replaced the helmeted king with the Lamb of God and the Dove of the Holy Spirit. Christian writers of the period stressed that these moves away from 'traditional' masculinity — that is, the embracing of celibacy, and move away from military leadership — were equally valid performances of masculinity, in particular because, like the presentation of (aristocratic) masculinity stressed in 'heroic' poetry of the previous chapter, they were indicators of a man's self-control and moderation. Interestingly, it is during this same period that hunting (i.e., providing for one's family) also began to take on not just a masculine colouring, but one associated with the secular elite. While the promotion of celibacy and peace, in the name of Christian moderation, challenged royal conceptions of masculinity, hunting provided an outlet that could be presented as explicitly masculine, but also, through new laws and regulations, be kept as a practice of royal and aristocratic males. In all three cases, then, political and religious innovations of the tenth century explicitly challenged previous ideals of masculinity, but provided new, alternative, religiously-sanctioned avenues through which kings might perform high-status masculinity.

MASCULINITY AND KINGSHIP AT THE END OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Cristenum cyninge gebyrað swiðe rihte þæt he sy on fæder stæle cristenre þeode, 7 on ware 7 on wearde Cristes gespeliga, ealswa he geteald.

It very rightly behoves a Christian king that he be in a father's place over a Christian nation, and is, in watch and in ward, Christ's vicegerent, just as he is considered.

(Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, *Institutes of Polity*)

Masculinity and Kingship: The Case of Edward the Confessor

Following Cnut's death in 1035, his son Harold 'Harefoot' reigned in his brother Harthacnut's stead in England for two years before claiming the throne for himself from 1037 to 1040. On his death, the throne passed back to Harthacnut, who had been ruling in their father's Scandinavian holdings. When Harthacnut died suddenly on 8 June 1042 at the wedding feast of Tofig the Proud, his father's standard-bearer, and Gytha, daughter of royal official Osgod Clapa, Æthelred's last surviving son Edward was well positioned — both figuratively and literally, as he was also in attendance at the feast — to restore Alfred's West Saxon line to the English throne.[1] By this point, Edward had spent most of his life in exile: having been forced from the kingdom at Cnut's accession in 1016 when he was probably no more than ten or twelve years old, he did not return until 1041 as a mature man of around thirty-five years, and on his return from Normandy, he was accompanied by an entourage composed of a number of Continental retainers that included his nephew Ralph (son of his sister Godgifu and Drogo, Count of Vexin), the abbot and future archbishop Robert of Jumièges, and the two clerics Leofric and Herman.[2] This entourage also probably included a number of Norman knights or other elites, for the *Vita Ædwardi Regis* notes that on returning from Francia '*ex eadem gente comitati sunt quam plures non ignobiles uiri*', whom he eventually enriched and glorified in his reign as king.[3]

Despite Edward's quarter-century in exile on the Continent and his heavily Norman social circle, Frank Barlow is surely right to place the king's background firmly within a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon context, encompassing the chaotic violence of his father's reign, the still-thriving Benedictine reform movement, and the 'heroic' world of secular courtly culture.[4] If the *Vita Ædwardi regis* is to be believed, Edward delighted in both the spiritual and the secular, especially in hunting and hawking, just like his forebears before him:

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[1] Osgod is described in the sources as a 'staller', and in a later source, a '*major domus*'. Ann Williams, 'Osgod Clapa', *ODNB*; Katharine Mack, 'The Stallers: Administrative Innovation in the Reign of Edward the Confessor', *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986), 123–134 (p. 125).

[2] Barlow, *Edward*, p. 50. Leofric was an Anglo-Saxon, but had been educated in Lotharingia, where he had presumably met Herman.

[3] *Vita Ædwardi Regis* I.3: 'Quite a number of men of that nation (i.e., Francia), and they not base-born, accompanied him'. Text and translation from Frank Barlow, ed. and trans., *Vita Ædwardi Regis: The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962).

[4] Barlow, *Edward*, pp. 3–27.

[…] benignissimus rex Ædwardus […] plurimumque temporis exigebat circa saltus et siluas in uenationum iocunditate. Diuinis enim expeditus officiis quibus libenter co[ti]diana intendebat deuotione, iocundabatur plurimum coram se allatis accipitribus uel huius generis auibus, uel certe delectabatur applausibus multorum motuum canibus.[5]

Later Scandinavian sources place him alongside his brother Edmund Ironside as co-king at their father's death, and on the battlefield as well, even giving him credit for nearly killing Cnut in battle.[6] Also like his tenth-century ancestors, Edward economically supported the church, most notably in the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey, which celebrated its consecration on 28 December 1065 and the king's funeral and burial scarcely more than a week later.[7] His wife Edith, too, restored the convent at Wilton, which had long been associated with West Saxon royal women from the time of its founding by Alfred's grandfather Ecgberht and its refoundation by Alfred and Ealhswith.[8]

Edward, perhaps more than any Anglo-Saxon king, has also been closely associated with the question of royal celibacy. Recent historians have, of course, tended to see interpretations of Edward's intentional celibacy as highly exaggerated, based as they are on hagiographical readings of his life written centuries after his death; Barlow, for instance, goes so far as to say that 'the theory that Edward's childlessness was due to deliberate abstention from sexual relations lacks authority, plausibility and diagnostic value'.[9] It is possible — or even probable — that, regardless of his posthumous reputation for perpetual holy celibacy, Edward's childlessness was simply the result of bad luck. But even if this were the case, it does not necessarily preclude understanding Edward in a tenth-century context regarding his succession plans.

When it seemed clear that he and Edith would not be producing a child in the late 1050s, Edward could still rely on the earlier Anglo-Saxon tradition of succession from amongst various branches of the royal line. Lacking any cousins in England, Edward sent to the Continent to recall his nephew, Edward 'the Exile',

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[5] *VÆdR* I.6: '… the most kindly King Edward […] spent much of his time in the glades and woods in the pleasures of hunting. After divine service, which he gladly and devoutly attended every day, he took much pleasure in hawks and birds of that kind which were brought before him, and was really delighted by the baying and scrambling of the hounds'.

[6] Barlow, *Edward*, pp. 35–36, which cites *Óláfs saga Helga* from *Heimskringla* and *Óláfs saga ins Helga* from *Flateyjarbók*.

[7] Barlow, *Edward*, pp. 244–255.

[8] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 257–258.

[9] Barlow, *Edward*, p. 82.

who was living in the Kingdom of Hungary, to become heir apparent.[10] The exiled Edward died within days of returning to England, unfortunately, but he did leave behind a son, Edgar 'Ætheling', the final male-line descendent of Alfred and Æthelred.[11] Succession by a nephew or other member of a collateral line would not have raised any eyebrows in a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon context; it had, after all, been the case with the three sons of Edward the Elder who reigned in turn, and with the sons of Edmund succeeding after their childless uncle Eadred. Tom Licence has recently argued quite convincingly, indeed, that contemporary sources seem to show Edgar as Edward's clear choice to succeed him.[12]

Edgar's æthelinghood could have brought another problem, of course: when his father died, Edgar was perhaps only six or seven years old, and though Edward may have assumed his nephew would live long enough to ensure an easy handover of power, Edgar was still no more than thirteen or fourteen in twilight years of his uncle's life. The young prince's age would not have automatically disqualified him from hopes of succession, as the cases of Edward the Martyr and Æthelred had shown, but the elderly king would surely have understood the problems that a minor successor might bring; as Ecclesiastes and Pseudo-Cyprian had warned, after all, 'Woe to the land whose king is a child'.[13] If age were not a disqualifying factor though, and if Edgar was indeed acknowledged as Edward's heir apparent by the late 1050s (or early 1060s at the latest), the king's primary reason not to remain celibate would have been ameliorated.

Joanna Huntington argues that the sources that most explicitly argue for Edward's perpetual virginity (e.g., Aelred of Rievaulx) are only the end-point of a change in the interpretations of the saint-king's sanctity based on the needs of his later cult.[14] It is worth remembering, though, that the *Vita Ædwardi regis*, written at

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[10] For a full consideration of the exiled *ætheling* and his son, see Nicholas Hooper, 'Edgar the Ætheling: Anglo-Saxon Prince, Rebel, and Crusader', *ASE* 14 (1985), 197–214. On Edgar's return with his father, see Barlow, *Edward*, pp. 219–220.

[11] Edgar does not appear in any record before 1066, but it is probably safe to assume he returned to England alongside his father.

[12] Tom Licence, 'Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question: A Fresh Look at the Sources', *ANS* 39 (2017), 113–127. Edgar would, in fact, go on to be chosen king by some English thegns in 1066 after the death of Harold Godwinson at Hastings, but he never ruled. He surrendered to William in December of that year, and, accompanied by his mother and sisters, went into exile at the court of King Malcolm III Canmore of Scotland by 1067.

[13] Ecl 10:16; *De XII* IX.360–361.

[14] Joanna Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint: Virginity in the Construction of Edward the Confessor', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 119–139 (pp. 130–132).

Edith's behest not long after the king's death, explicitly casts Edward's miracles as resulting from his '*sancta castimonia*' ('holy chastity') and that he '*omnen uitam agebat deo dicatam in uera innocentia*'.[15] That Edward may have embraced celibacy, even in later life, should thus not be entirely discounted. Read with an eye to tenth-century royal precedent, there are a number of legitimate reasons Edward might have chosen to remain chaste. That he felt a genuine Christian calling to celibacy is certainly a possibility. Later sources propose that Edward had been promised to the monastery at Ely in his childhood, which would certainly explain an interest in royal celibacy, and may have had precedent in Alfred's pious anxiety as the youngest son with little hope of succession but who was nevertheless forced into ruling. While Barlow has shown that these theories 'lack sound authority and also plausibility', it is nevertheless probable that Edward would have been educated, at least in part, by religious (probably monastic) teachers both in England and during his exile on the Continent.[16]

Celibacy could easily have had a political function for Edward, too. As Karl Ubl has argued, far from weakening Edward's position as king, '*war seine Kinderlosigkeit ein brauchbares Mittel, um die konkurrierenden Prätendenten im In- und Ausland gegeneinander auszuspielen.*'[17] Of course, the dual threat of the Norman and Danish claims on the throne could have been a double-edged sword and may have played a role in Harold Godwinson's decision to take the throne for himself instead of supporting Edgar in a regency.[18] But childlessness was nothing new for the West Saxon dynasty. If Edgar was not the intended heir (which seems likely), then perhaps, as may have been the case with Æthelstan a century prior, an arrangement had been made that Edward would remain childless, with succession passing to the queen's family in exchange for support and peace until Edward's death. If that were the case, Edward's reaction to the Northumbrian revolt in 1065, and strife between the sons of Godwine, is all the more tragic and may help to explain why '*Quo dolore decidens in morbum, ab ea die usque in diem mortis sue egrum trahebat animum.*'[19] He had been forced to take Edith back after sending her away to a nunnery in 1051 (in the wake of her brothers being forced to

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[15] *VÆdR* II: He 'lived his whole life dedicated to God in true innocence.'
[16] Barlow, *Edward*, pp. 32–33.
[17] Karl Ubl, 'Der kinderlose König: Ein Testfall für die Ausdifferenzierung des Politischen im 11. Jahrhundert', *Historische Zeitschrift* 292 (2011), 323–363 (pp. 358–359). ('His childlessness was a viable means of playing rival pretenders at home and abroad against each other.')
[18] Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 96.
[19] *VÆdR* I.7: 'Sorrowing at this, he fell ill, and from that day until the day of his death he bore a sickness of the mind'.

flee the country, and this too may have contributed to such a political deal. It also, of course, could be read as evidence either that Edward intended to remain celibate the rest of his life, or alternatively that he would have been happy to replace her with another bride from a different family, as so many of his ancestors had done. The evidence does not allow for a more conclusive answer, unfortunately.

In any case, it is quite tempting, with nearly a millennium of hindsight, to view Edward's lack of an heir as the spark that lit the fuse of the eventual Norman Conquest. But leaving aside this historicist assumption, would a celibate, childless English king in the eleventh century have been seen as having failed in his masculine duty to produce an heir, and in his royal duty to retain the kingdom? The development of Edward's celibacy into a mark of his sanctity could certainly serve as a convenient means of rehabilitating a tarnished image over the course of subsequent generations, especially when considered as a text meant to defend his widow following the Conquest.[20] Drawing on the traditions formulated in the long tenth century — the models of Æthelstan and St Edmund, the ideals of Æthelwold and Ælfric and Wulfstan — Edward's monastic biographers could argue that rather than being a failed king, a *rex iniquus* even, and a failed man, he was instead working within an alternative, perhaps even superior, model of right masculinity and kingship.[21]

The Intersection of Masculinity and Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England

As the introduction to this study noted, the study of masculinity — of men *as men* — in the middle ages has only recently developed as a subfield within the broader field of medieval gender history, and still lags behind in the wider study of masculinity in history. While Stafford, Lees, Nelson, Hadley, and Stone, amongst many others, have made significant contributions to the study of early medieval masculinities, lacunas remain. This study has attempted to fill one such gap, and address the question of how conceptions of masculinity intersected with the conception of kingship in the later Anglo-Saxon period. In particular, this study has

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[20] Katherine Lewis calls the virgin king ideology 'a convenient explanation for subsequent dynastic disruption and dislocation': Katherine J. Lewis, 'Becoming a Virgin King: Richard II and Edward the Confessor', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 86–100 (p. 89); see also Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 40–48 (especially pp. 45–47) and pp. 260–261.

[21] On memory and the revising of reputations of failed kings and men, see Katherine Weikert, 'Valiant Losers', *History Today* 66:10 (October 2016).

attempted to understand the conceptions of both masculinity and kingship that were promoted by the various communication communities of the long tenth century, especially the Benedictine reformers and their royal allies and patrons, and the secular aristocrats who served or supported both, as well as the ways these communities' conceptions of masculinity and kingship influenced the actual performance of both by tenth-century kings and princes.

The study of historical masculinity, of course, should not ignore the contributions of women to the construction of masculinities; as Connell and Messerschmidt have argued, 'focusing only on the activities of men occludes the practices of women in the construction of gender among men'.[22] Chapter 1, above, has therefore shown that fathers and foster-families could have a role in raising these princes, but that women, too, could be, and indeed *were*, central to the raising and education of royal sons. These women were joined in the education of sons and princes by churchmen, and particularly in the tenth century by monastic reformers, and both helped to instil in those sons a particular vision of right masculine and royal behaviour.[23]

As Chapter 2 has argued, these educators had a long, and international, tradition to draw upon in defining 'right kingship'. While it appeared at the outset that Anglo-Saxon authors did not follow their Carolingian counterparts in writing mirrors for princes, an idealized vision of how kingship ought to be practiced certainly existed in England by the middle of the tenth century. This conception of right kingship was based on Irish sources (particularly Pseudo-Cyprian's *De XII abusiuis*), Old Testament materials, and patristic writings, amongst others, and posited a king as the corrector ('*rector*') of his people, with justice being his key concern. When, in the course of the late tenth century, Æthelred's reign began to suffer from internal and external catastrophes, churchmen like Ælfric and Wulfstan disseminated these ideas of right kingship within the royal court and beyond through the writing and preaching of sermons and other 'moral-didactic' texts (e.g., the difficult-to-categorise *Institutes of Polity*). These writers saw an apocalypse on the horizon, and preached against the destructive results of a *rex iniquus* and the sinful nation he was to correct. Despite his failures, it seems that Æthelred listened to them.

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[22] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinities', p. 848.
[23] Nelson, 'Parents, Children, and the Church', p. 94.

These moral-didactic texts are not the only Anglo-Saxon sources that might say something about proper aristocratic masculine behaviour, though. Barlow describes the northern, 'Germanic' way of life depicted in Old English 'heroic' poetry from the turn of the millennium as part of a 'very masculine culture', and Lees calls the world of *Beowulf* 'almost exclusively male'.[24] However masculine these poems may be, Chapter 3 has shown that the worldview of *Beowulf*, the Exeter Book, and other 'heroic' poetry was not, in fact, so far removed from the monastic outlook discussed previously as it might appear on the surface. Rather, the 'heroic' *topoi* in these poems can easily be read through a tenth-century Christian monastic lens, as texts that were read, compiled, and copied in the same generations as the text discussed in Chapter 1. In doing so, apparent tension between 'Christian' and 'Germanic' is alleviated, and the 'heroic' poetry can then be read as more evidence of a renegotiation of masculine and aristocratic behaviour in the long tenth century, with a particular focus on moderation and self-control in all things.

The models of kingship and masculinity in both 'moral-didactic' and 'heroic' sources, though, remain primarily an expression of ideals, but as Chapter 1 showed, they might also have a direct influence on the behaviour of men (and kings) as individuals. Further, as Chapter 4 has shown, the actual practice of kingship and performance of masculinity also evidenced a change in the tenth century, and in warfare, in hunting, and especially in sex (or a lack thereof), kings of the period framed themselves, and were framed by others, in relation to the shifting conceptions of right royal and masculine behaviour as outlined in those aforementioned written sources. Æthelred's avoidance of personal military command, a hallmark of royal and masculine performance, was instead reconceived as adopting a different, but more effective, form of kingship; Æthelstan, for his part, could simultaneously be a renowned warrior and a pious celibate, and his avoidance of marriage and sex, in fact, following the writings of Aldhelm and later Benedictine reformers, *augmented* rather than tarnished his masculinity. Celibacy was, after all, like so many things, an indication of the manly conflict between Christian wisdom and self-control against the sinful temptations of the world.

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[24] Barlow, *Edward*, p. 20; Lees, 'Men and *Beowulf*', p. 140.

It is a common refrain that masculinity is constantly in crisis.[25] Many scholars have argued, in fact, that crisis is a *condition* of masculinity; it is an unstable aspect of identity, with its terms 'continually being re-defined and re-negotiated', and with its faulty foundation often built upon a supposition that it can only be defined as the inverse of femininity.[26] But as Joan Scott's seminal article argues, 'massive political upheavals that throw old orders into chaos and bring new ones into being may revise the terms (and so the organization) of gender in the search for new forms of legitimation'.[27] Masculinity may always be in 'crisis', but only in that it is constructed in relation to external stimuli: conceptions of femininity, yes, but political and cultural changes as well. While no period in history can be disregarded as a time of change, the long tenth century in England is notable for several significant changes: the development of a new (and much larger) English state, the renewal of viking attacks and invasions, the growth of internal problems of rivalries and rebellions, and the cultural restructuring of society concomitant with the religious reforms of the Benedictine movement. As the Chronicle poem on Edgar's death, possibly composed by Wulfstan, laments, '*aa æfter þam hit yfelode swiðe*'.[28] This type of Bourdieusian 'crisis point', Mort argues, can act as a 'developer' to create new forms of discourse that seek to ease those tensions.[29] The problems of the tenth century were of a type that older models of early medieval kingship were not especially suited to dealing with, and as Connell and Messerschmidt have shown, 'a pattern of practice (i.e., a version of masculinity) that provided such a solution in past conditions but not in new conditions is open to challenge — is in fact certain to be challenged'.[30] Shades here, then, of Æthelred's penitential turn: the practice of kingship that his greedy followers spurred him to in the foolish years of his youth could not answer for the defeats at the hand of enemies foreign and domestic in the 990s, and Æthelred thus returned to the Benedictine teachings of Æthelwold, Ælfric, and Wulfstan. The 'heroic' aspects of masculine and royal performance, whether or not they had a 'pagan' past, were

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[25] John MacInnes, for instance, noted as far back as 1998 that masculinity 'has always been in one crisis or another'. John MacInnes, *The End of Masculinity: The Confusion of Sexual Genesis and Sexual Difference in Modern Society* (Nottingham: Open University Press, 1998), p. 11.

[26] Mick Mangan, 'Shakespeare's First Action Heroes: Critical Masculinities in Culture Both Popular and Unpopular', cited in John Benyon, *Masculinities in Culture* (Nottingham: Open University Press, 2002), p. 90.

[27] Scott, 'Gender', pp. 1073–1074.

[28] ASC (D) 975: 'always after that it grew much worse'.

[29] Mort, 'Crisis Points', p. 124.

[30] Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 138; Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinities', p. 853.

thus renegotiated — and literally rewritten — by monastic authors who saw wisdom- and justice-based Christian leadership as the answer to national woes.

Patrick Wormald wrote in 1978 that Anglo-Saxon kingship should be conceived of not as simply theocratic kingship, but as what he termed 'pastoral kingship'.[31] The conception of king as shepherd over his flock has a long tradition in medieval political philosophy, but in the tenth century, it is most visible in Edgar's New Minister Charter and the *Regularis concordia*.[32] As this study has shown, however, kingship in late Anglo-Saxon England, in its 'pastoral' aspects and otherwise, had a quite clearly gendered dimension as well, which prior examinations have hitherto missed. I would therefore propose, then, that we might think of later Anglo-Saxon kingship not just as 'pastoral', but perhaps also as 'paternal kingship', with the king acting not just as a shepherd protecting his flock, but as father protecting, guiding, and correcting his realm-wide family, most notably by correcting his own behaviour. Indeed, at least one manuscript of Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity*, compiled after his death but still in the mid-eleventh century, makes this very point, declaring '*Cristenum cyninge gebyrað swiðe rihte þæt he sy on fæder stæle cristenre þeode 7 on ware 7 on wearde Cristes gespeliga, ealswa he geteald'*.[33]

These two conceptions — king-as-bishop and king-as-father — are not, of course, mutually exclusive; indeed, they may be driven by the same developments. In tenth-century England, both kings and bishops (who were slowly losing the opportunity to become biological fathers in the transition from the early to central middle ages) came under the sway of the burgeoning power of monastic ideals.[34] The reign of Edgar in particular saw the development of the idea of the king as the *pater monachorum*, a phrase also used in Benedictine circles for abbots themselves.[35] This is hardly a new idea; Thomas F. X. Noble, wrote over forty years ago that Louis the

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[31] Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', pp. 74–75; cf. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, pp. 137–138; Lemke, 'Voices', p. 107; Clayton, '*De duodecim abusiuis*, Lordship, and Kingship', p. 140.

[32] Clayton, 'Old English *Promissio*', pp. 120–122.

[33] Wulfstan, *I Pol* (a) 1–2: 'It very rightly behoves the Christian king that he is in a father's place over a Christian nation, and in watch and in ward is Christ's vicegerent, just as he is considered'. Jost, p. 40.

[34] Simon MacLean, 'Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology in the Late Tenth Century: Ælfthryth and Edgar in Continental Perspective', in *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison* (1876–1947), ed. by David Rollason, Conrad Leyser, and Hannah Williams (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 255–274 (p. 256); Robert Deshman, '*Benedictus Monarchus et Monachus*: Early Medieval Ruler Theology and the Anglo-Saxon Reform', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22 (1988), 204–240.

[35] MacLean, 'Monastic Reform', p. 266; Deshman, '*Benedictus Monarchus*', p. 227. Remember, too, that abbot itself literally means 'father', as derived from the Latin *abbas* and earlier Greek and Aramaic cognates.

Pious's kingship was driven by monastic ideals.[36] This is certainly true for tenth-century England too. But few medievalists, and fewer Anglo-Saxonists, have hitherto endeavoured to conceptualise Anglo-Saxon kingship, or early medieval kingship more generally, as an office influenced by gender as well as religious and political theory.[37] If the king is a father of his nation, it is crucial to understand what it meant to be a father, in a familial sense as well as, in the tenth century, the spiritual sense. It is only through this gendered reading of early medieval political discourse that we might come to better understand kingship and masculinity in the middle ages, and, perhaps most importantly, be allowed to think more broadly about the wider relationship between gender and political power in history, and in the present.

The model developed in this study for understanding the relationship between masculinity and kingship in tenth-century England is, admittedly, one very much beholden to the specific time and place on which it focuses. However, I hope that, amongst other things, this study has also shown the value of research on the intersection of gender and politics, and there is much valuable work left to be done to explore how that intersection continued beyond 1066, and beyond England as well. As in Anglo-Saxon studies, scholars in Old Norse studies have recently begun to address issues of gender and masculinity in literature, and especially in sagas, but there is more room left to explore, for instance, the impact of masculinity and gender on viking history more broadly.[38] Explorations of gender and rulership in the history of the Norman realms, especially in relation to the presentation of men and masculinity in Orderic and William of Malmesbury, has similarly appeared, but there is more room for comparatively studies here as well.[39] Very little has been done, too, to explore gender and rulership amongst the Anglo-Saxons' neighbours

[36] Thomas F. X. Noble, 'The Monastic Ideal as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious', *Revue Bénédictine* 86 (1976), 235–250.

[37] There is also, obviously, much more that could be said to place these ideas in the context of Roman political though, that gave ultimate power to the *paterfamilias*, while heroes were lauded as *pater patriae* ('father of the fatherland') and senators were addressed as '*patres conscripti*' ('conscripted fathers').

[38] See, for example, Gareth Lloyd Evans, 'Models of Men: The Construction and Problematization of Masculinities in the *Íslendingasögur*' (DPhil dissertation, Oxford University, 2015), recently published as Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Men and Masculinities in the Sagas of the Icelanders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Pragya Vohra, 'Creating Kin, Extending Authority: Blood-Brotherhood and Power in Medieval Iceland', *PHMPCE*, pp. 105–131.

[39] Kirsten A. Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008); William Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his Eldest Son', in Hadley, *Masculinity*, pp. 39–55; Simon Yarrow, 'Men and Masculinities at the Courts of the Anglo-Norman Kings in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis', *HSJ* 23 (2014), 105–114; Kirsten A. Fenton, 'Men and Masculinities in William of Malmesbury's Presentation of the Anglo-Norman Court', *HSJ* 23 (2014), 115–124.

and contemporaries in early medieval Ireland, not to mention Wales and Scotland, post-Carolingian France, or the German kingdoms. The recent 'global' turn in medieval history, moreover, means an even more wide-ranging approach to understanding medieval gender and political culture, to include the Mediterranean, the Byzantine East, and the Islamicate world, if not beyond, should also be considered.[40] There is considerable space, then, for further explorations of gender and rulership throughout medieval societies and, especially, for a comparative assessment of how gender informed rulership in the post-Carolingian West, and in the medieval world more broadly, in the transition from the early to central middle ages. That investigation, however, must wait for a future volume.

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[40] See, for instance, recent work in Bronwen Neil and Lynda Garland, eds, *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society* (London: Routledge, 2013), and Michael Edward Stewart, *The Soldier's Life: Martial Virtues and Manly Romanitas in the Early Byzantine Empire* (Leeds: Kismet Press, 2016). Compare also the current work being done by, e.g., Sihong Lin (Manchester) on transregional and cross-cultural connections in the late antique and early medieval world.

Appendix

PSEUDO-CYPRIAN'S *REX INIQUUS*

Aidan Breen was preparing a new critical edition and translation of *De XII abusiuis* before his untimely death in 2013. The following extract is adapted from his unpublished PhD dissertation: Aidan Breen, 'Towards a Critical Edition of *De XII Abusivis*: Introductory Essays with a Preliminary Edition of the Text and Accompanied by an English Translation' (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1988). This dissertation has recently been made available online through Trinity's Access to Research Archive at <http://www.tara.tcd.ie/handle/2262/77107>.

Nonus abusionis gradus est rex iniquus. Qui cum iniquorum rector esse oportuit, licet in semet ipso nominis sui dignitatem non custodit. Nomen enim regis intellectualiter hoc retinet, ut subiectis omnibus rectoris officium procuret. Sed qualiter alios corrigere poterit qui proprios mores ne iniqui sint non corrigit? Quoniam iustitia regis exaltatur solium et in veritate solidantur gubernacula populorum.

Iustitia vero regis est neminem iniuste per potentiam opprimere, sine acceptione personarum inter virum et proximum suum iuste iudicare, advenis et pupillis et viduis defensor esse, furta cohibere, adulteria punire, iniquos non exaltare, impudicos et histriones non nutrire, impios de terra perdere, parricidas et periurantes vivere non sinere, ecclesias defendere, pauperes elemosynis alere, iustos super regni negotia constituere, senes et sapientes et sobrios consiliarios habere, magorum et ariolorum phitonissarumque superstitionibus non intendere, iracundiam suam differre, patriam fortiter et iuste contra adversaries defendere, per omnia in Deo confidere, prosperitatibus animum non elevare, cuncta adversa patienter tolerare, fidem catholicam in Deum habere, filios suos non sinere impie agere, certis horis orationibus insistere, ante horae congruas non gustare cibum. Vae enim terrae, cuius rex puer est et cuius principes mane comedunt. Haec regni prosperitatem in praesenti faciunt et regem ad caelestia regna meliora perducunt.

Qui vero regnum secundum hanc legem non dispensat, multas nimirum adversitates tolerat imperii. Idcirco enim saepe pax populorum rumpitur et offendicula etiam de regno suscitantur, terrarum quoque fructus diminuuntur et servitia populorum praepediuntur, multi et varii dolores proeperitatem regni inficiunt, carorum et liberorum mortes tristitiam conferunt, hostium incursus provincias undique vastant, bestiae armentorum et pecorum greges dilacerant, tempestates aeris et hemisperia turbata terrarum fecunditatem et maria ministeria prohibent et aliquando fulminum ictus segetes et arborum fleres et pampinos exurunt. Super omnia vero regis iniustitia non solum praesentis imperii faciem fuscat, sed etiam filios suos et nepotes, ne post se regni hereditatem teneant, obscurat. Propter piaculum enim Salomonis regnum domus Israhel Dominus de minibus filiorum eius dispersit, et propter iustitiam David regis lucernam de aemine eius semper in Hierusalem reliquit.

Ecce quantum iustitia regis saeculo valet, intuentibus perspicue pa tet. Pax populorum est, tutamen patriae, munitas plebis, munimentum gentis, cura languorum, gaudi m hominum, temperies aerie, serenitas maria, terrae fecunditas, solacium pauperum, hereditas filiorum et sibimet ipsi spes futurae beatitudinis. Attamen sciat rex quod sicut in throno hominum primus constitutus est, sic et in poenis, si iustitiam non fecerit, primatum habiturus est. Omnes namque quoscumque peccatores sub se in praesenti habuit, supra se modo plagali in illa futura poena habebit.

IX. Of the unjust king

The ninth step of abuse is an unjust or wicked king, who although he ought to be the ruler and guide of the wicked, does not by his own behaviour preserve and maintain the dignity of his name. For the name of 'king' retains this significance (i.e., that the king be 'rector'), namely, that he fulfils the office of ruler to all his subjects. For how shall he correct others, who does not amend his own behaviour, if it be wicked? For in righteousness is the king alone exalted and in fidelity and truth the governance of the peoples established.

For the righteousness of a king is to oppress no man unjustly through the exercise of power, to give judgement between one man and another without acceptance of persons, to be the defender of stranger (i.e. aliens and refugees), orphans, and widows, to restrain robbery and theft, to punish adultery, not to promote the wicked to high office, not to patronise actors or practitioners of lewd and filthy pastimes, to rout the ungodly from the land, to permit no parricide or perjurer to live, to defend the churches, to nourish the poor with alms, to set good men in charge of the affairs of his kingdom, to have those who are old and wise as counsellors, to pay no heed to the superstitions of magicians and soothsayers and sorceresses, to restrain his anger,[1] to defend his country justly and valiantly against adversaries, to put his confidence in all things in God, not to be elated in spirit with good fortune, to bear up patiently, under adverse circumstances, to keep the true faith in God, not to permit his children to do anything wicked, to set aside certain times for prayer, not to dine before the proper hour. 'For woe to the land whose king is a youth and whose princes dine in the morning.' The keeping of these precepts makes a kingdom prosperous in this world, and afterwards bring the king himself to the greater and more excellent kingdom of Heaven.

But he who does not exercise his rule in accordance with this prescript truly sustains many evils and adversities in his realm. Because of this, the tranquillity of the peoples is often disturbed, and causes of offence (i.e. scandals) stirred up against the kingdom, the fruits of the earth are also diminished, and the subjection (in tribute) of the peoples is obstructed, many different misfortunes beset the kingdom and hinder its prosperity, the deaths of loved ones and children (through plague?) bring sorrow, hostile invasions lay waste the provinces on all sides and cause the slaughter of the beasts of burden and the herds of (domesticated) animals, the tempests of the air (storms) and the disturbance of the upper atmosphere prevent the fertility of the land and the constancy of the tidal motion of the sea,[2] and frequently blasts of lightning wither the corn on the ground and the blossoms and young shoots on the trees. But, above all, the unrighteousness of a king not only darkens the face of his whole realm, but even causes his sons and nephews to fade out of significance, so that they do not inherit the kingdom. For the Lord, because of Solomon's great sin, divided the kingdom of the House of Israel out of the hands of his children, and because of king David's righteousness he left the lamp of his generation forever burning in Jerusalem.

Behold how great a thing is the righteousness of a good king in this world: it is most plainly to be seen and understood.[3] Of it comes the tranquillity of the peoples, the defence of the country, the protection of his subjects, the bulwark of the whole nation, the remedy of all sorrows and ailments, the rejoicing of men, the temperateness of the weather, the stillness of the sea, the fruitfulness of the earth, the comfort and solace of the poor, the sure inheritance of his children and to himself the hope of eternal felicity in the world to come. But yet let the king know this, that just as among men he is set highest in his throne, so likewise if he does not administer justice, he shall be set in the foremost place of punishment (in Hell). For in this life, as many transgressors as he permitted to have under him, he shall be punished commensurately, in atonement (for those sins), in the world to come.

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[1] Or 'not to harbour anger'
[2] i.e., which brings in the shoals of fish.
[3] Or 'it is plainly to be seen by those who behold it'.

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