A Discourse of Exile: Representations of Restored Royal Exiles in Anglo-Saxon England

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**Abstract**

Exile was a state of hardship undertaken by a vast number of individuals throughout the history of Anglo-Saxon England. Thoughts about exile permeate literary works throughout the period, including poems, homilies, and prose narratives. Exile was a powerful force in shaping concepts of the Anglo-Saxon past. In this dissertation, I will examine how stories about exile were employed to craft presentations of Anglo-Saxon kings who had been restored to power. To this end I have selected three representative kings for discussion: Edwin of Northumbria, Alfred of Wessex, and Æthelred II of England. Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* and its portrayal of Edwin’s exile experience is the subject of the first chapter. In the chapter about Alfred I assess Asser’s biography of that king (the *Vita Ælfredi*), as well as entries made in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the prologue to Alfred’s law code. In the final chapter I look at the Chronicler’s account of Æthelred II, and assess the manipulation of language and employment of literary device in the king’s post-exile charters and legislation. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, I demonstrate how new questions may be asked of these well-known primary sources to expand our understanding of the composers of these narratives and documents and the historical contexts of their compositions. Most importantly, this dissertation further develops the idea that a ‘discourse of exile’ existed in Anglo-Saxon texts, and that this discourse was artfully employed to impart important statements on liminality, cultural identity, unity, negotiations of power, typologies, and kingship.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my son, George Wulfstan White.

**Author’s Declaration**

At the time of submission, none of the material contained herein has been put forward for publication. The research and production of this thesis is my own work and has not been a joint venture with any other author or contributor.

**1. Introduction: Universal and Localized Conceptions of Exile**

**1.1 Overview**

From the late-sixth century through to the Norman Conquest of 1066, at least twenty-six kings of Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age England are known to have experienced periods of exile during their lives. These exiled kings reflect 18% of an estimated one hundred forty-five Anglo-Saxon kings known to have ruled in England, and so constitute a significant number.[[1]](#footnote-1) For nearly half of these exiled kings, expulsion is the end of their stories; they were never restored to power and so exile, like death, concludes most accounts given by contemporary writers and chroniclers. Seven of these unrestored exiles were driven out by force, while more than six others voluntarily removed themselves by becoming monks or by setting out on indefinite pilgrimage to Rome.[[2]](#footnote-2) With only a few exceptions, including the brief accounts of Kings Sigeberht of East Anglia and Ine of Wessex, remarkably little is known about royal exiles who did not return to rule.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Not surprisingly, more material is extant concerning kings who reclaimed their thrones or were otherwise restored to office after exile. These individuals are distinguished for having both endured the hardship and helplessness of exile and having subsequently occupied the highest non-ecclesiastical post in the hierarchy of Anglo-Saxon England. This polarity of their circumstances provides a framework for discussion which concerns crucial concepts of Anglo-Saxon kingship, sense of place, and developing identities. The subject of exile, as I will demonstrate, can serve as a unique lens through which these connected concepts may be more fully understood. Likewise, exploring restoration from exile can provide new insights into related contemporary views of power (no less than the realities of power). In what ways do our narrative sources portray royal exile, and how are these portrayals employed to shape audience perceptions of history, kingship, stability, and identity? Similarly, what evidence can we find for reactions to exile experiences in sources closely associated with their respective kings, particularly law codes and charters? How do these constructions of post-exile kings resonate with contemporary conditions?

In this dissertation, I will examine three Anglo-Saxon kings who returned to their thrones from exile: Edwin of Northumbria, Alfred of Wessex, and Æthelred II of England. These kings lived in remarkably different times and conditions from each other. Edwin lived in a newly-forming kingdom of Northumbria, and saw the conversion of his people from ancestral paganism to Roman Christianity in the early seventh century.[[4]](#footnote-4) Alfred similarly oversaw a period of unification as ruler of Wessex at the end of the ninth century; West Saxon absorption of the southern kingdoms culminated in political unity during the reign of Alfred’s grandson Æthelstan.[[5]](#footnote-5) Alfred’s reign also saw the political and cultural transformation of England into a divided island, with Wessex-controlled regions to the south, and Danish lands north of Watling Street. England’s political divide was removed in 954 with the expulsion of Eric Bloodaxe from York, bringing all the southern and northern regions of England under the control of one king.[[6]](#footnote-6) Thus Æthelred, who reigned between 978 and 1016, was king of a nominally united England, wherein all regions were sworn to obeisance. Unity and division, loyalty and disloyalty, would be tested during this unfortunate king’s rule, resulting in sweeping invasions by Danish forces, Æthelred’s removal to the Continent, and a break in the dynastic supremacy of the line of Cerdic.[[7]](#footnote-7) The political conditions for each king varied, and so contribute to the value each king holds as a unique case study in this work.

The circumstances and physical realities of the respective exiles for Edwin, Alfred and Æthelstan also differed. Edwin was driven out of Deira (soon to be part of Northumbria) while a young man who had not yet assumed his father’s throne. With other British and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to turn to, Edwin was able to remain in England under the protection of various other early seventh-century kings. Alfred was also able to remain in England, but without powerful kings to turn to; instead he spent part of 878 hiding in the wilderness of his own kingdom. By comparison to both Edwin and Alfred, Æthelred was expelled from England altogether, in part a consequence of the unification of the English kingdoms in the mid-tenth century. As a result, his flight in 1013 took him across the English Channel to live with his wife’s family in Normandy in a brief but desperate retreat from the perils of home.

One further variable distinguishing these case studies from each other is the manner of each man’s respective restoration. Edwin’s protectors during his exile became military allies, and later helped the young ætheling to reclaim the kingdom of Northumbria in 616. Alfred had no outside assistance available; his restoration was largely due to rallying scattered parties of sworn men, securing their continued loyalties, and then adapting English methods of warfare and defense. Conversely, the restoration of Æthelred nearly two hundred years later was not accomplished by military alliances or inspired leadership. Instead, Æthelred was invited back by those leaders who remained in England, and then only under certain conditions requiring reform.

Despite all of these differences, the three examples show a shared feature: namely, that exile serves to construct audience perceptions of king and kingdom. Indeed, non-biographical sources show similar efforts were made to shape perceptions of post-exile kings. I have developed this dissertation under the premise that an examination of the portrayals and realities of exile for each king can enhance our understanding of Anglo-Saxon thought about Christian kingship, national identity, the nature of worldly power, and the uses of the written word. How this is accomplished differs for each king, due to their above-noted dissimilarities as well as to the nature of the extant sources available.

In Chapter One, I focus my discussion to Bede’s treatment of the Northumbrian king and analyze his portrayal of Edwin’s exile experience as a formative and typologically significant event with broad implications for the English Church and England generally. There I will reveal how Bede structured his narrative about Edwin using such literary devices as analepsis and envelope structures, and also look at Bede’s use of figural resonances evoking biblical kings and events. Such close scrutiny of a single literary work is also employed in Chapter Two about Alfred of Wessex: Asser’s *Vita Ælfredi* informs us about Alfred’s exile-like dislocation and restoration but also reveals how this episode of Alfred’s life was interpreted and promoted by at least one of the king’s advisors. Biblical resonances are again discussed, as is Asser’s apparent preoccupation with dislocated peoples throughout his composition. I will also briefly consider how later Anglo-Saxon sources received Asser, the *ASC*, and traditions about Alfred to craft exile stories of their own. The context of Asser’s account is more greatly appreciated by investigating the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (‘A’) entries for Alfred’s reign and Alfred’s legislation, both of which merit their own chapter sections. In Chapter Three, I pursue questions concerning Æthelred II’s expulsion from England in 1013 and his conditional restoration to power in 1014. Here, lacking biographical narrative sources, I will examine the ‘C’ version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the post-exile charters of Æthelred to determine how these sources reflect reactions to Æthelred’s expulsion and return. I then consider how these responses should be understood within the context of contemporary political realities in England, and conclude the chapter with an analysis of Æthelred’s law codes to further emphasize how exile experiences could reshape royal and governmental practice.

In the chapters that follow I will observe how contemporary authors responded to the exile and restoration of royal figures, and how their responses were shaped by individual circumstances. To determine motivations as well as shared and individual agendas, I am primarily concerned with the *mentalités* of authors and audiences and so have adopted the historical approach of the *Annales* school by applying literary analysis to historical documents. I will demonstrate how this method can contribute to broader discussions of national and cultural identity, the relationship between kings, kingdoms and God, and the changing face of kingship and governance in Anglo-Saxon England.

**1.2 Exile, Terminology and Historical Context**

To understand how the idea of exile is applied and interpreted in this dissertation, some discussion is needed about the different forms which exile might take. These constructions of exiles are varied and distinctive, hence it will be necessary to briefly outline what each involves and to identify which forms of exile are present in the various contemporary sources. Forms of exile include both voluntary and involuntary departures: forceful expulsion, outlawry, loss of royal favor, penitentialdislocation, and monastic/heremitic removal of the self from the world.

I will discuss contemporary Anglo-Saxon language applied to ideas of exile further below, but first would like to consider that, for some persons, exile was necessary because remaining in the homeland had become too dangerous. Such danger-induced refugee experiences of exile may be temporary or permanent. A definition for our modern understanding of such exiles may be found in the 1951 resolution of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees:

As a result of events occurring before I January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Such a definition of ‘refugee’ does not require that such exiles be directly forced into flight. Refugees, while acting upon external pressures beyond their control, choose to vacate their homelands ‘owing to such fear’ and so may be viewed as willing exiles. To leave is deemed to be a reasonable response to conditions that may bring harm or suffering.[[9]](#footnote-9) We may, therefore, regard refugee forms of exile as voluntary, although neither refugees themselves nor their chroniclers are likely to take this view. The real potential for bodily harm and suffering must restrict any assumptions regarding the presence of free-will in refugee exiles; they are driven out by force or threat of force, and so should be considered as suffering imposed exile.

Large groups of refugees may be found in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature. Bede mentions two diasporas of Britons in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, first under duress from Pictish forces and again later by allied Picts and Angles.[[10]](#footnote-10) Asser’s *Vita Ælfredi* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* both contain references to large groups of refugees fleeing from Wessex during the Viking incursions of 878.[[11]](#footnote-11) Kings too are among these refugees and their presence is a reminder that royal refugee status could result from either foreign military pressures or dynastic coups.

All three of the kings discussed in this dissertation were refugee exiles, to varying degrees, from combined pressures of military, dynastic, and political upheavals. A number of other instances of similar royal exile are documented. After the overthrow of his father Æthelfrith (590-616), King Oswald of Northumbria (634-642) fled along with his brothers.[[12]](#footnote-12) Æthelbald of Mercia likewise fled for a brief period due to threats from usurpers. Accounts of his exile are presented in Felix’s eighth-century *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* and include encounters with and visions of St. Guthlac.[[13]](#footnote-13) These episodes, as will be seen below, are strikingly reminiscent of Bede’s portrayal of Edwin of Northumbria. For instance, during a spiritual visitation from the deceased Guthlac, King Æthelbald is said by Felix to have received counsel and prophecy about his impending reign and eventual death, and Æthelbald receives a divine signal to confirm Guthlac’s words. Edwin similarly received counsel from a spirit messenger, and also received a sign as evidence.[[14]](#footnote-14) Edwin’s and Æthelbald’s sojourns in the wilderness are typical of exile stories, as I will discuss below in the chapters concerning Kings Edwin and Alfred, and may have drawn from similar biblical accounts.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Judicial Outlawry is another form of exile. Although being outlawed was often a permanent condition, Scandinavia and Normandy had diminished forms of it which limited terms of sentence to three years, and there is evidence that sentences of outlawry could be shortened in Anglo-Saxon England as well by royal consent.[[16]](#footnote-16) Outlawry forced criminals into hiding or flight by removing them from protection of law. While the most common forms of legal punishment were monetary compensation and death, outlawry was a grave, if less-common, penalty; the sentence of exile was generally reserved for the most severe of crimes and under extraordinary circumstances.[[17]](#footnote-17) If we consider modern perspectives on outlawry, we find that meanings have changed to some degree.

1. **a.** *Law*. A person declared to be outside the law and deprived of its benefits and protection; a person under sentence of outlawry. **b.** A person who lives without regard for the law; a miscreant, felon, criminal, *esp.* one on the run from a law enforcement agency. **c.** A person who has been banished or proscribed; an exile, a fugitive.[[18]](#footnote-18)

There are also more contemporary ideas concerning outlawry. In a brief discussion about the use of *ex*- in the Latin *exlex*,Ælfric of Eynsham presented his own succinct explanation: *hic et haec et hoc exlex/ utlaga oððe butan æ* (‘outlaw or beyond law’).[[19]](#footnote-19) As this late tenth-century comment demonstrates, outlawry could be understood very simply and broadly. Elisabeth Van Houts has discussed at length the changing terms associated with outlawry and banishment: *fliema* (exile, fugitive or outlaw) and *adrifen* (driven away) are most prevalent in vernacular sources, with later Scandinavian introductions of *utlaga* or *utlah*, and Latin uses of *exlegere*, *exlex*, *exulare* and *exul*.[[20]](#footnote-20) In the *ASC* annal for 1014, the word *utlah* is used to record the ban by the English *witan* on Danish kings following Æthelred II’s restoration from exile, and so the point fits well with enforced exiles generally: should they reenter restricted areas they will be denied the protections of law and may be killed.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Punitive exile could also be an arbitrary affair, not contingent upon lawbreaking: royal or aristocratic displeasure was sufficient to be expelled from a region, and churchmen were not immune from this. In 817, Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury, was removed from office by King Coenwulf due to differences of opinion about royal interference with minster estates.[[22]](#footnote-22) Over a century earlier, St Wilfrid (d. 709) had been exiled twice during the reigns of Kings Ecgfrith and Aldfrith of Northumbria. In the first instance Wilfrid’s offense may have been the fact that he convinced Ecgfrith’s wife to maintain her chastity and to eventually re-enter the religious life.[[23]](#footnote-23) Around the year 660, Agilbert, Bishop of Wessex, lost favour with King Coenwalh allegedly due to the language barrier that existed between the two: the bishopric was split in two without consulting Agilbert who went to France.[[24]](#footnote-24) This does not necessarily suggest that Agilbert was exiled, and in fact it has every appearance of willful resignation by an offended bishop, particularly in the later *ASC* entry concerning the event.[[25]](#footnote-25) However, in Bede’s account, we are told that Agilbert’s replacement, Wine, ‘was also expelled from the bishopric by the king; he took refuge with Wulfhere, king of Mercia’ (*pulsus est et Uini ab eodem rege de episcopate; qui secedens ad regem Merciorum uocabulo Uulfheri*).[[26]](#footnote-26) Wine’s circumstances were seen as mirroring those of his predecessor, which would suggest that Agilbert had been exiled as well as deposed. In any event, it is clear that Bede considered Wine to have been expelled from Wessex entirely, and so an exile from that kingdom.

The *witan* could also play an important role in deciding matters of exile: banishment into exile was not solely commanded by kings but was a punishment that could be collectively determined. In the 755 entry of the *ASC*, the Chronicler records the deposition and death of a West Saxon king:

*ASC* 755: Cynewulf and the councillors of the West Saxons deprived Sigeberht of his kingdom because of his unjust acts, except for Hampshire; and he retained that until he killed the ealdorman who stood by him longest; and then Cynewulf drove him into the Weald, and he lived there until a swineherd stabbed him to death by the stream at Privett,[[27]](#footnote-27) and he was avenging Ealdorman Cumbra.

Her Cynewulf benam Sigebryht his rices 7 Westseaxna wiotan for unryhtum dedum buton Hamtunscire, 7 he hæfde þa oþ he ofslog þone aldormon þe him longest wunode, 7 hiene þa Cynewulf on Andred adræfde, 7 he þær wunade oþ þæt hiene an swan ofstang æt Pryfetesflodan: 7 he wrec þone aldormon Cumbran.[[28]](#footnote-28)

This story of forced removal demonstrates how aristocratic disapproval could have dire consequences for kings. Here, because of unspecified faults in his behavior, the West Saxon nobles deposed and expropriated Sigeberht. The Chronicler states that the king was deprived of his kingdom, and so was deposed if not necessarily exiled: we may question whether or not Sigeberht was free to leave Hampshire (if he was safe anywhere), but he was seemingly permitted to stay within the bounds of Wessex. This seems an unusual arrangement, but it may be that the unfailing loyalty of Ealdorman Cumbra was sufficient to prevent the king’s complete banishment from the kingdom. Alternatively, it may be that Cumbra’s function was more as keeper than host, perhaps in a secular arrangement akin to enforced tonsuring as seen elsewhere.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Sigeberht is alleged to have killed Cumbra, for unstated reasons, and was thereafter forced by Cynewulf to retreat into the Wolds (*on Andred* ***adræfde***). Sigeberht’s venture back into Wessex resulted in his ignominious death at the hands of a swine herder, a vivid sign of the real, mortal dangers of exile and outlawry even for a king.[[30]](#footnote-30) However, the inclusion of this detail by the Chronicler would significantly diminish any perception that Sigeberht was attempting to reclaim Wessex. The result is a story of a bad king’s punishment, though this may have been a construction by the Chronicler: Barbara Yorke has pointed to the 755 annal as one of several instances in which the Chronicler represented previous West Saxon leaders as less admirable than Alfred himself.[[31]](#footnote-31) We should recognize that Sigeberht’s story is immediately followed by that of Cynewulf’s attempt to ‘drive out an atheling who was called Cyneheard’ (*he wolde* ***adræfan*** *anne eþeling se was Cyneheard haten*); Cyneheard was Sigeberht’s brother, and so the *ASC* may be giving evidence of a *witan*-sanctioned dynastic usurpation by means of banishment.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Southern England was not unique in its dynastic and royal worries and dislocations. Northumbria, perhaps most famously of all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, saw remarkable numbers of royal deposition and exile. These are recorded in the northern recension of the *ASC*, which gives evidence of at least nine Northumbrian kings having been tonsured, banished or killed in the eighth century. Ceolwulf received the tonsure in 737, and the cousin who succeeded him, Eadberht, similarly became a monk in 757.[[33]](#footnote-33) It is likely that in these cases the kings were retiring, although it is notable that Ceolwulf had been forcibly tonsured previously before returning to rule Northumbria for a final six years.[[34]](#footnote-34) Æthelwold Moll, Alhred, Æthelred, Osred, and Eardwulf were all deposed and driven from the kingdom; the last entry in the *ASC* regarding Northumbria’s Anglo-Saxon kings is in 867, in which King Osbert was deposed and engaged in a civil war with a usurper named Ælla.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Kings also abdicated or confronted deposition by taking monastic vows or ending their days as pilgrims. Peregrination is a self-imposed form of exile with varying meanings and degrees of separation.[[36]](#footnote-36) Typically these individuals left their homelands, usually traveling overseas, for the betterment of their souls, or with the purpose of evangelizing. Often these *peregrini* remained separated from their homelands, though some formed new attachments and became incorporated into new societies. Sometimes peregrination was temporary, such as when on pilgrimage; these generally made their way home after the trials of travelling.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Peregrination, by any of the above interpretations, constitutes a form of penance or non-corporeal martyrdom and enforces the idea that travel and displacement were serious hardships. The ‘sentence’ of peregrination was also not always voluntary but could be often meted out for the gravest of sins.[[38]](#footnote-38) Early penitential handbooks impose varying forms and lengths of peregrination or exile based on the circumstances and degrees of the sins committed. For instance, the penitential of Columban states that a cleric who begets a child must do penance of seven years pilgrimage, with only bread and water for sustenance; a cleric who commits murder must wander for ten years, and then return to act as a son to the parents of his victim.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The penitential ascribed to Columban is a continental adaptation of Irish influences brought to Merovingian France in the sixth century, and we should note that explicit reference to exile is not found in any of the Anglo-Saxon penitentials. Books of penance in England in the seventh and eighth century are generally vague about the specific forms of penance being undertaken, and seem to leave these details for the clergy to decide. However, there is a removal, in a fashion, in ‘doing penance’ which is clarified in the penitential handbook attributed to Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury:

XII.4 Penitents according to the canons ought not to communicate before the conclusion of the penance; we, however, out of pity give permission after a year or six months.[[40]](#footnote-40)

A distinction should be made here that this form of exclusion does not require physical displacement as with Irish penitential sentences of exile. Yet there is a removal from the community of Christians in the Anglo-Saxon penitentials which would have carried a great weight for any doing penance over extended periods of time. The mercy shown in the above extract evinces the seriousness which exclusion from the Eucharist bore on contemporaries.

Excommunication as a punishment was remarkably similar to secular outlawry in that both involved a loss of protections: outlaws lived without protections from the abuses of people, just as excommunicants lived without protection from an eternity in Hell. Outlawry and excommunication were also similar in that both were generally reserved for the most egregious of crimes or sins, respectively.[[41]](#footnote-41) Although only outlawry requires physical dislocation, the separation between an excommunicate and their neighbors was no less severe, as Laura Napran has pointed out. Contact with an excommunicate was forbidden, and so Napran interprets excommunication as an exile form that separated the offender from the community of the faithful.[[42]](#footnote-42) Furthermore, excommunicates were denied holy sacraments; should one die while in excommunication they could face ‘ultimate exile of exclusion from eternal life’.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Excommunication and peregrination, though punitive, were not exclusively involuntary states. The act of confession must be taken willingly by the sinner, who seeks a means by which he or she might purge their souls of guilt and make amends in the eyes of God. Still, as with those exiles ‘driven out’ by force above, how much choice would the truly faithful have had in taking such measures? If the threat of real violence spurred the flight of groups and individuals like Edwin, Oswald and the Britons, we should recognize that the threat of eternal damnation would have been no less real to those seeking atonement. In close-knit communities where the sins of others might be widely known or suspected, a decline in social standing may also factor in. In this sense, where the alternative is exclusion and damnation, peregrination and excommunication may be viewed as imposed upon the pilgrim through external pressures.

Many people chose to adopt the life of an exile willingly as a means of attaining non-corporeal martyrdom. During a period in which persecutions against Christians were uncommon, martyrdom through death was a rarity. In her landmark study of ‘Red, White and Blue martyrdom’ Stancliffe has shown how ‘red’ martyrdom, which implied bodily destruction or forceful eviction, was complemented by ‘white’ and ‘blue’ martyrdom which did not.[[44]](#footnote-44) In all cases, martyrdom was a means of professing one’s faith by emulating and sharing in Christ’s life and suffering. Stancliffe has determined that ‘white’ martyrdom entails a life of daily asceticism, while ‘blue’ martyrdom indicates one of penitent discipline.[[45]](#footnote-45) Thus blue martyrdom may describe our penitent pilgrims above, whereas white martyrdom is reserved for those who undertook *peregrinatio* of their own accord.

Should we view voluntary penitents and pilgrims as types of exiles? As I have suggested, suitable options for the religiously dislocated (including hermits and cenobites) may not have been viewed as genuine choices, particularly if the participants felt that one path would lead to eternal salvation. Does such a decision differ greatly from the choices of exiles and outlaws who may be killed or persecuted should they return to the comforts of their homelands? I would argue that the experiences of dislocation for these would be as arduous and uncertain as that of any foreigner travelling abroad, or as an exile banished from home. However, despite potential similarities in conditions, or questions of whether dislocation is voluntary or not, for the better understanding of this dissertation I suggest that a meaning of forceful eviction under threat of violence be adopted when considering our exile kings to the exclusion of other possible exile types. This is not an arbitrary decision, but one based on the language used by contemporary sources that may distinguish ‘exiles’ from pilgrims, foreigners, or cenobites. Van Houts’ aforementioned work on the language of exile has identified some of the words to be associated with exile in Anglo-Saxon England: *fliema*, *adrifen*, *flyma, utlaga*, *exlegere*, *exlex*, *exulare,* and *exul*.[[46]](#footnote-46) It is important to recognize that these words associated with exile are not exhaustive, nor are they wholly distinct from one another with sharp legal definitions. Other ways of expressing exile may be found, as Bishop Wine’s exile has demonstrated above (*pulsus est et Uini ab eodem rege de episcopate*); the bishop was not simply removed, but evicted from the kingdom.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Here we should consider the matter of intention and purpose, and ask if these affect whether or not an individual is an ‘exile’. People who freely move about without compulsion may happen to suffer or enjoy experiences similar to those of banished individuals, yet these travelers are not necessarily ‘exiles’, particularly if they are free to return to their previous positions and points of origin. The immigration of foreign craftsmen to Alfred’s court, discussed briefly in Chapter Two below, may be viewed as opportunistic businessmen rather than refugees.

However, for the three kings I will be discussing below, their inability to return to home and power during exile is crucial. For Edwin, a mystical visitor would assist his return to Northumbria and restoration to power, while Æthelred’s restoration, in contrast, came about through the chance death of his usurper and an agreement made between the king and the leading aristocracy. Alfred’s status as an exile is more ambiguous, as will be seen, due largely to the political borders which shaped Wessex: although much of his kingdom is presented as lost to Viking war bands by Asser and the Chronicler, he remained throughout his difficult period of refuge in the marshes of Somerset within West Saxon bounds. Alfred’s resumption of power and reclamation of the remainder of Wessex, according to Asser and the Chronicler, came about through careful planning and the fruitful gathering of supporters for battle. Later Anglo-Saxon and medieval authors came to present Alfred as an exile or exile-like figure in their own works; by drawing on the language and themes associated with exile, these authors demonstrate that Alfred’s story had been received as holding an important exile component.[[48]](#footnote-48) I will discuss this further in Chapter Two, but should emphasise that these tales mark representations rather than realities; the geographic position of Somerset within the kingdom of Wessex and recent arguments concerning the king’s resources and strengths in 878 gives cause to question whether Alfred was actually an exile. I will discuss Asser’s portrayal of the king and consider whether he intended to develop an image of Alfred as an exile, or whether he used his story about the king to tell a broader exile story about the lossess and restoration of the English.

**1.3 Historiography and Related Scholarship**

As will be shown, the exile experiences of Edwin, Alfred and Æthelred were uniquely and carefully responded to and portrayed by our extant sources. Yet they are also representative of a larger body of material concerning exiles across periods and peoples. Composers of prose and verse in the Anglo-Saxon period contributed to expressions of their own cultures, but we should recognize that a long tradition of exile literature preceded our period of study. Jo-Marie Claasen provides a literary analysis of works concerning exile from the Roman world in her book *Displaced Persons*.[[49]](#footnote-49) Claasen notes that exile literature was also variable and could be about an exile or exiles, about the state of exile, directed to an exile, or written by an exile. These literary variants could take the form of epics, elegiac and lyric poems, personal or public letters, or formal essays.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Claasen considers sources, authors and audiences to interpret the function of exile as a theme, revealing the ways in which narratives shape and re-shape the realities of exile to meet desired conventions. For instance, Cicero’s personal letters while in exile, to Claasen’s mind, give a ‘truer’ version of his time away from Rome than that presented in the ‘official’ version he penned after his return.[[51]](#footnote-51) This ‘official’ version, according to Claasen, reflects ‘heroic hindsight’ used to draw on the support and sympathy of Cicero’s fellow citizens.[[52]](#footnote-52) The shaping of narrative, as I will demonstrate, is also evident in the crafting of Anglo-Saxon texts, whether in standard forms of literature or in governmental documents. The variable elements of subject, author and audience remain, and will be shown to have affected the presentation of our three case studies.

Ovid similarly manipulated exile in his own work; inclusion of three references to Medea in his *Epistulae ex Ponto*, for instance, pointsto the author’s desire to emphasize his own heroic suffering in exile.[[53]](#footnote-53) Positive attributes of mythic exiles, such as in tales of Theseus, Cadmus and Dionysus, are apparent; the impact of these portrayals may be seen most clearly in Virgil’s Aeneas, whose forced departure from Troy takes a positive spin as it develops into a search for a new *patria.*[[54]](#footnote-54) Claasen argues that ‘myth’ and ‘literature’ must be coupled in this respect: ‘We need to consider the manner in which individual authors retell the same stories.’[[55]](#footnote-55)

By this line of reasoning, it may be that later ideals of Anglo-Saxon Christians developed in part from well-known classical authors who wrote about exile.[[56]](#footnote-56) Dislocation has long been recognized as a culturally significant topos by ethnographers and folklorists, and cross-cultural continuities have been identified. Numerous forms and interpretations of exile woven into the literature and traditions of peoples throughout the world reveal that exile is a multi-colored and well-used strand in the pattern of human memory and perception. Arnold van Gennep’s 1909 work *Les Rites de Passage* stands as the foundational work on this facet of the human condition. Van Gennep was a prominent folklorist and ethnographer who identified and assessed those ceremonies and rituals which pervasively accompany change across cultures. Van Gennep observed three subdivisions of ceremonial change: preliminal ‘rites of separation’, liminal ‘transition rites’ and postliminal ‘rites of incorporation’.[[57]](#footnote-57) These rites form a cyclical pattern of pivoting ‘magic circles’: the individual is severed from his/her community, then experiences the absence of home and people, and finally returns.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The categories and concepts which embody them [the magic circles] operate in such a way that whoever passes through the various positions of a lifetime one day sees the sacred where before he has seen the profane, or vice versa. Such changes of condition do not occur without disturbing the life of society and the individual, and it is the function of rites of passage to reduce their harmful effects.[[59]](#footnote-59)

By passing from one state to another, an individual or group undergoes ‘magico-religious’ separations and incorporations: they meet and cope with change. Van Gennep notes that such separation and incorporation may be physical as well as psychological. Boundaries between territories may be natural or fabricated, but the inhabitants are cognizant of how far their rights and protections extend as members of their society; ritual recognition of these boundaries makes their interiors sacred and trespass sacrilegious.[[60]](#footnote-60) Similarly, traversing spaces which separate non-adjacent societies reflects a physical and magico-religious ‘wavering between two worlds’: a liminal rite of passage not dissimilar to the transitions which take place in changes of societal position.[[61]](#footnote-61)

In a later work building on van Gennep’s *Rites*, Joseph Campbell also discusses cultural aspects of exile from an ethnographic standpoint. Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* looks to heroic legends for similar patterns of separation, initiation and return, and reveals a pattern which implements both Van Gennep’s concept of sacred space and the cyclical nature of rites of passage.[[62]](#footnote-62) Campbell’s ‘cosmogonic cycle’ includes phases wherein the hero moves the action in order to regain something lost.[[63]](#footnote-63) In this way, the exile may be seen as undergoing a trial in order to return to his/her society with gains to share. The depth of descent into hardship is proportionate to the hero’s actions upon returning from exile. Campbell notes that even historical figures are re-invented by authors of their lives with adventures or sufferings appropriately matched to the impacts of their return.[[64]](#footnote-64) In the present work, then, we might expect to find exaggerated stories and aggrandizement about exile experiences commensurate to the high office of kingship.

Campbell cites the common employment of the cosmogonic cycle and adaptations of hardship as evidence for what he calls a ‘heroic monomyth’.[[65]](#footnote-65) Christians of the early medieval period, as Joseph Campbell noted, expressed their own participation in the monomyth through voluntary, religious exile.[[66]](#footnote-66) Preoccupation with the idea of religious exile is seen in the literature and poetics of the age. In her reassessment of the Old English poem *The Seafarer*, Dorothy Whitelock refuted arguments for allegory and instead argued for a more literal interpretation that gave ‘poetic expression to the impulse that sent numbers of his [the poet’s] countrymen to the schools of Ireland, to the mission fields of Germany, and to the shrines of distant saints’.[[67]](#footnote-67) More recently, Manuela Brito-Martins has examined the etymology of the term *peregrinatio* and how this developed under Christian Latin authors.[[68]](#footnote-68) Initially the word implied one who travels or stays abroad, but the meaning of the word came to include spiritual journeys as well.[[69]](#footnote-69) Through this change *peregrinatio* came to include life pilgrimage and monasticism. This change may have stemmed from earlier connections made between travelling and a search for wisdom and philosophy; Brito-Martins notes that both pagan Cicero and Christian Augustine of Hippo had made this connection between peregrination and a search for personal improvement and understanding.[[70]](#footnote-70) Later depictions of exile reveal similar ideas were still present in the Anglo-Saxon period: exile could function as a positive, transformative process. Transformation from the material to the heavenly and eternal was a primary aim of monastic and eremitic living, where isolation and silent contemplation, removed from the *mundus*, was held by some to facilitate personal development.[[71]](#footnote-71)

In her study of medieval pilgrimage, Dee Dyas examines how this form of self-imposed exile is reflected in Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose.[[72]](#footnote-72) Dyas devotes a chapter to pilgrimage as a form of voluntary exile during the Anglo-Saxon period, with such figures as St. Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop laying the foundations for a lasting pilgrim tradition in England. This translation of a metaphorical, spiritual exile into an experience of physical displacement and hardship, inspired in large part by the earlier writings of the Church Fathers, found expression in Anglo-Saxon life and literature:[[73]](#footnote-73)

So fundamental is it [pilgrimage] to contemporary Christian thought and so ubiquitous its use in Old English literature that it can fairly be described as *the* key undergirding image of Christian poetry and prose in the period from the Conversion to the Norman Conquest.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Dyas ascribes the omnipresence of pilgrimage motifs in the Anglo-Saxon corpus to the comfort offered by the Christian church to those suffering either voluntary or imposed exile. Dyas’ arguments are well-conceived, and her identification of lifelong pilgrimage as a widespread concept in the Anglo-Saxon world is grounded in an extensive survey of surviving prose and poetry.[[75]](#footnote-75) However, as I will demonstrate in the case studies below, the comfort afforded by Christian theology is only one indicator of the use to which exile themes might be applied in Anglo-Saxon texts: Christian legitimacy of rule and metaphysical elevation are among these.

The story of early medieval England and Europe reveals that exile experiences were far from unusual. It has already been noted that a sizeable number of kings underwent periods in exile, and there were many more besides: voluntary and involuntary, religious and secular. For instance, in my own assessment of Bede’s preoccupation with exiles in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I identified no fewer than forty-two groups and individuals who underwent one or more forms of exile.[[76]](#footnote-76)Dáibhí Ó Cróinín’s brief study of Anglo-Saxon royal exiles emphasizes the numbers of individuals who traveled to Ireland, whether for spiritual or political reasons.[[77]](#footnote-77) Ó Cróinín discusses how correspondence between some of these exiles and their Anglo-Saxon friends and families continued during their absence.[[78]](#footnote-78) Exiles such as these may have held sway back home, particularly if their journeys had raised them to positions of respect as advisors and churchmen.

There is an abundance of scholarship concerning exile themes in Anglo-Saxon poetry, especially in the poems commonly referred to as the Old English elegies: *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *Deor*, *The Wife’s Lament*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Husband’s Message*, *The Ruin*, *Resignation A*, *Resignation B*, *The Riming Poem*, all of which are found in Exeter Book.[[79]](#footnote-79) For instance, in a collection of essays concerning the elegiac poems, Ida Masters Hollowell examined the contents of *The Wanderer* with the daunting task of identifying the narrator.[[80]](#footnote-80) Hollowell suggests that the Wanderer had been a seer, or *woðbora*,with a pagan background that lacked purpose in the newly Christian world and so found himself lost or exiled from society. In the same collection, Roy Leslie builds upon previous interpretations and discussions by Dorothy Whitelock, Stanley Greenfield, and John Pope to consider the possibility that *The Seafarer* may have been intended to appeal to both metaphorical and literal understandings of exile.[[81]](#footnote-81)Patrick Conner adopts a New Historicist approach to the poems in the Exeter Book by reading them alongside guild statutes produced at Exeter.[[82]](#footnote-82) In doing so, he argues that *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Riming Poem*, *Resignation A* and *Resignation B* all contain elements that refer to exile, salvation, and spiritual rewards in terms of capital. Thus Conner concludes that the elegies ‘once functioned to perpetuate, to guarantee, and to strengthen the social relationships necessary to the production of a monastic economic hegemony.[[83]](#footnote-83)

Stanley Greenfield’s examination of Anglo-Saxon poetry provides crucial reading toward our understanding of exile through the period. In his 1955 article ‘The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of ‘Exile’ in Anglo-Saxon Poetry’, Greenfield followed Francis Magoun, Jr.’s identification of repeating words and phrases indicative of patterns in grammatical-metrical structure.[[84]](#footnote-84) Greenfield’s aim was to further explore ‘verbal formulas’ as they relate to poetic themes, in this instance focusing on the theme of exile. He demonstrated found that four aspects of exile are repeatedly expressed by Anglo-Saxon poets: status, deprivation, state of mind and movement.[[85]](#footnote-85) He acknowledged that these are not the only aspects of exile to be found in Old English poetry, but argued through the presentation of numerous key phrases that these features of exile received special emphasis by multiple poets of the age, particularly *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and *The Wife’s Lament*.[[86]](#footnote-86)

In 1953, Greenfield had already considered the role of exile as a sub-theme in ‘The Theme of Spiritual Exile in *Christ I*’.[[87]](#footnote-87) His argument here focused on how, rather than why, exile was incorporated as a theme. Greenfield argued that *Christ I*  is primarily concerned with celebrating the Nativity, combining the sense of joy at Christ’s arrival with that of sorrow for man’s spiritual exile from Heaven and God.[[88]](#footnote-88) Greenfield identified five instances of the subtheme of exile within *Christ I*: expulsion from Paradise, despair after the Fall, exiles in Limbo awaiting the Harrowing of Hell, the scattering of the flock after the Crucifixion, and man’s present exilic state.[[89]](#footnote-89) For the poet, these instances of exile provided thematic unity between the poem’s divisions while also voicing concerns of the singer’s times; ‘This indeed is the poet’s personal cry for salvation and grace, and it is the cry of his generation.’[[90]](#footnote-90)

Anglo-Saxon Christian poets used Biblical accounts of exile to interpret their own history and place in the world. Nicholas Howe has argued for similar symbolic and literal contemporary interpretive connections between biblical accounts and Anglo-Saxon history in his discussion on the Old English *Exodus*.[[91]](#footnote-91) The author of *Exodus*, as Howe suggests, knew of the migratory past of the Anglo-Saxons who crossed over from the continent to England, but was also keenly aware of his people’s conversion history. By incorporating the language and meanings of his own time and people, How argues that the poet recast the Exodus story in a way that told of the foundations of Israel and simultaneously evoked the post-conversion Anglo-Saxons.[[92]](#footnote-92) The Exodus of the Jews had served as an exemplar for histories of pre-conversion Christian people elsewhere, most notably in Eusebius’ *Vita Constantini* wherein the Roman Emperor Constantine was depicted as a type of Moses.[[93]](#footnote-93) However, Howe demonstrates that the historical similarities between the experiences of the Israelites and the Anglo-Saxons, specifically as migratory crossers of seas, may have been of importance to the Old English poet’s project of suggesting a correspondence between the two peoples: ‘Because the ancestral migration meant the entry of the Anglo-Saxons into Old Testament history, it gave a biblical warrant to their preconversion experience.’[[94]](#footnote-94) Thus, ideas about Old Testament exile and dislocation were crucial to Anglo-Saxon concepts of identity as a Christian people.[[95]](#footnote-95) More about exile figures from the Hebrew Bible will be discussed in each of the chapters below.

Understanding exile requires understanding what constitutes ‘homeland’. Patrick Wormald’s assessment of English unity discusses the gradual process of unification, a concept promoted earlier by Frank Stenton, but Wormald forcibly argues that ‘no early Anglo-Saxon king so much as *claimed* to be ‘King of the English’ until the reign of Æthelstan in 928’.[[96]](#footnote-96) Political realities aside, the promotion of religious and cultural unification has been recognized in sources from the period. Herbert Cowdrey has pointed to Bede’s promotion of English unity in the early eighth century, while Sarah Foot has written on the support for a similar ideal during the reign of Alfred.[[97]](#footnote-97) In his collection of essays on the subject of Anglo-Saxon governance, James Campbell discusses how intermarriages between powerful families contributed to notions of national unity: ‘The remarkable extent to which the English nobility avoided civil war is arguably a tribute to their ‘national outlook’’.[[98]](#footnote-98) Campbell also points to the continuing influence of the Church on this broad identity among the Anglo-Saxons through the ninth and tenth centuries.[[99]](#footnote-99)

Discussions on unification give rise to considerations of Anglo-Saxon thoughts of ‘home’: as one’s shared cultural, religious, and political zones expand, so too do one’s feelings concerning the geographical place of ‘home’ and relational sense of place. Nicholas Howe has confronted this issue, noting that ‘a sense of place has as much to do with imagined cartography as with geographic fact’.[[100]](#footnote-100) Howe refers to various accounts, descriptions, and the oldest surviving *mappamundi* to demonstrate how Anglo-Saxon worldviews responded to their relationship to the Church and their relative distance and orientation from Rome or Jerusalem. In a striking example of how the Anglo-Saxons perceived their place in the world, Howe points to Ælfric’s *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, wherein the abbot advises the monks that the period between Nocturns and Lauds is best measured by how long it takes to read four psalms and the Lauds of All Saints, noting that nights are shorter in Britain than in Italy.[[101]](#footnote-101) Howe argues that by doing this Ælfric ‘plots the spiritual geography of the island’ and so reveals the intrinsic connection between sense of place in Anglo-Saxon England and the Holy See.

Anglo-Saxon perceptions of ‘home’, therefore, fit within a spiritual context; entrance and expulsion from home, as Joseph Campbell’s monomyth suggests, can take on spiritual meaning.[[102]](#footnote-102) I will demonstrate below that this was the case with kings Edwin and Alfred; the narrators of their lives shaped their exile experiences into episodes of spiritual and metaphysical importance. Æthelred’s exile was not so favourably remembered, but I will demonstrate that attempts were made by members of his court to portray the king in a manner befitting the holder of a sacral office. The conception of the king being, in some sense, a sacral figure is crucial to the arguments I will lay out below, and has been discussed and debated in numerous studies. A work of crucial importance to understanding early medieval kingship is J.M. Wallace-Hadrill’s *Early Germanic Kingship*.[[103]](#footnote-103) In this collection of lectures delivered in 1970, Wallace-Hadrill traces how the office of kingship developed in Western Europe as duties of royal office multiplied: one had to be a warrior, but also a protector, a legislator, and supporter of the Church. Wallace-Hadrill’s discussions on what kingship entailed have spurred further enquiry. Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood edited a later volume of papers covering a variety of topics relating to kingship; many of these papers are cited in my own chapters below. For instance, Ian Wood’s ideas on the political realities of royal inheritance and Janet Nelson’s examination of royal inaugurations contribute greatly to our present understanding of how Wallace-Hadrill’s ‘sacral’ kings were made and recognized, while Patrick Wormald’s paper on legislation and kingship looks at lawcodes as ideological expressions of the king’s will.[[104]](#footnote-104)

Examinations of Anglo-Saxon kingship have continued to spark discussion. Barbara Yorke, for instance, has used historical and archaeological evidence to trace the origins and development of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Wessex, East Anglia, and Essex through the tenth century.[[105]](#footnote-105) Yorke notes how kings were instrumental to early conversion efforts, and in time their roles were shaped by the aims of the Church.[[106]](#footnote-106) In a separate, later work, Yorke devotes a section to reconfirming the king’s importance for missionary efforts and demonstrates the growing presence of churchmen at royal courts.[[107]](#footnote-107) In her discussion of the complex web of relationships and interactions between seemingly secular and ecclesiastical parties, Yorke cautions ‘there is a danger that in looking separately at topics such as ‘kingship’ and ‘the church’ we drive artificial barriers between them’.[[108]](#footnote-108) This is sound advice, and I have attempted to adhere to this fundamental concept in my discussions below.

On the subject of kingship, I should also recognize an important monograph recently published by Paul Kershaw.[[109]](#footnote-109) By focusing his discussion on displays of peacemaking, and the growing importance of this royal function, Kershaw reveals how early medieval people viewed concepts of peace, kingship, and divine order; numerous examples of typological modeling are provided, as are the very real conditions of obstacles to peace in traditional warrior cultures. Kershaw’s *Peaceful Kings* is an exemplary demonstration of how broader discussions of Western kingship and identity can be approached in new ways by the application of a well-placed ‘lens’. In my case studies below, I apply the ‘lens’ of exile to similarly expand our understanding of kingship and identity; Kershaw’s contribution has been particularly heartening.[[110]](#footnote-110)

This review of literature has been necessarily limited to a few important scholarly works and is far from exhaustive. Because of their above-noted differences, each case study below has its own appropriate historiography and special topics for discussion. With regards to the kings themselves, remarkably little has been written about Edwin, although he is discussed within broader works; much of the historiography for Chapter One therefore concerns Bede, the Roman mission to Northumbria, and seventh- and eighth-century Britain generally. Far more work is available on the reign of Alfred, including work by Richard Abels, Alfred Smyth, and David Pratt, to name a few. Æthelred’s troubles have developed a substantial corpus of studies in the past thirty years, as seen in the work of Janet Nelson, Ann Williams, Patrick Wormald, and Simon Keynes. These and other works will be discussed in turn in the chapters below.

In what follows, I examine the decisions made by contemporary, or near-contemporary, authors of histories, chronicles, biographies, charters and law-codes. By giving particular attention to portrayals of exile, I will show that exile stories can serve as ‘lenses’ through which realities of historical contexts and authorial agendas may be understood. In Chapter One I discuss Bede’s narrative account of King Edwin in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, observing literary techniques surrounding Edwin’s exile story which promote other thematic elements of that work. Chapter Two examines accounts from Asser’s *Vita Ælfredi*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and the law-codes of Alfred of Wessex, exploring exile’s role in supporting court-based agendas and a general promotion of ‘English’ unity. I finish with an examination of the exile of Æthelred II in Chapter Three. Comparison and analysis of law-codes and charters issued shortly before Æthelred’s exile and immediately after his return reveals careful crafting of official documents in response to Æthelred’s circumstances and England’s shifting loyalties. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is also considered for evidence of authorial license and the political ‘logistics’ of exile and restoration.

Through these discussions I will demonstrate how authors used exile to construct directed views of each king, albeit in very different ways. I will also look at how restoration from exile shaped responses of the kings and their advisors in the form of official documents. Furthermore, I will show how these portrayals of and responses to royal exile reveal broader contemporary conceptions of kingship, identity, and divine will. The presentations of Edwin, Alfred, and Æthelred invite us to recall the proposals of Van Gennep and Joseph Campbell concerning the universal importance of liminalities to the interpretation of life histories. The dangers and hardships of exile, whether real or fictive, have the capacity to transform mundane individuals into prominent characters stored in our collective memories. The manner of these portrayals determines whether we view these exiles as heroes or villains.

**2. Chapter One: Edwin of Northumbria**

**2.1: Introduction**

In this first study I will consider the restored exile King Edwin of Northumbria (reigned 616-33). Edwin invites investigation for a number of reasons, not the least of which is his status as the first Christian king of Northumbria. Edwin promoted the spread of Christianity within and without his kingdom and was posthumously regarded as a saint. Apart from a very brief period of apostate rulers in Northumbria (633),[[111]](#footnote-111) Edwin’s reign was followed by a succession of Christian kings and the continuing development of churches, monasteries, and ecclesiastical hierarchy in the North. Edwin also established military and political dominance over other Anglo-Saxon and British kingdoms; Northumbria’s influence across Britain continued through the reigns of Oswald (634-642) and Oswiu (642-670).[[112]](#footnote-112)

For the present study it is Edwin’s status as a restored exile which will be examined. Portrayal of the king’s exile and restoration are of especial interest here. Extant contemporary or near-contemporary sources on Edwin, as with all seventh-century subjects, are sparse and written exclusively by authors in religious houses.[[113]](#footnote-113) Charters, writs and law codes for Northumbria are notably absent for this period, leaving only narrative texts for analysis.[[114]](#footnote-114) We are very fortunate, then, that these surviving narratives include Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, completed in 731. Although written nearly a century after the events of Edwin’s reign, the *HE* contains the most expansive account of the period. Bede devotes eleven chapters of Book II to Edwin and the missionary work of Edwin’s Christian teacher, Paulinus.[[115]](#footnote-115) The only other king to receive such intensive treatment is Edwin’s successor, St Oswald, whose reign and posthumous miracles are the subject of the first thirteen chapters of Book III.[[116]](#footnote-116) However, despite both kings having been exiles before attaining the throne, Bede only gives extensive details on the exile experience of Edwin.[[117]](#footnote-117)[[118]](#footnote-118) The amplification and manipulation of exile stories, as will be shown, are powerful ways of directing the reader’s perception of the king while enhancing the didactic purpose of the work. Indeed, it is the manner in which Bede presents his account of Edwin’s exile, carefully deploying complex literary structures to enhance thematic elements of kingship and unity, which is central to the present discussion.

It is helpful to first summarize the course of Edwin’s life and reign. Edwin was the son of Ælle, King of Deira, who was killed around 590. The Bernician King Æthelfrith (d. 616) assumed control of Deira as early as 592 and as late as 604; the actual date can not be ascertained, and precisely when Edwin fled Northumbria is unclear, but Bede expressly states that he lived as an exile during Æthelfrith’s reign.[[119]](#footnote-119) Edwin reclaimed both Deira and Bernicia from Æthelfrith in 616, and so the length of his exile would have been anywhere between twelve and twenty-six years. Edwin’s marriage in 625 to Æthelburh, daughter of the converted King Æthelberht of Kent, brought the Roman missionary Paulinus to Northumbria and eventually led to Edwin’s conversion and baptism at York in 627. When Edwin was slain by the Mercian King Penda at Hatfield Chase in 633, his family and Paulinus fled the kingdom. The death of Edwin came to mark a brief relapse to paganism in Northumbria and the temporary separation of the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia.[[120]](#footnote-120)

How did Bede choose to present Edwin’s reign and exile? Crucially, Bede’s account does not follow the linear chronological sequence I have just given. Instead, Bede begins with a description of Edwin’s later accomplishments as king and tells of Paulinus’ mission to Northumbria.[[121]](#footnote-121) Bede then devotes two chapters to recording letters sent from Pope Boniface to Edwin and Æthelburh.[[122]](#footnote-122) Shortly after resuming his account of Edwin, Bede departs from the narrative present, forming an external analepsis, or flashback in time, to share a tradition concerning Edwin’s pre-restoration life as an exile; the analeptic passage in II.12 will be discussed in greater detail below.[[123]](#footnote-123) Bede returns in II.13-16 to the narrative present to describe the efforts of both Edwin and Paulinus to evangelize in Northumbria and in the kingdoms of East Anglia and Lindsey.[[124]](#footnote-124) II.17-19 consist of papal letters from Pope Honorius to Edwin, Bishop Honorius of Canterbury, and to the Irish people.[[125]](#footnote-125) Book II concludes with Edwin’s death, the ravaging of Northumbria by Cædwalla, and the flight of Paulinus and the Deiran royal family from Northumbria.[[126]](#footnote-126) To help clarify Bede’s structural choices for his chapters concerning Edwin, I have drawn up the following table in which the columns advance chronologically as they progress to the right:

**Fig. 1: Edwin Chapters Outline**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Edwin Chapters | Edwin in Exile, pre-616 | Edwin as King, post-exile 616-627 | Edwin as Christian King, 627-633 |
| II.9, Edwin as powerful king |  | Kingship, Inception of Roman Mission |  |
| II.10 (papal letter) |  | Papal Letter |  |
| II.11 (papal letter) |  | Papal Letter |  |
| II.12 (analepsis) | **Exile** |  |  |
| II.13-16, Edwin aids Roman mission |  |  | Kingship |
| II.17 (papal letter) |  |  | Papal Letter |
| II.18 (papal letter) |  |  | Papal Letter |
| II.19 (papal letter) |  |  | Papal Letter |
| II.20, Edwin’s death |  |  | Death of King, End of Roman Mission |

It should be immediately clear that Bede chose not to follow a chronological structure for his account of Edwin. Instead, Bede begins in the narrative present before telling a story in the narrative past and finally returning again to the narrative present. It is also clear that this analepsis was positioned between two layers of chapters: those including selected papal letters, and those about the king’s experience as a ruler.

What did Bede accomplish through this unusual construction? Bede’s editorial discretion has been noted by a number of scholars, and the choices he made are rarely accepted as mere artistic preference.[[127]](#footnote-127) The author’s inclusions and omissions should be understood as the conscious choices of a master, with effects carefully calculated for his audience. I contend that Bede’s decisions about the structure of the narrative on Edwin were intended to draw the reader’s attention to a particular episode in the king’s life: his period in exile. By presenting this part of Edwin’s story as an analepsis, Bede was able to position an influential, previous event at the centre of his narrative. Bede did this because of, rather than despite, the resulting breach in chronological order. Furthermore, the interruptions occasioned by the papal letters of Popes Boniface and Honorius were similarly designed to position Edwin’s exile story in the centre of Bede’s account, forming an envelope structure which frames and contextualizes the analeptic climax of Edwin’s exile. The effect of this envelope is reinforced by a second thematic envelope formed by Bede’s presentation of Edwin’s warrior- and Christian-kingship in the narrative present. These literary constructs and Bede’s use of Edwin’s exile story as a focal point for his narrative will be defined and examined in turn below, as will the typological and figural connections to the Bible Bede’s work invites within the text.

**2.2: Edwin’s Exile as Analeptic Climax**

I begin this discussion with an examination of the climactic analepsis of Bede’s frame narrative: Edwin’s exile experience at the court of King Rædwald. First I should clarify the literary terminology I adopt here. ‘Analepsis’ is a narratological term for a passage which functions as a flashback within a story, wherein a forward-moving narrative is broken up by one or more accounts of earlier events.[[128]](#footnote-128) A ‘frame narrative’ is a story which holds another story within it, in our case the analepsis.[[129]](#footnote-129) Historically, Edwin’s exile followed Æthelfrith’s invasion of Deira, either *c*.590-2 or *c*.604.[[130]](#footnote-130) However, Bede begins his story in a narrative present concurrent with Edwin’s post-exile rule (reigned 616-633) and only afterwards gives an account of Edwin’s exile. After concluding this analeptic passage, Bede returns to the narrative present in which the older King Edwin undergoes conversion to Christianity. The twelve chapters about Edwin in the *HE* (II.9-20) thus comprise a frame narrative, where the story within the narrative scheme is an analepsis recalling earlier events. Bede crafted his account of Edwin to centre on the king’s exile, and so I refer to I.12 as the ‘analeptic climax’ of the narrative.

Bede begins his story of Edwin in II.9 with the king’s marriage to the Kentish princess Æthelburh and the arrival of Paulinus in Northumbria.[[131]](#footnote-131) Bede tells us that Paulinus’ attempts to convert King Edwin were protracted by the king’s ruminative nature.[[132]](#footnote-132) This sets a crucial backdrop for the analepsis in II.12. Following two intervening chapters containing papal letters (II.10-11), Bede initiates II.12 with a reminder that Paulinus had initially been unable to persuade the long-deliberating Edwin to become a Christian. However, Paulinus eventually received new information vital to bringing about Edwin’s conversion.

...tandem, ut uerisimile uidetur, **didicit in spiritu**, quod uel quale esset oraculum regi quondam caelitus ostensum. Nec exinde distulit, quin continuo regem ammoneret explere uotum, quod in oraculo sibi exhibito se facturum promiserat, si temporis illius erumnis exemtus ad regni fastigia perueniret.

At length, as seems most probable, **he was shown in spirit** the nature of the vision which God had once revealed to the king. Nor did he lose any time in warning the king to fulfill the vows which, when he saw the vision, he had undertaken to perform if he should be delivered from the trouble he was then in and should ascend the royal throne.[[133]](#footnote-133)

Paulinus learned of a vision Edwin had received much earlier in life. This new information provides the mechanism by which Bede carries his frame narrative into the analeptic episode: the reader’s curiosity is piqued by the knowledge that Edwin’s past is of vital importance to Edwin’s imminent conversion. The ‘trouble’ mentioned in the above extract took place during the closing period of Edwin’s exile while living under the protection of the East Anglian King Rædwald. The vision Bede mentions was received by Edwin during this time and resulted in the king taking an oath of obeisance in exchange for his restoration from exile. Edwin’s mystical experience will be discussed further below. Crucially, in the above extract, Bede promotes the idea that Paulinus was granted this information through a providential vision or message. Divine revelation seems to be implied by Paulinus’ discovery (*didicit in spiritu*)of Edwin’s exile vision.[[134]](#footnote-134) Bede emphasizes the mystical elements at work in Edwin’s life, specifically in regard to the king’s exile experience. In doing so, Bede directs his readers to connect a period of royal exile with the ultimate conversion of Northumbria’s first Christian king.

What did this exile period entail? Bede informs us through a description of the vision received by Paulinus, defining Edwin’s position and hardship more clearly:

***HE* II.12** Erat autem oraculum huiusmodi. Cum persequente illum Aedilfrido, qui ante eum regnauit, **per diuersa occultus loca uel regna multo annorum tempore profugus uagaretur**, tandem uenit ad Redualdum, obsecrans ut uitam suam a tanti persecutoris insidiis tutando seruaret. Qui libenter eum excipiens promisit se quae petebatur esse facturum. At postquam Aedilfrid in hac eum prouincia apparuisse et apud regem illius familiariter cum sociis habitare cognouit, misit nuntios qui Redualdo pecuniam multam pro nece eius offerrent.

This was his vision: when he was being persecuted by his predecessor Æthelfrith, **he wandered secretly as a fugitive for many years through many places and kingdoms**, until at last he came to Rædwald and asked him for protection against the plots of his powerful persecutor. Rædwald received him gladly, promising to do what he asked. But when Æthelfrith learned that he had been seen in that kingdom and was living on intimate terms with the king among his retainers, he sent messengers offering Rædwald large sums of money to put Edwin to death.[[135]](#footnote-135)

These are the first details Bede provides concerning Edwin’s previous life as an exile, pursued by King Ӕthelfrith. At this point in Bede’s account it is difficult to determine the level of hardship he experienced as an exile, although the detail that Edwin was travelling anonymously indicates a persistence of danger for the young ætheling.

That the king ‘wandered’ (*vagari*) rather than ‘rode’ or ‘journeyed’ may reflect an attempt by Bede to portray Edwin’s fugitive existence as one of uncertainty and despondency. The use of *vagari* in tandem with *profugus* here is reminiscent of the language found in the Book of Genesis, a work which Bede knew thoroughly, not least because he had composed a commentary on it.[[136]](#footnote-136) In Genesis the close association of the two words is found twice:

**Gn 4:12** cum operatus fueris eam non dabit tibi fructus suos **vagus et profugus** eris super terram

When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield to thee its fruit: **a fugitive** and a **vagabond** shalt thou be upon the earth.

And again:

**Gn 4:14** ecce eicis me hodie a facie terrae et a facie tua abscondar et ero **vagus et profugus** in terra omnis igitur qui invenerit me occidet me

Behold thou dost cast me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face I shall be hid, and I shall be **a vagabond and a fugitive** on the earth: every one therefore that findeth me, shall kill me.

That this latter statement by Cain concerns the dangers of exile fits well with the dangers Edwin experienced, and particularly the potential for violence at the hands of Rædwald.[[137]](#footnote-137) Bede may have seen a similar adoption of this collocation in Columbanus’ *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*  (c.591), section B, wherein the punishment for churchmen who commit murder is specified:

Si autem non satis fecerit parentibus illius nunquam recipiatur in patriam, sed more Cain **uagus** **et profugus** sit super terram

But if he does not make satisfaction to his relatives, let him never be restored to his native land, but like Cain let him be a **wanderer** **and fugitive** upon the earth.[[138]](#footnote-138)

Columbanus’ collocation of *uagus* and *profugus* shapes characterizes exile as a removal not only from men, but from the face of God.[[139]](#footnote-139) Bede was aware of Columbanus’ life and works, though whether he was familiar with Columbanus’ penitential is uncertain.[[140]](#footnote-140) However, both Bede and Columbanus were familiar with the works of Augustine of Hippo, including his *De Civitate Dei*. At one point in that work, Augustine uses the story of Cain and Abel to distinguish between the heavenly city, worldly things, and those seeking salvation (or not).

Scriptum est itaque de Cain quod condiderit civitatem; Abel autem tamquam **peregrinus** non condidit.[[141]](#footnote-141)

So it is written in scripture about Cain, that he founded a city; Abel, however, **as a pilgrim** did not found one.[[142]](#footnote-142)

Although Augustine does not use *vagari* or *profugus* in this extract, there is a shared idea that Cain serves as an example of worldly faults and suffering. Edwin’s status as a pagan prior to 627 meant that he was removed from God’s sight. His exile was thus both physical and metaphysical, a literal and metaphorical journey which eventually culminated in his conversion to Christianity. Bede, like Augustine before him, forms a connection to Genesis by describing his own exiled subject with remarkably similar language. Through this construction, Bede invites those familiar with Genesis to reflect on Edwin’s own story in new and instructive ways; Bede presents an exercise for the Christian mind while emphasizing the severity of Edwin’s exile condition.

‘Wandering’ and ‘flight’ are also associated with the desert or wilderness in the Hebrew Bible, often indicating an uncertain path. For instance,

**I Sm. 23:12-14**  dixitque David si tradent viri Ceilae me et viros qui sunt mecum in manu Saul et dixit Dominus tradent surrexit ergo David et viri eius quasi sescenti et egressi de Ceila huc atque illuc **vagabantur** incerti nuntiatumque est Saul quod **fugisset** David de Ceila quam ob rem dissimulavit exire morabatur autem David in **deserto** in locis firmissimis mansitque **in monte** **solitudinis** Ziph quaerebat tamen eum Saul cunctis diebus et non tradidit eum Deus in manus eius

And David said: Will the men of Ceila deliver me and my men into the hands of Saul? And the Lord said: They will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose, and departing from Ceila, **wandered** up and down, uncertain where they should stay: and it was told Saul that David **was fled** from Ceila, and had escaped: wherefore he forbore to go out. But David abode in the **desert** in strong holds, and he remained in a **mountain** **of the desert** of Ziph, in a woody hill. And Saul sought him always: but the Lord delivered him not into his hands.

Here again, although not with the same lexical collocation, ‘wandering’ and ‘flight’ are associated in scripture, in this case in reference to a future king of the Hebrew Bible.[[143]](#footnote-143) Considering Bede’s earlier exegetical work on both Genesis and I Samuel,[[144]](#footnote-144) it is plausible to assume that Bede regarded the terms as a semantic pair. The *HE* of course has many biblical echoes, borrowings, and typological connections, so it comes as no surprise that Bede depicts Edwin’s hardship in terms closely associated with the suffering and hopelessness of biblical examples of exile. More will be said on such typological connections below. For now, it is important to note that Bede presents this thematic reminiscence at the commencement of the analeptic climax of his frame narrative on Edwin. Bede used analepsis and frame narrative to place Edwin’s exile at the centre of his account, and in turn used the analepsis in order to make the typological connection central in his story.

Bede may have wished Edwin to seem a hopeless wanderer in exile. It may be that Edwin actually travelled with a retinue of family and supporters, and that Bede chose to omit such details; silence on the matter heightens the reader’s sense of Edwin’s hardship and loneliness. Yet it may have been one such companion who warned Edwin of Rædwald’s potential treachery.[[145]](#footnote-145) Edwin was reluctant to break faith with his protector, as seen in the speech Bede ascribes to him:

***HE* II.12** Gratias quidem ago beniuolentiae tuae; non tamen hoc facere possum quod suggeris, ut pactum quod cum tanto rege inii ipse primus irritum faciam, cum ille mihi nil mali fecerit, nil adhuc inimicitiarum intulerit. Quin potius, si moriturus sum, ille me magis quam ignobilior quisque morti tradat. Quo enim nunc **fugiam**, qui per omnes Brittaniae prouincias tot annorum temporumque curriculis **uagabundus** hostium uitabam insidias?

I thank you for your goodwill, but I cannot do what you say, as I should have to be the first to break the compact which I made with this great king; he has done me no wrong nor shown any enmity towards me so far. If I am to die, let me rather die by his hand than at the hands of some meaner person. Whither am I now to **fly** seeing that I have been **wandering** for long years throughout all the kingdoms of Britain, trying to avoid the snares of my enemies?[[146]](#footnote-146)

Once more we see Bede using a pair of forms derived from *fugio* and *vagor* in close association, further adding biblical resonance to his narrative on Edwin’s exile. Indeed, Edwin’s words express the depths of suffering and mental anguish he has undergone. His despondency and frustration are evident in his lack of potential refuge; if he tries to avoid Rædwald’s treachery, few options remain in which he might seek sanctuary. Edwin’s years of wandering and acquiescence to Rædwald’s betrayal powerfully convey the emotional burden of exile: endlessly hunted, seeking protection from the violence of others, and so at the mercy of his protectors. For Edwin, leaving Rædwald would mean risking a baser death than murder by a king. Bede thus reveals to us Edwin’s thoughts on honourable death while accentuating the continuous threats to life which exile entails.[[147]](#footnote-147) Edwin would prefer to risk death in Rædwald’s court than to return to the life of the hunted exile. Through biblical allusions and careful selection, Bede dramatically and effectively evoked the torments which exile afforded to Edwin, with a poignancy that no reader could miss.

Bede informs that Edwin, after spurning the warning of his friend, remained outdoors to contemplate his situation and lament his lot. The young exile is then faced a vision in the form of a man who made promises to help secure Edwin’s safety and future success.[[148]](#footnote-148) Edwin agrees that he would obey anyone who helped him in this and is given a sign by the spirit messenger: the placing of the stranger’s right hand upon his head.

***HE* II.12** Quo accepto responso, confestim is qui loquebatur cum eo **inposuit dexteram suam capiti eius** dicens: ‘Cum hoc ergo tibi signum aduenerit, memento huius temporis ac loquellae nostrae, et ea quae nunc promittis, adimplere ne differas.’

Upon this answer the one who was speaking to him immediately **laid his right hand on Edwin’s head** and said, ‘When this sign shall come to you, remember this occasion and our conversation, and do not hesitate to fulfil what you are now promising.’[[149]](#footnote-149)

This action has striking resonances of Biblical blessings and appointments to leadership.[[150]](#footnote-150) For instance, it is seen in the blessing by Jacob of Ephraim and Manasses (Gen. 48:13-19), as well as the blessing by Moses of Joshua (Num. 27:18-23 and Deut. 34:9).[[151]](#footnote-151) In both instances, those blessed by the laying of hands upon their heads are placed as leaders of their people. Ephraim, although the younger brother of Manasses, is blessed by Jacob’s right hand, which carried a stronger blessing than that of the left hand placed upon Manasses. When Jacob’s son Joseph protested at the placement of his father’s right hand upon Ephraim, Jacob said, referring to the future of Ephraim’s people:

**Gn 49:19** scio fili mi scio et iste quidem erit in populos et multiplicabitur sed frater eius iunior maior illo erit et semen illius crescet in gentes

I know, my son, I know: and this also shall become a people, and shall be multiplied; but his younger brother shall be greater than he; and his seed shall grow into nations.

The laying of Jacob’s right hand upon Ephraim made Ephraim the founder of a strong Israelite tribe. One of Ephraim’s descendents was Joshua, who was in turn made leader of the Israelites by Moses’ laying of hands upon him, although not specifically by Moses’ right hand.[[152]](#footnote-152)

It is intriguing and significant that Bede chose to recount this detail concerning the laying of hands in Edwin’s exile vision. The anonymous *Vita Gregorii* composed at Whitby presents a distinct, earlier account of the same episode.[[153]](#footnote-153) There, the anonymous author claimed to draw upon ‘ancient tradition’ in the story of Edwin’s spirit messenger.[[154]](#footnote-154) It seems, perhaps, that Edwin’s exile experience had developed into an oral story shared in seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria, indicating that the importance of this episode in the king’s life was widely appreciated prior to the writings of either Bede or the Whitby monk.[[155]](#footnote-155) The Whitby account of the messenger does not mention the laying of hands, though it does stipulate that Edwin was to obey ‘him who first appears to you in this form and with this sign’ (*qui tibi primo cum hac specie et signo apparebit*).[[156]](#footnote-156) The sign the Whitby author refers to is a cross above the messenger’s head; the messenger is then said to have been Paulinus himself. Bede, in contrast, does not name Paulinus as Edwin’s spirit messenger, and presents a distinctly different sign by which Edwin may recognize his saviour and recall his oath to obey him.

Bede does not appear to have read or otherwise used the Whitby *Vita Gregorii* in composing the *HE*.[[157]](#footnote-157) If different versions of the Edwin story were circulating in Northumbria then Bede may have drawn from a story that diverged from the Whitby author. Bede would surely also have taken inspiration from his background in biblical scholarship, adapting some form of the mysterious encounter to more fully resonate with blessings found in the Hebrew Bible. We should note Bede’s extensive use of quotations and reminiscences from the scriptures elsewhere in the *HE*, his selective use of sources and traditions, and his manipulation of other Edwin traditions.[[158]](#footnote-158) Bede recrafted events in his history to promote his aims: the detail concerning the stranger’s right hand is the sort of feature which we might expect Bede to borrow from scripture in constructing his ecclesiastical history.[[159]](#footnote-159) This blessing by the messenger encourages the reader to view connections between Edwin and Old Testament founding fathers, and to perhaps extrapolate from these connections that Bede considered the Christian Northumbrians (nominally post-627) as a newly founded people with similar Biblical reminiscences.

In Bede’s account, Edwin swears an oath to the spirit messenger who then disappears; Bede relates that the vanishing of the messenger was intended to make Edwin aware that his mysterious visitor was, indeed, a spirit.[[160]](#footnote-160) Edwin is shortly informed that Rædwald has decided not betray him to King Ӕthelfrith; this marks the initial fulfillment of the spirit messenger’s agreement with Edwin. As well as sparing Edwin’s life, Rædwald assists Edwin in gaining the throne from Ӕthelfrith, who was slain in battle.[[161]](#footnote-161) At the deciding battle at the river Idle, Rædwald’s son Regenhere was killed, which may partly explain why Edwin was later able to succeed Rædwald as the most powerful king in Britain.[[162]](#footnote-162) Bede states that all of these outcomes were the result of divine causation, foretold by the spirit messenger.

Ac sic Eduini **iuxta oraculum[[163]](#footnote-163) quod acceperat** non tantum regis sibi infesti insidias uitauit, uerum etiam eidem peremto in regni gloriam successit.

Thus Edwin, **in accordance with the vision** he had received, not only avoided the snares of the king his enemy but after he was killed succeeded him on the throne.[[164]](#footnote-164)

With this statement on the providential nature of events following on from Edwin’s exile vision, Bede concludes the analeptic interjection in Edwin’s tale. Bede then moves his narrative forward in time, back to the narrative present, and initiates the closing stage of his frame narrative by continuing to describe Paulinus’ attempts to convert the restored exile Edwin.:

...ingrediens ad eum quadam die uir Dei **inposuit dexteram capiti eius** et, an hoc signum agnosceret, requisiuit.

One day Paulinus came to him and, **placing his right hand on the king’s head**, asked him if he recognized this sign.[[165]](#footnote-165)

This act, fulfilling Edwin’s exile vision at the court of Rædwald, brings the Northumbrian king to finally agree to convert; Edwin acknowledges and keeps the oath he had made to the spirit messenger.

Benedicta Ward has argued that Bede rarely included miraculous stories for the sheer promotion of wonder, but instead used such episodes to underscore the integral role of miracles in the relationship between God and men.[[166]](#footnote-166) We have seen how Bede deployed analepsis in a frame narrative to connect Paulinus’ efforts with the same divine purpose that sent the spirit messenger who visited Edwin in exile. The analepsis also served as the mechanism by which Bede was able to convey the hardships of Edwin’s exile and the blessing of the king in biblical terms; this presents opportunities for discussion of typological connections which will be addressed below. In the analepsis, Bede implies the providential nature of Edwin’s experience in exile and its consequences, specifically his conversion by Paulinus. Bede wished to portray Edwin as God’s chosen and Paulinus’ mission as God’s work on earth; Bede thus uses the story about Edwin’s exile to evoke these concepts in the minds of his readers. No wonder, then, that Bede couches this episode from Edwin’s story in a frame narrative that gives central position to the king’s exile and mystical vision.

Bede went further to promote the crucial importance of Edwin’s exile experience by surrounding the analeptic passage with two thematic envelope structures, one based on kingship and the other on insular connections with Rome. I will now discuss these envelope structures, exploring how they contribute to the prominence of Edwin’s exile in the *HE*. Examining the two envelopes in turn also reveals how Bede implemented these constructions to promote his views on Christian kingship and unification under Roman Christian doctrine, consequently tying these outcomes of Edwin’s reign to his life as an exile.

**2.3: Envelope One: Warlike Christian Kingship**

In Bede’s frame structure surrounding the analeptic climax of Edwin’s exile experience (II.12), we find two envelopes surrounding the analepsis. In poetics, envelopes are devices which create repetition before and after a set of stanzas or lines; William Blake’s *Tiger* is a famous example, wherein the first and last stanzas are nearly identical.[[167]](#footnote-167) ‘Envelope’ is also a useful term for describing enclosing repetitions in narrative prose, and ‘thematic envelope’ may more clearly suggest topical repetition rather than absolute duplication. This last understanding of ‘thematic envelope’ is the meaning which the present work adopts. In the case of Bede’s account of Edwin, we have two such thematic envelopes: a kingship envelope and a Rome-based envelope. Although present within **Fig. 1** given above, the envelopes may be more clearly understood by the following diagrams:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Fig. 2 – Kingship Envelope** |  |  |  |  |
| II.9, Edwin as powerful king | =======🡺 | II.12, Exile | 🡸========= | II.13-16, Edwin as Christian King |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Fig. 3 – Rome/Papal Envelope** |  |  |  |  |
| II.10-11, Papal Letters | =======🡺 | II.12, Exile | 🡸========= | II.16, *tufa* description, and II.17-19, Papal Letters |
|  |  |  |  |  |

In both instances, the episode of Edwin’s exile is enclosed by similar elements in the content of the preceding and following chapters. I will discuss the kingship envelope first, and examine the Rome-based envelope in the next section.

Prior to his account of Edwin, Bede presents the reader with a list of English kings who had held extensive power or *imperium* over Britain.[[168]](#footnote-168) Bede’s first mention of Edwin occurs in this list of eight overlords. While Bede is generally sparing with his comments within the list, Bede included far more detail on Edwin here than with any other over-king.

…quintus Aeduini rex Nordanhymbrorum gentis, id est eius quae ad borealem Humbrae fluminis plagam inhabitat, **maiore potentia** cunctis qui Brittaniam incolunt, Anglorum pariter et Brettonum, populis praefuit, praeter Cantuariis tantum, necnon et Meuanias Brettonum insulas, quae inter Hiberniam et Brittaniam sitae sunt, Anglorum subiecit imperio…

...the fifth was Edwin, king of the Northumbrians, the nation inhabiting the district north of the Humber. Edwin had **still greater power** and ruled over all the inhabitants of Britain, English and Britons alike, except for Kent only. He even brought under English rule the Mevanian Islands (Anglesey and Man) which lie between England and Ireland and belong to the Britons.[[169]](#footnote-169)

Stenton pointed out that Edwin’s reign came to be seen as an important factor in the movement toward English unity, bringing southern kingdoms into association with the North: ‘undoubtedly the head of the greatest confederation which as yet had arisen in England’.[[170]](#footnote-170) This view is emphasized by the construction of Bede’s list, which sets Edwin apart from his predecessors in regard to his dominion and conquests. Bede points out that Edwin’s sway was greater than those kings before him but that his influence ended among the English with Kent. This was possibly due to geographic distance and relative power of Kent, but may also have been the result of political relations established through the marriage of Edwin to the Kentish princess Ӕthelburh, discussed below.[[171]](#footnote-171)

Edwin’s primacy as the first Anglo-Saxon king to achieve such widespread control is highlighted in Bede’s list of rulers who held *imperium*. Bede expresses Edwin’s primacy again four chapters later (II.9) in the formation of his kingship envelope structure surrounding Edwin’s exile. Here Bede refers to Edwin’s historic position as a ‘first’ among English kings:

Cui uidelicet regi, in **auspicium** suscipiendae fidei et regni caelestis, potestas etiam terreni creuerat imperii, ita ut **quod nemo Anglorum ante eum**, omnes Brittaniae fines, qua uel ipsorum uel Brettonum prouinciae habitabant, sub dicione acciperet. Quin et Meuanias insulas, sicut et supra docuimus, imperio subiugauit Anglorum.

The king’s earthly power had increased as an **augury** that he was to become a believer and have a share in the heavenly kingdom. So, **like no other English king before him**, he held under his sway the whole realm of Britain, not only English kingdoms but those ruled over by the Britons as well. He even brought the islands of Anglesey and Man under his power as we have said before.[[172]](#footnote-172)

Significantly, Bede does not merely restate his comments from II.5 here, but instead gives a glossed entry that accounts for Edwin’s pre-eminence in divine terms, his earthly strength foretelling his conversion. Still, Bede’s repetition of statements from only a few chapters earlier reminds the reader of who Edwin was, defining the king by his remarkable accomplishments and introducing the main narrative on the king’s life and rule.[[173]](#footnote-173) This repetition clearly lays out the most apparent and ‘earthly’ of the king’s accomplishments and underscores Edwin’s unique position as the first Anglo-Saxon king to wield such power.

Bede was not alone in his esteem for the chronological primacy of Edwin’s status. The author of the anonymous *Vita Gregorii* also presents Edwin’s earthly power in terms of surpassing his predecessors. After noting that Edwin was the second Anglo-Saxon king to embrace Christianity (the first being Ӕthelbert), the anonymous Whitby author marks Edwin as a pioneer of English rule.

rex **precepit** tam sapientia singularis quam etiam sceptro dicionis regie, a tempore quo gens Angulorum hanc ingreditur insulam

From the time when the English race came to this island, King Edwin **held the preeminence** as much for the wisdom as for the extent of his royal and single-handed sway.[[174]](#footnote-174)

Edwin’s historic significance is clearly articulated in the *HE* and the *Vita Gregorii*, suggesting the existence of continuities in the varied traditions concerning the king. Edwin was unique and special for his ‘preeminence’, and both authors make this point to substantiate the attention they give Edwin as a subject for discussion.

Bede initiates his account of Edwin by highlighting his strengths as a successful warrior king.[[175]](#footnote-175) However, Edwin’s status as one holding *imperium* followed between twelve and twenty-three years of wandering in exile. Bede’s decision to begin his narrative with a description of Edwin’s warlike qualities might be regarded as a straightforward introduction for the reader, giving some understanding of Edwin’s importance in the history of the English people. This notion has merit,[[176]](#footnote-176) but there are two pieces of evidence that suggest Bede was writing with a plan concerning his upcoming chapter on Edwin’s exile.

The first point to consider is that Bede frequently alludes to Edwin’s preeminence among English kings. Recurring statements that Edwin was the first to wield a certain level of power over English and British kingdoms are mirrored later in the analeptic climax (II.12) of the frame narrative.[[177]](#footnote-177) Further to promising safety from Rædwald, the spirit messenger included the following assurances in his agreement with Edwin.

‘Quod si etiam regem te futurum extinctis hostibus in ueritate promittat, ita ut non solum **omnes tuos progenitores sed et omnes, qui ante te reges in gente Anglorum fuerant, potestate transcendas**?’ At Eduini constantior interrogando factus non dubitauit promittere, quin ei, qui tanta sibi beneficia donaret, dignis ipse gratiarum actionibus responderet.

‘And what’, said the stranger, ‘if he assured you that your enemies would be destroyed and that you would be a king who **surpassed in power not only all your ancestors, but also all who have reigned before you over the English**?’ Edwin, encouraged by his questions, did not hesitate to promise that he would be suitably grateful to anyone who offered him such benefits.[[178]](#footnote-178)

For the reader, this statement within the analeptic climax explains what had been divulged earlier. Edwin’s successes, previously unaccounted for, are now revealed to have been the result of his promise to the spirit messenger; as William Chaney has noted, extended realms and influence were held to be divine rewards to faithful Christian kings in the early medieval period.[[179]](#footnote-179) Furthermore, the king’s eventual preeminence in extending his royal power is restated, resonating with Bede’s earlier discussion on the king. By including this detail in the spirit messenger’s speech, Bede again reveals his high regard for chronological primacy while tying the analepsis of his frame narrative to the initial formation of his envelope structure on kingship.

Contributing further to the kingship envelope structure are Bede’s inclusions about Edwin’s role as a Christian king. Here we should consider Bede’s statement that Edwin’s success was a sign of his impending conversion to Christianity: ‘as an augury that he was to become a believer’ (*in auspicium suscipiendae fidei*).[[180]](#footnote-180) This informs the reader that the king did not accomplish his goals as a reward for piety, but rather as an indicator of faith to come.[[181]](#footnote-181) Edwin’s conversion to Christianity, as we have seen, hinged upon his mystical experience while in exile. Bede’s mention of augury thus portends not only the events of Edwin’s life, but also the story of Edwin’s exile and conversion yet to be told. The initial narrative about Edwin’s success as a warrior king in II.9 is thus linked once more to the analepsis concerning his vision in exile in II.12.

The omen of Edwin’s eventual conversion similarly links Bede’s depiction of Edwin as a warrior king to the second frame of the kingship-based envelope structure: Christian kingship. Bede saw kings as moral leaders as well as earthly protectors, forming a link between their subjects and God.[[182]](#footnote-182) After concluding the analepsis and returning to the narrative present, Bede depicts and praises the converted Edwin’s impact in evangelizing in II.13-16. As King of Northumbria, Edwin’s conversion soon led to a series of mass baptisms within his kingdom. The success of Paulinus and Edwin stands in stark contrast to Paulinus’ previous missionary efforts. In the first section of the envelope, Bede informs us that Edwin’s marriage to Æthelburh had resulted in the arrival of Paulinus at the king’s court.[[183]](#footnote-183) Paulinus had been sent by Gregory the Great in the second mission to the English in 601.[[184]](#footnote-184) Arriving in Northumbria c.625, Paulinus immediately set about proselytizing, but with limited initial success.

Sed, sicut apostolus ait, quamuis multo tempore illo laborante in uerbo, ‘Deus saeculi huius excaecauit mentes infidelium, ne eis fulgeret inluminatio euangelii gloriae Christi.’

But although he toiled hard and long in preaching the word, yet as the apostle says, ‘the god of this world blinded the minds of them that believed not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.’[[185]](#footnote-185)

At that time the Northumbrians were not listening to Paulinus despite his efforts. Paulinus’ difficulties seem to have stemmed in part from Edwin’s own hesitance. Bede emphasizes the king’s reluctance by including the story of an assassination attempt made on Edwin.[[186]](#footnote-186) In this tradition, a wounded Edwin swears to Paulinus that he will adopt Christianity if he survives and succeeds in killing those who had plotted his death. At the story’s end, despite surviving the attack and exacting vengeance, Edwin continues to deliberate at length on whether to convert or not.

Bede’s repeated comments on Edwin’s unhurried ruminations, coupled with Paulinus’ general failure to convert the Northumbrians, reveals the author’s thoughts on the spiritual role of kings. In his 1970 Ford Lectures on kingship, J.M. Wallace-Hadrill noted Bede’s estimation of the crucial role kings played in the adoption of Christianity:

Bede’s reading had taught him that peoples – and the *Ecclesiastical History* is about a people – were brought to Christianity, and sustained in it to their prosperity or plunged from it into disaster, by kings. Kings were the focal point of conversion; without them, the propagation of the new faith and the encouragement of its teachers were inconceivable.[[187]](#footnote-187)

Rosalind Hill further argues that early conversion efforts would have been safest and ‘most satisfactory’ if supported by rulers, and that traditional loyalty would have brought those living under said rulers to the fold.[[188]](#footnote-188) Barbara Yorke also notes the critical role of kings to conversion efforts, with protective overlordship of missionaries and the establishment of bishoprics and church lands.[[189]](#footnote-189) It is unsurprising, then, that Edwin’s people had initially been as resistant to conversion as their king.

Bede, reluctant to present bad examples, does not overemphasize the king’s responsibility for Paulinus’ earlier failed attempts; instead he presents Edwin as ‘a man of great natural sagacity’, calmly and thoroughly considering his options.[[190]](#footnote-190) In the first frame of the kingship envelope (II.9), Bede presents Edwin’s warlike qualities and successful conquests in a way that expressed the breadth of king’s authority. By placing Edwin’s conversion in the second frame of the kingship envelope, Bede was able to more specifically convey how the king pressed his influence to promote the Roman mission. Bede shows Edwin’s positive impact in the support shown by his chief counsellors in II.13.[[191]](#footnote-191) Here the famous analogy of human life as a sparrow flying through a hall in winter encourages Edwin’s counsellors to agree with the king’s adoption of the new religion.[[192]](#footnote-192) Attending this counsel was the chief religious leader of Northumbria’s pagan tradition. This priest, named Coifi, listened to Paulinus’ explanation of Christianity and then abandoned idolatry, broke formerly observed taboos and desecrated a pagan temple to signify his commitment.[[193]](#footnote-193) Bede does not mention any dissent among Edwin’s counselors, and so implies that agreement was universal among the Northumbrian magnates to adopt Christianity.[[194]](#footnote-194)

Bede’s kingship-based envelope structure thus frames Edwin’s exile experience between a warrior king whose own reluctance to adopt Christianity is prohibiting the conversion of his people generally, and a converted king spurring even the most devout pagans to accept the new faith. The conversion of the Northumbrians is, in Bede’s presentation, uppermost among the changes which resulted from Edwin’s exile. The widespread nature of Northumbrian conversion, as Bede portrays it, is first indicated with Edwin’s baptism at Easter 627: Bede says that Edwin was accompanied by all of his nobles and a great number of commoners.[[195]](#footnote-195) He goes on to describe the intense desire of the Northumbrian people to receive baptism. In one instance, word of Paulinus’ presence at the royal vill at Yeavering resulted in droves of converts descending upon the palace; Bede accentuates Northumbrian zealotry in his description of the thirty-six days of catechizing and baptism which followed.[[196]](#footnote-196)

Edwin’s conversion, brought about by his recollection of the exile vision, clearly influenced more than just his optimates and advisors; it also enabled Paulinus’ mission in Northumbria to succeed. The king’s support also allowed the mission to extend beyond Northumbria’s borders.[[197]](#footnote-197) In II.15, Bede records that Edwin convinced Eorpwold, King of the East Angles, to convert to Christianity.[[198]](#footnote-198) Here we see a further link between Bede’s envelope structure based on kingship and Edwin’s exile vision. Eorpwold, as well as being subservient to Edwin, was also a son of King Rædwald. Bede records in the analepsis of his frame narrative that Rædwald had served as host to Edwin during the young Deiran’s exile and that Rædwald had helped Edwin to reclaim his rights in Northumbria through military aid.[[199]](#footnote-199)

This connection between the Northumbrian and East Anglian courts must have been established during Edwin’s exile and strengthened during his reign. Bede tells us that Rædwald had practised some form of Christianity, though without abandoning his idols completely.[[200]](#footnote-200) As Rædwald’s son, Eorpwold was at least superficially acquainted with Christianity prior to Edwin’s efforts. However, Bede shapes his account to demonstrate that Eorpwold owed his salvation to Edwin. Bede’s kingship-based envelope structure, in this instance espousing Edwin’s qualities as a Christian king, is thus further associated with the climactic analepsis: Edwin returns as an evangelist to the East Anglian court which had preserved him in exile. We should recall that Edwin held *imperium* over all kingdoms excepting Kent; it may therefore be argued that Eorpwold’s decision to convert was a deferential gesture toward a superior political and military power as much as a sincere adoption of the new faith. In either case, the immediate result is the same. Bede is clear that Edwin’s strength and resulting influence stemmed from meeting the terms of his agreement with the spirit messenger. In recording the conversion of Eorpwold in II.15,Bede portrays Edwin as an ideal for how Christian kings should use their strength and influence to spread the gospel.

In II.16, Bede recounts Edwin’s presence at a communal baptism held by Paulinus in the kingdom of Lindsey, emphasizing Edwin’s active role in bringing other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to Christianity.[[201]](#footnote-201) This is the closing section of Bede’s kingship-based envelope structure. From this discussion, it is clear that Bede constructed this literary device in a way which frames the analeptic episode of Edwin’s exile between the bounds of warrior and Christian kingship. In doing so, Bede was able to strengthen the sense of a divine hand at work in Edwin’s life while presenting an exposition of the importance of the relationship between rulers and the growing English church.

**2.4: Envelope II: the Papacy and Rome**

Bede’s account of Edwin’s exile is bounded by one other envelope structure. Following the first section of the kingship-based envelope structure (II.9), Bede includes two undated letters from Pope Boniface to Edwin and his wife Ӕthelburh. In the first letter Pope Boniface encourages Edwin to adopt Christianity.[[202]](#footnote-202) In the second, Pope Boniface’s letter to Ӕthelburh, the pope implores the queen to help ensure Edwin’s adoption of Christianity, noting that until her husband accepts the new religion their marriage cannot be considered legitimate by the Church.[[203]](#footnote-203) These letters, preceding the analeptic climax of Edwin’s exile, form the opening section of a Rome-based envelope in Bede’s chapters concerning Edwin, and in conjunction with other papal letters given after Edwin’s exile episode help to form a Rome-based envelope. I have already provided a diagram to demonstrate this envelope, but include it again here for clarity:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Fig. 3 – Rome/Papal Envelope** |  |  |  |  |
| II.10-11, Papal Letters | =======🡺 | II.12, Exile | 🡸========= | II.16, Roman *tufa* description, and II.17-19, Papal Letters |
|  |  |  |  |  |

By including papal correspondence with Edwin in the *HE*, Bede underscores the newfound importance of the Northumbrian king and his kingdom while introducing a relationship between Northumbria and the Holy See at Rome.[[204]](#footnote-204) Patrick Wormald notes that Bede ‘crystallized the enthusiasm with which the Anglo-Saxons, like the other early Germanic peoples, threw themselves into the balance of the old Romano-Christian world.’[[205]](#footnote-205) Bede’s own enthusiasm for Rome may be seen in his recording of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims to Rome,[[206]](#footnote-206) and may owe much to the legacy of Benedict Biscop. Biscop founded the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, bringing books and artwork from Rome for the edification of the monks living there, Bede among them.[[207]](#footnote-207) Bede’s worldview has been discussed by Arthur Holder who argues that in Bede’s sense of space ‘a cosmic centre lies along an axis that runs between Jerusalem and Rome.’[[208]](#footnote-208)

Bede clearly considered these papal letters to be of vital importance as evidence of Edwin’s heightened status and the developing links between the Roman Church and the Northumbrian mission which these letters revealed. D.P. Kirby suggests that Bede’s reliance on oral tradition for this period of history made these letters valuable in adding legitimacy to his narrative.[[209]](#footnote-209) However, I suggest that there are additional reasons for Bede’s choice to include these letters within Bede’s narrative. Consider the following extract from Pope Boniface’s letter to Edwin which describes the power of God over worldly affiars:

cui etiam **summitates imperii** **rerumque** **potestates** submissae sunt, quia eius dispositione omnium praelatio regnorum conceditur.

To Him also **the greatest empires** **and the powers of the world** are subject, because it is by His disposition that all rule is bestowed.[[210]](#footnote-210)

This sentence attributes worldly success and power to God, and is included in a letter to a king who Bede tells us was particularly powerful.[[211]](#footnote-211) Pope Boniface thus offers an explanation to Edwin for his success and so encourages the king to acknowledge and worship Christ. Bede’s inclusion of this letter does more than support the veracity of Bede’s narrative; it also heightens the reader’s esteem for Edwin as a figure of interest to Rome while serving as a proof text of Rome’s early concern for the spiritual welfare of Northumbria.

There is one further point from this statement which may support an argument that Bede was formulating a Rome-based envelope structure. Pope Boniface’s reference to ‘the greatest empires’ may have aroused thoughts of the Roman Empire which once extended as far as the Antonine Wall and which had left textual and visual remains throughout Europe and England.[[212]](#footnote-212) Pope Boniface, as bishop of the Holy See, would have been cognizant of the former glories of Rome and may have envisaged these when writing to Edwin; what greater empire had existed in Western Europe than Rome? Ideas of early Anglo-Saxon *Romanitas* are discussed in further detail below, but for now I would suggest that echoes of the Roman Empire would have resonated with Bede’s contemporaries as well as residents of early seventh-century Northumbria.

In a second extract from this letter, Pope Boniface depicts God’s method of making Himself known to the ignorant:

quia tamen eius humanitas ad insinua/tionem sui reseratis cordis ianuis quae de semet ipsa proferetur secreta humanis mentibus inspiratione clementer infundit

Yet, in His goodness, He opens the doors of the heart so that He Himself may enter, and by His secret inspiration pours into the human heart a revelation of Himself.[[213]](#footnote-213)

Pope Boniface once more presents God as taking a hand in the affairs of men so that they might know Him. This statement within the Rome-based envelope is particularly poignant when the events recounted in the analepsis are understood. In Pope Boniface’s statement lies the suggestion of divine mercy, foreshadowing Bede’s later narrative on the events which took place during Edwin’s exile. The secret inspiration and revelation expressed by Pope Boniface, when juxtaposed with the analeptic climax of II.12, contribute to a sense of prophecy and providence surrounding Edwin’s exile and his nocturnal vision of the messenger sent by God.

In II.11, the second of Pope Boniface’s letters, addressed to Edwin’s wife Æthelburh, reminds the reader that Edwin’s conversion was partly due to his marriage to that Kentish princess. By including this letter in his work, Bede alludes further to the role of revelation and grace in the events of Edwin’s life, foreshadowing his narrative on the king’s exile and conversion:

ut profecto sacrae seripturae testimonium per te expletum indubitanter perclareat: ‘Saluabitur uir infidelis per mulierem fidelem.

Then the testimony of holy scripture will be clearly and abundantly fulfilled in you: ‘The unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife.’[[214]](#footnote-214)

Edwin’s marriage to a Christian would affect his reception of the concurrent missionary efforts of Paulinus, and the pope stresses this point in his letter. Of importance to the present discussion is the location of this letter in Book II. The letter to Æthelburh immediately precedes Bede’s account of Edwin’s exile in the analeptic climax. Bede chose to interrupt the narrative sequence of his account of Edwin’s life with a letter that might have been easily placed at either the beginning or end of the king’s story. This is significant, because Bede’s decision to include Pope Boniface’s letter to Æthelburh at this particular point in Edwin’s story heightens the providential air of his account of Edwin’s exile and conversion.

Pope Boniface’s composition quotes a relevant extract from Paul’s first letter to the early Corinthian Church: ‘The unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife.’[[215]](#footnote-215) This quotation has obvious relevance to the circumstances of Æthelburh and Edwin, but bears further significance by Bede’s placement of this letter (II.11) immediately prior to the analepsis in which Edwin’s conversion is secured by the spirit messenger (II.12). Paul’s mid-first-century letter concerns difficulties with the early church at Corinth as well as the Apostle’s own difficulties.[[216]](#footnote-216) By preceding his account of the conversion of Edwin and the Northumbrians with Pope Boniface’s letter, Bede foreshadows events with the suggestion of prophecy. Bede presents biblical resonances between the apostolic Church in Corinth and the seventh-century Church in Northumbria. Indeed, the events portrayed in II.12-16 closely follow patterns found in scripture. Bede thus encourages the reader to perceive providence in Edwin’s story, not least in his exile experience, and to understand this divine intervention as a force that results in later religious changes made in Northumbria.

Indeed, Bede’s placement of these papal letters was calculated to give Heilsgeschichtlich purpose to Edwin’s subsequent exile story. At the beginning of his account of Edwin’s exile, Bede clearly recalls the letters of Pope Boniface to Edwin’s experience:

Haec quidem memoratus papa Bonifatius de salute regis Eduini ac gentis ipsius litteris agebat. Sed et oraculum caeleste, quod illi quondam exulanti apud Redualdum regem Anglorum pietas diuina reuelare dignata est, non minimum ad suscipienda uel intellegenda doctrinae monita salutaris **sensum** iuuit **illius**.

Such was the letter Pope Boniface wrote concerning the salvation of King Edwin and his race. But a heavenly vision which God in His mercy had deigned to reveal to Edwin when he was once in exile at the court of Rædwald, king of the Angles, helped him in no small measure to understand and accept **in his heart** the counsels of salvation.[[217]](#footnote-217)

Bede forms a transition between the two letters and the events of Edwin’s exile by acknowledging the pope’s influence while emphasizing the importance of events in the king’s life which had already come to pass. Bede’s words are particularly reminiscent of Pope Boniface’s statement that God ‘opens the doors of the heart...and by His secret inspiration pours into the human heart a revelation of Himself’.[[218]](#footnote-218) Colgrave and Mynors translate both *sensum* and *mens* to mean ‘heart’, although ‘thought’, ‘understanding’, ‘feeling’ and ‘conscience’ are equally good definitions for either word.[[219]](#footnote-219) In any event, Bede’s comment in II.12 echoes the sentiment of Pope Boniface’s letter and further ties the initial Rome-based frame of the envelope structure with the analeptic account of Edwin’s exile.

Bede’s inclusion of these two papal letters reveals an attempt to bolster the authority of his own account, but also heightens the reader’s curiosity, building up to the analeptic climax of the frame narrative and drawing the reader’s focus to God’s concern with Edwin. The letters of Pope Boniface in II.10 and II.11 form the opening section of the Rome-based envelope structure. The closing section of this device forms when Bede concludes his story of Edwin’s life. Edwin’s reign is portrayed as a time of unusual security in the king’s domain; Bede famously relates how ‘a woman with a new-born child could walk throughout the island from sea to sea and take no harm’.[[220]](#footnote-220) Bede follows this depiction of peace and order with statements suggesting that Edwin was following or reinstating Roman practices in Northumbria.

Tantum uero in regno excellentiae habuit, ut non solum in pugna ante illum **uexilla gestarentur**, sed et tempore pacis equitantem inter ciuitates siue uillas aut prouincias suas cum ministris semper **antecedere signifer** consuesset, necnon et incedente illo ubilibet per plateas illud **genus uexilli, quod Romani tufam, Angli appellant thuuf,** ante eum ferri solebat.

So great was his majesty in his realm that not only **were banners carried** before him in battle, but even in time of peace, as he rode about among his cities, estatees, and kingdoms with his thegns, he always used to be preceded **by a standard-bearer**. Further, when he walked anywhere along the roads, there used to be carried before him the **type of standard which the Romans call a *tufa* and the English call a *thuf***.[[221]](#footnote-221)

Bede mentions here that Edwin had adopted the custom of having a *thuuf*, not unlike the Roman *tufa*, carried before him whenever he walked along roadways. André Crépin states that inclusion of this detail regarding Edwin’s reign was meant to link English customs with Roman institutions.[[222]](#footnote-222) Bede is careful to specify that Edwin was taking part in a Roman custom. Bede’s comments on the *tufa* strongly suggest that Edwin’s aspirations for peace and order were somehow connected to the king’s *Romanitas*, and an attempt to reclaim the glories of a Golden Age. It seems that Bede is implying a return, to some extent, of the Roman Empire, reflected in the peace, order, and customs of Edwin’s reign. In his recent book on kings as peacemakers, Paul Kershaw states ‘The relationship of *pax* to *imperium* that Bede’s image of Edwin’s progress through the Northumbrian countryside sought to evoke has its roots in the Roman past.’[[223]](#footnote-223) We should recall Bede’s earlier statements on Edwin’s extensive power over other kingdoms, as well as the *summitates imperii* in the first letter of Pope Boniface presented in the opening section of the Rome-based envelope. Bede promotes the Christian King Edwin as a participant in the restoration of a Roman ideal in England, both in outward display, breadth of dominion, and maintenance of order.

Bede’s comment that Edwin’s standard resembled a Roman *tufa* also serves as a reminder of the impact the wider world had upon Edwin, particularly during his travels in the South. There is some evidence, for instance, that the finds at Sutton Hoo were influenced by Roman art works and insignia; if Edwin was similarly influenced by the legacy of the Roman Empire, this may have been a result of his time as an exile at King Rædwald’s court in East Anglia and surviving practices from the Eastern Roman Empire there.[[224]](#footnote-224) Also, Edwin’s marriage to Ӕthelburh, a Kentish princess,[[225]](#footnote-225) would have furthered links with the South, as well as with the Merovingians across the Channel who had similarly retained Roman features in the development of their kingdom.[[226]](#footnote-226) In tandem with his acquaintance with Paulinus and the Roman remains and cultural continuities of Northumbria, Edwin may have modelled his appearance and rule on Roman sources in the South: sources which he would have been exposed to while an exile or as the result of southern contacts made during that period of his life.[[227]](#footnote-227)

Bede follows his presentation of Edwin’s *Romanitas* in II.16 with three chapters that include more papal letters. These letters form the closing frame of his Rome-based envelope structure. These papal letters were sent by Popes Honorius and John IV, addressed to Edwin (II.17), Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury (II.18) and the Irish people (II.19). The letter from Pope Honorius to Edwin is important to this discussion for three reasons. The first is in Pope Honorius’ comments concerning providence and kingship.

Sic enim uos reges esse cognoscitis, dum regem et Creatorem uestrum orthodoxa praedicatione edocti Deum uenerando creditis, eique, quod humana ualet condicio, mentis uestrae sinceram deuotionem exsoluitis.

You know that you are a king, only on condition that you have faith in your King and Creator (as you have been instructed by orthodox teaching to do) and, by offering worship to God, pay Him, so far as human conditions allow, the sincere devotion of your heart.[[228]](#footnote-228)

This extract is reminiscent of the words Pope Boniface directed to Edwin prior to the king’s conversion in II.10: Edwin’s earthly power is maintained at God’s discretion and is reliant upon his continued adherence to ‘orthodox teaching’. Edwin received orthodox instruction founded in Roman doctrine from Bishop Paulinus. The letter from Honorius reminds the reader that Edwin’s salvation and earthly power come from the Church in Rome. This Roman connection is emphasized further by the mention of Pope Gregory I:

Praedicatoris igitur uestri domini mei apostolicae memoriae Gregorii frequenter lectione occupati, prae oculis affectum doctrinae ipsius, quod pro uestris animabus libenter exercuit, habetote, quatinus eius oratio et regnum uestrum populumque augeat et uos omnipotenti Deo inreprehensibiles repraesentet.

So employ yourself in frequent readings from the works of Gregory, your evangelist and my lord, and keep before your eyes the love of that teaching which he gladly gave you for the sake of your souls: so his prayers may exalt both your kingdom and your people and present you faultless before the Almighty God.[[229]](#footnote-229)

Edwin owed his salvation not only to the missionary work of Paulinus, but ultimately to Pope Gregory the Great who had sent the Roman mission to England. Bede has much to say about Gregory the Great in the *HE*, and includes a lengthy account of Gregory’s life in II.1.[[230]](#footnote-230) The reader of Bede’s work is thus already familiar with Gregory before reaching the chapters concerning Edwin, and knows that Bede holds Gregory in the highest esteem. By including this letter, Bede offers a reminder to the reader of Gregory’s legacy and ties this legacy more strongly to the Northumbrian court of Edwin. This letter, by nature of its being from the Pope as well as through its content, contributes to the Rome-based envelope surrounding Edwin’s exile experience.

Bede uses two other letters to reinforce his Rome-based envelope structure around Edwin’s exile, each linked to the king’s conversion which his exile experience brought about. In the letter from Pope Honorius to Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury, the pope informs the archbishop that two pallia have been sent from Rome: one for the new metropolitan see at York and one for the metropolitan see at Canterbury. The pope explains that these vestments of office are sent as a matter of convenience.

Et tam iuxta uestram petitionem **quam filiorum nostrorum regum** uobis per praesenti nostra praeceptione, uice beati Petri apostolorum principis, auctoritatem tribuimus, ut quando unum ex uobis diuina ad se iusserit gratia euocari, is qui superstes fuerit alterum in loco defuncti debeat episcopum ordinare. Pro qua etiam re singula uestrae dilectioni pallia pro eadem ordinatione celbranda direximus, ut **per nostrae praeceptionis auctoritatem** possitis Deo placitam ordinationem efficere; quia, ut haec uobis concederemus, longa terrarum marisque interualla, quae inter nos ac uos obsistunt, ad haec nos condescendere coegerunt...

So in accordance with your request and **that of the kings our sons**, we grant you authority by these presents, in the name of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, that when God in His divine grace shall summon one of you to His presence, the one who remains may consecrate another bishop in place of the dead man. For this reason we have sent a pallium to each of you, beloved, so that you may carry out the consecration as God wills, **by our authority and command**. It is a long distance by sea and land which lies between us and you, which has compelled us to grant you this...[[231]](#footnote-231)

Sending two pallia to England would certainly eliminate the inconvenience of a journey to Rome and back, but sending one to York and one to Canterbury also reveals that the pope wished to create two equal provinces in England. Earlier in II.14, Bede stated that Edwin had established York as an episcopal see for Paulinus at the time of his baptism in 627.[[232]](#footnote-232) Bede also notes in II.16 that Paulinus’ evangelizing had resulted in a see at Lincoln, and that Paulinus had consecrated Archbishop Honorius there after the death of Justus, Archbishop of Canterbury.[[233]](#footnote-233) Bede presents the activities of the Church in the North as crucial to the maintenance and growth of English Christianity generally. The inclusion of Pope Honorius’ letter concerning the pallia thus functions as part of the Rome-based envelope surrounding the analepsis of Edwin’s exile. At the same time, it also reinforces Bede’s promotion of York’s religious authority within a unified English Church under Rome.

Strikingly, Honorius’ letter includes information concerning royal intervention in ecclesiastical affairs. Pope Honorius states that he sent the two pallia not only at the request of Archbishop Honorius, but also that of ‘the kings our sons’. This statement reveals that the pope had been in communication with both King Eadbald of Kent (616-640) and King Edwin, and that the newly converted royal houses were taking an active hand in the developing infrastructure of the Church in England. Evidence for royal participation in the growth of the Church is also seen in the letter from Pope Honorius to Edwin (II.17):

Ea uero, quae **a nobis pro uestris sacerdotibus ordinanda sperastis**, hoc pro fidei uestrae sinceritate, quae nobis multimoda relatione per praesentium portitores laudabiliter insinuata est, gratuito animo adtribuere ulla sine dilatione praeuidemus; et duo pallia utrorumque metropolitanorum, id est Honorio et Paulino, direximus...

We are preparing to concede you willingly and without delay **those rights which you hoped we should grant your bishops**: we do this on account of the sincerity of your faith which has been abundantly declared to us in terms of praise by the bearers of this letter. We are **also sending a pallium** for each of the two metropolitans, that is for Honorius and Paulinus...[[234]](#footnote-234)

Edwin’s active role in establishing the northern Church has been discussed already; his promotion of Paulinus’ missionary efforts and the spread of Christianity are the primary subjects of II.13-16 (the closing frame of Bede’s kingship envelope). Bede was writing at a time when negotiations were underway for Northumbria to be elevated as ‘an independent ecclesiastical province’ equal to the church at Canterbury; the theme of English unity under one church is prominent in the *HE*.[[235]](#footnote-235) Bede’s inclusion of these papal letters informs the reader that York and Northumbria had attained a legitimate claim to religious authority in England, and associates this claim with Edwin’s spiritual encounter in exile and conversion. Arguments for York’s ecclesiastical authority were not founded, then, in Bede’s time, but extended back to the earliest days of the English Church and the reign of a king whose life was shaped by providence.

Crucially, Bede’s inclusion of the letter from Honorius gives evidence that the origins of York’s eventual metropolitan status predate the heterodoxy of the Easter controversy between Roman and Ionan churchmen and settled at the Synod at Whitby in 664.[[236]](#footnote-236) Bede included a third letter in the closing frame of the Rome-based envelope structure. This letter is sent by Pope John IV to the ‘Irish race’ (*gens Scottorum*), reproving them for their erroneous calculation of the dating of Easter and warning them to avoid the dangers of Pelagianism.[[237]](#footnote-237) This letter appears awkwardly placed here at the concluding stages of Bede’s account of Edwin. Notably, the letter does not refer to Edwin, Northumbria, or the English Church, the prominent subjects of the second half of Book II. It is also possible that the letter was not written during Edwin’s lifetime: Pope John IV (640-642) succeeded Pope Severinus (640) whose brief papacy followed that of Pope Honorius (625-638). Bede tells us that Pope John IV wrote his letter while still pope-elect (*electus in pontificatum*)which suggests a date of 640, seven years after Edwin’s death.

Why then did Bede include this letter in his Rome-based envelope structure surrounding Edwin’s exile account? One possibility is that the letter, placed as it is toward the end of Book II, was meant to foreshadow events of Book III. Indeed, Book III is predominantly concerned with conflict between religious observances of Ionan and Roman doctrine, with the Synod at Whitby as its climax. However, Bede’s placement of the letter here also suggests that he viewed the papal letter as both relevant to Edwin’s story and in appropriate to the Rome-based envelope. Pope John IV’s letter presents arguments against perceived errors of the Irish churchmen; by including this letter, Bede presents a contrast to Edwin’s Roman orthodoxy and so draws attention to the Roman ties to Edwin’s faith and kingdom.[[238]](#footnote-238) The importance and relevance of this letter to the envelope structure lies in its presentation of a people in doctrinal opposition to Rome, highlighting Edwin’s adherence and promotion of the Roman mission while also introducing an element of disunity to be confronted later in Book III.

Here we should recognize that while Bede gives central importance to Edwin’s exile and ascribes events leading to Edwin’s conversion to God’s will, the exile and conversion of King Oswald (reigned 634-642) are only briefly mentioned in the account of that king’s life. Pope John IV’s letter to the Irish implicitly presents the key variable differentiating Edwin from Oswald: Edwin had been converted under the Roman mission originated by Pope Gregory the Great, whereas Oswald had been converted by Irish monks at Iona (III.1). It is important to mention this distinction here because it further explains Bede’s decision to centralize the analepsis of Edwin’s exile experience and to include Pope John IV’s letter within the Rome-based envelope structure.

The Roman roots of Edwin’s conversion and the Gregorian mission to England are crucial to Bede’s depiction of the king. Bede includes a great deal of information about Gregory within the *HE*, including a lengthy chapter on the pope’s life, a number of Gregory’s letters, and the mission Gregory sent to convert the English.[[239]](#footnote-239) In the first chapter of Book II, Bede shares a popular tradition concerning Gregory’s decision to send missionaries to England which makes specific reference to Edwin’s father, King Ælle, and the kingdom of Deira.[[240]](#footnote-240) Bede saw particularly strong connections between Rome, Northumbria and Edwin’s family, connections strengthened through Gregory’s vision and effort.

For Bede, Gregory represents Rome and the Church, and it is notable that Gregory is mentioned in two of the letters Bede included in his Rome-based envelope.[[241]](#footnote-241) Pope Honorius’ letter to Edwin (II.17) advises the king to refer to the works of Gregory, ‘your evangelist and my lord’.[[242]](#footnote-242) Gregory is also mentioned in Pope Honorius’ letter to Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury (II.18); the archbishop is encouraged to carry out his duties ‘following the rule of your master and head’.[[243]](#footnote-243) The thought of Gregory the Great, passed on through his writings, was formative to Bede’s own worldview and composition. Patrick Wormald has noted Bede’s references to Gregory in developing his theme of English Christian unity, while others have noted Gregory’s influence upon Bede’s ideology and writing style.[[244]](#footnote-244)

Despite Gregory’s influence, Paul Meyvaert’s 1964 Jarrow lecture crucially identified one important distinction between Bede and Gregory. Gregory, in Meyvaert’s assessment, ‘believed in the theme of diversity within unity’, whereas Bede felt that certain kinds of diversity conflicted with the unity and universality of Roman doctrine.[[245]](#footnote-245) Indeed, Bede records two letters in the *HE* which evince Gregory’s lenience toward seemingly minor deviations in practice. The first was sent by Gregory to Augustine of Canterbury, encouraging Augustine to selectively adopt and employ any variant practices of Christianity determined to be ‘more pleasing to Almighty God’.[[246]](#footnote-246) The second letter (I.30) is addressed to Abbot Mellitus, later Archbishop of Canterbury (619-624), advising that pagan sites and practices should be carefully adapted, rather than dissolved, in converting the English.[[247]](#footnote-247)

Gregory’s encouragement of adopting and adapting from provincial practices may seem to conflict with Bede’s view of Roman orthodoxy and the potential dangers of variation, but Bede was primarily concerned with doctrinal and liturgical diversity. For instance, Bede repeatedly condemns those same errors of Paschal observance and tonsuring which are criticized in Pope John IV’s letter to the Irish.[[248]](#footnote-248) The fact remains that Bede was raised in a monastery founded under Roman practice (674) well after the Synod at Whitby and had a strong appreciation for the universality of the Church. While he undoubtedly admired a number of Irish churchmen for the rigor of their monasticism and their pastoral attentions, he could only criticize what he perceived as devisive variations in doctrine. Bede did not employ Pope John IV’s letter in Book III, where it might have been of greater superficial relevance, but at the close of Edwin’s story. In doing so, Bede bolstered his Rome-based envelope structure by presenting a contrasting element of Christianity, and introduced a perceived danger to the unity developed by the efforts of Edwin and the Roman Church.

As has been shown, Bede gave his account of Edwin’s exile a crucial, central place and cast it as an analeptic passage in his chapters about the Northumbrian king. By doing so, Bede gave this episode greater weight and meaning. The mystical encounter and oath made to the spirit messenger at Rædwald’s court carry their own significance. Yet it is Bede’s development of two envelope structures on kingship and Rome which accentuate and reshape the analepsis, creating a lens through which concepts of kingship, doctrine and unity may be explored. The papal letters reflect Bede’s message that Northumbrian Christianity held a strong connection to Rome, a link made possible by Edwin’s vision in exile and subsequent adoption of Christianity. Pope John IV’s letter to the Irish contrasts heavily with the other papal letters Bede shares, but through its inclusion Bede emphasizes that Edwin was not just a Christian king, but one who followed orthodox Roman Christianity. Edwin’s reign brought not only a return to Roman ideals of order but also a greater sense of Christian unity. The secure place of Northumbria in this Christian unity relied upon events recalled in the analeptic climax of the frame narrative: Edwin’s exile, mystical vision, triumphant restoration, and eventual conversion. By crafting his work with thematic envelopes based on kingship and Rome, Bede defined Edwin’s exile experience as the narrative crossroads between divine will and earthly result. I will now show that Bede invited his readers to reflect on this intersection by including items of significant biblical resonance in his narrative account of Edwin.

**2.5: Biblical Resonance and ‘God’s Elect’**

Bede’s account of Edwin’s exile shows the author borrowing from events and figures in the Hebrew Bible to craft his account of the Northumbrian king. His use of language, particularly when employing the collocation of *vagari* and *profugus*, evokes the story of Cain’s expulsion from Eden and King David’s period of exile during the reign of Saul. Bede’s depiction of the mysterious messenger’s right hand on Edwin’s head in II.12 and Pualinus’ identical action in II.13 mirrors Jacob’s blessing on Ephraim in Genesis 48. The inclusion of Pope Boniface’s letter to Æthelburh in II.11 adds further biblical resonance through that letter’s quotation of I Corinthians 7. All of these connections reflect a sense of origin or ‘genesis’; the first exile and murderer, the first kings of Israel, the beginnings of a nation, and the challenges of a newly formed Christian church. Edwin’s exile and conversion experiences bear a great deal of meaning beyond the importance of the events themselves. Bede used the king’s exile as a focal point for drawing out and emphasizing other important themes in his work. Further examination of biblical parallels surrounding Edwin’s exile story in the *HE* will help to clarify what Bede accomplished by positioning the king’s mysterious encounter as an analeptic episode at the core of a framing narrative.

Before exploring how Edwin’s exile formed the constructive core by which themes of election and unity were articulated and emphasized in Bede’s history, it is necessary to first briefly survey Bede’s approaches to historiography. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill notes that Bede was influenced by the sixth-century *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* composed by Gildas, and that Bede had adopted Gildas’ view that national histories were directed by God’s will.[[249]](#footnote-249) R.A. Markus agrees, pointing to Bede’s own account of the ‘Romano-British disaster’ as the result of the sinful nature of the Britons and their failure to evangelise the newly-arrived Anglo-Saxons.[[250]](#footnote-250) Alan Thacker similarly views Gildas as a primary influence for Bede’s ‘providential historical narrative’,[[251]](#footnote-251) but also sees the works of Eusebius and Gregory of Tours reflected in the *HE*. Eusebius’ own ecclesiastical history has an analogous chronological structure and themes to Bede’s work, while Bede’s interest in a more localized or national Church reflects the pattern of Gregory of Tours’ *Historia Francorum*.[[252]](#footnote-252) These works may also have encouraged Bede’s own approach to history as the recording of God’s will enacted on Earth.[[253]](#footnote-253) General scholarly consensus on Bede’s view of historiography is concisely voiced by George Hardin Brown, who states:

Bede’s sense of history encompasses both human and divine causality, the ordinary working out of God’s plan, man’s contribution to history for good and ill, and the miraculous.[[254]](#footnote-254)

This approach to history also draws upon traditional views from the Hebrew Bible. A.C. Charity pointed out that authors of the Old Testament had a greater interest in God’s activities than in God’s nature, with God ‘existing in action and acting in history’; the result was a tradition of historiography wherein the absence of an active God was inconceivable.[[255]](#footnote-255) The writings of the Hebrew Bible were a great source of inspiration for Bede and are reflected throughout his work. Alan Thacker notes that Bede’s division of the *HE* into five books mirrors the Pentateuch; Bede himself observes that there are five languages spoken in Britain ‘just as the divine law is written in five books’.[[256]](#footnote-256) In his edition of the *HE*, Plummer identified 152 citations from the Bible, thirty of which are from the Old Testament.[[257]](#footnote-257) Andrew Scheil has pointed to the Old Testament as the ‘favored model’ for early medieval authors;[[258]](#footnote-258) this is clearly evident in Bede’s writing.

Adoption of the Hebrew Bible as a model for historical narrative had a significant impact on Bede’s approaches to promoting English unity and Christian kingship. By interpreting past events concerning the spread of the Gospels as providential, Bede portrayed the English as a ‘chosen nation’: God’s newly elect.[[259]](#footnote-259) Patrick Wormald suggests that Bede’s portrayal of the English as the New Israel encouraged a concept of unity under one Church and God, while also encouraging (perhaps unintentionally) political unity.[[260]](#footnote-260) George Hardin Brown agrees, noting that ‘the main aim of the whole work is to expound the development of God’s plan for the English as a chosen people’.[[261]](#footnote-261) Clearly Bede’s promotion of English unity and the alleged development of a new, divinely elect *gens* has generated much discussion.

The concept of English election and unity through conversion to Christianity is strongly linked to the kings Bede portrays in the *HE*. Barbara Yorke has noted that past Anglo-Saxon kings could present both good and bad examples for Bede to draw upon, and that kings of the Old Testament offered models for portraying his Anglo-Saxon subjects.[[262]](#footnote-262) Judith McClure compares Bede to the writers of I Samuel in his focus on the religious concerns of different peoples and his view that God’s dealings with a people are closely tied to the history of its kings.[[263]](#footnote-263) Such close ties are expressed by Bede’s presentation of typological connections between the subjects of his *HE* and the Hebrew Bible.

Bede’s concept of election was broader than any racial or national exclusivity. Cowdrey notes that Bede’s divisions between the English, Picts, Irish, and Britons reflects an ‘artificiality of Bede’s scheme of peoples’; a more heterogeneous mixture of peoples within communities and kingdoms is more likely to have reflected the reality of life in seventh- and eighth-century England.[[264]](#footnote-264) The Angles and Saxons of England were not entirely set apart from their indigenous counterparts. However, as the ones who followed the gospel call to propagate Christianity, particularly Roman Christianity, Bede’s portrayal of the Anglo-Saxons is as a people divinely chosen to adopt and distribute this doctrine. Cowdrey discusses Bede’s division of the five languages of Britain (I.1), and how the English promotion of the Roman mission, with its *lingua Latinorum*,‘should bind the four other languages in such a unity of race and obedience as the Pentateuch prefigured’.[[265]](#footnote-265) Bede was not necessarily promoting the Anglo-Saxons as a ‘New Israel’ unto themselves, but as active participants in the broader development of a newly chosen people which included all converts to Roman Christianity. Garrison has pointed out the dangers of presuming that election is implicit in all references to scripture or adoptions of Old Testament practice; not all appropriations from scripture carry identical hermeneutic meanings.[[266]](#footnote-266) The nature of Bede’s identification of the Anglo-Saxons as God’s chosen people, as Garrison points out, is rooted in his belief that election is linked to mission; it is for this reason that Bede does not include the Britons in his presentation of a unified chosen people.[[267]](#footnote-267)

How do Bede’s historiographical approaches and views on election reveal themselves in the chapters surrounding Edwin’s exile? Bede uses the king’s exile as a core episode in and from which he presents a history reflecting divine action on Earth, with visions and revelations suggesting a providential hand at work. At times Bede is explicit about God’s active role, as may be seen in the conversion of Edwin’s leading men. When one of Edwin’s advisors compares man’s life on Earth to a sparrow flying through a hall in the middle of winter, Bede says that the other elders and counsellors spoke similarly, ‘being divinely prompted to do so.’[[268]](#footnote-268) Later in the same chapter, Bede notes that the pagan priest Coifi’s destruction of the pagan temples was done ‘through the inspiration of the true God’.[[269]](#footnote-269) Presented as they are in the chapter following the account of Edwin’s mystical encounter, the reader is invited to see not only divine providence in the conversion of Edwin’s counsellors, but also retrospectively in the king’s mysterious visitation in exile.

Bede places Edwin’s exile at the heart of a mission and election narrative which details the conversion of Northumbria and the spread of Christianity. We have already seen a few examples of biblical references and allusions in Bede’s narrative about Edwin. His inclusion of Pope Boniface’s letter quoting I Corinthians is particularly striking: Paul’s letter was sent to the foundling Christian Church in Corinth, while Pope Boniface’s letter to Æthelburh addresses the needs of the foundling Church in Northumbria.[[270]](#footnote-270) The pope’s letter is itself reminiscent of scripture. The typological resonance between the apostolic Church and the converts of Paulinus is first articulated by Pope Boniface’s quotation, but there is little doubt that Bede would have been aware of the signifance of Pope Boniface’s choice of scripture when he included the pope’s letter in II.11. By incorporating the pope’s letter into the *HE*, Bede shared a papal endorsement of a typological link between the new Christians of Northumbria and the early Christians of the New Testament. Readers of the *HE* who continued to read through the account of Edwin’s exile in II.12 and the conversion of his counsellors in II.13 might recall the pope’s letter and more clearly view this connection between the Northumbrians and the apostolic Church.

Readers may also have recognized that both groups were connected by the same New Covenant, and so were among God’s newly elect. Edwin’s exile is crucial to Bede’s promotion of election in his account of the king. For instance, Bede alludes to other typological connections in the episode concerning Edwin’s exile by depicting Paulinus laying his right hand upon Edwin’s head. This otherwise simple gesture, briefly discussed above,[[271]](#footnote-271) carries immense typological implications. By laying his right hand on Edwin, Paulinus becomes a counterpart to Jacob in the book of Genesis.[[272]](#footnote-272) Edwin, in turn, is linked to Ephraim who received Jacob’s blessing. Jacob’s blessing presaged Ephraim’s founding of a leading tribe of Israel, just as Edwin’s blessing by Paulinus led to the founding of the Northumbrians as a Christian people and so among God’s newly elect. Through extrapolation, Edwin’s Northumbrian subjects may thus be viewed as counterparts to the tribe of Joseph. This line of thought may be further advanced by expanding the typological connection to include other converted Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, ‘tribes’ in their own rights living under a new covenant of shared faith. These biblical resonances emphasize Bede’s themes of unity and election, and depend on the mystical events of Edwin’s exile at the court of Rædwald.

Edwin’s exile is portrayed as a causal factor in the admission of the Northumbrian people into God’s elect through their conversion to Christianity. The nature of exile itself is hermeneuticaly significant to the pre-conversion/pagan state of Northumbria. I have shown how Bede collocates the words *vagari* and *profugus* to suggest figural likenesses between Edwin and Cain. Cain was cast out by God: ‘a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth’ (*vagus et profugus eris super terram*).[[273]](#footnote-273) God also marked Cain to preserve his life from those who would kill him. In Bede’s account of Edwin’s exile, God preserves the king’s life from Rædwald by persuading the East Anglian king to support Edwin rather than betray him.[[274]](#footnote-274) There is a strong resonance between Edwin and Cain, but why Bede should do this is difficult to understand: Cain committed the first murder and was cast out because of it, hardly making for a heroic or admirable point of comparison. I do not propose that Bede wanted his audience to view Edwin as a type of Cain, and certainly not as a murderer. Instead Bede hints at a typological connection here to emphasize the hardship and hopelessness of Edwin’s exilic state. More crucially, and as noted above, this typological link presents the exiled Edwin as a wandering pagan, removed from the face of God, within a new origin story: that of God’s people in Northumbria and England.[[275]](#footnote-275) Once removed from the face of God, Edwin’s exile is transformed by Bede into a spiritual as well as earthly hardship, overcome through divine intervention and conversion. Bede thus uses Edwin’s exile experience in a way which equates Northumbria’s pagan past with the torment of Cain’s expulsion.

Edwin’s exile story is used to reinforce Bede’s theme of unity and election in other ways. The first instance at which Bede presents Edwin’s life in relation to Old Testament events is found in the description of the king who forced Edwin into exile. In the concluding chapter of Book I, Bede suggests a typological likeness between King Æthelfrith and the Old Testament King Saul:

**Ita ut Sauli** quondam regi Israheliticae gentis **conparandus uideretur**, excepto dumtaxat hoc, quod diuinae erat religionis ignarus. Nemo enim in tribunis, nemo in regibus plures eorum terras, exterminatis uel subiugatis indigenis, aut tributarias genti Anglorum aut habitabilies fecit. Cui merito poterat illud, quod benedicens filium patriarcha **in personam Saulis** dicebat, aptari: ‘Beniamin lupus rapax; mane comedet praedam et uespere diuidet spolia.’

**He might indeed be compared with Saul** who was once king of Israel, but with this exception, that Æthelfrith was ignorant of the divine religion. For no ruler or king had subjected more land to the English race or settled it, having first either exterminated or conquered the natives. To him, **in the character of Saul**, could fittingly be applied the words which the patriarch said when he was blessing his son, ‘Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey and at night shall divide the spoil.’[[276]](#footnote-276)

Here Æthelfrith is compared with Saul twice: a reminiscence of an Old Testament king who had fallen from God’s favour. The connection is two-fold: Æthelfrith is directly connected with Saul and indirectly linked with Benjamin.[[277]](#footnote-277) The biblical quotation Bede selected here is taken from the account of Jacob’s death, wherein Jacob blesses his sons and foretells their respective foundings of the twelve tribes of Israel.[[278]](#footnote-278) The insinuation is that through Æthelfrith’s military efforts against the Britons, he helped make England more widely available for Anglo-Saxon rule. Furthermore, the link between events of Æthelfrith’s life and the division of the tribes of Israel in the Hebrew Bible implies that Bede saw Æthelfrith, to some extent, as a founder of one ‘tribe’ of Anglo-Saxons. We should recall the blessing of Ephraim and the laying of Paulinus’ right hand upon Edwin’s head. In other words, Bede is telling the story of the foundings of a people based on the tribes of the Old Testament Israel.

The typological association between Æthelfrith and Saul is also significant, and further demonstrates how Bede used Edwin’s exile story to encourage a view of the Northumbrian people as among God’s elect. Saul was the first king divinely appointed to rule over the Israelites, anointed by the prophet Samuel.[[279]](#footnote-279) When Saul later fell out of favour with God, David was chosen to replace him and was secretly anointed by Samuel.[[280]](#footnote-280) God’s plan for David was more complex than simply installing him in Saul’s place. When Samuel anointed David, the spirit of the Lord left Saul.

**I Sm. 16:14** spiritus autem Domini recessit a Saul et exagitabat eum spiritus nequam a Domino

But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.[[281]](#footnote-281)

To calm Saul, the king’s servants sent for David, who was known to be a fine harpist. Though David lived with Saul and was a court favourite, Saul’s jealousy eventually led him to order David’s death, forcing David to live in exile for fear of his life.[[282]](#footnote-282) The editors of the first book of Samuel inform that it was an evil spirit sent by God who first troubled Saul, resulting in David’s entrance to the royal household, and the same evil spirit which encouraged Saul to kill David.[[283]](#footnote-283) David’s destiny as king was ordained by God, but so too was the period of exile he had to endure before assuming the throne.

Æthelfrith’s expulsion of Edwin may have been similarly providential. By forging a typological link between Æthelfrith and Saul, Bede creates an indirect typological connection between Edwin and David. Judith McClure points to the story of Saul’s jealousy as a means through which Bede could understand the feuding of different Northumbrian families in his own time, including the exile of Edwin.[[284]](#footnote-284) Yet just as the causes of Edwin’s exile may be grasped through the typological connections of his oppressor, so also his exile experience and ultimate restoration are explained by biblical resonance. I have just discussed how the collocation of *vagari* and *profugus* helps to evoke an association between Edwin’s exile and Cain, but I have also noted the use of these words in the first book of Samuel concerning David’s exile in the deserts and mountains.[[285]](#footnote-285) Both David and Edwin were pursued by their oppressors while in exile, and both sought protection with foreign powers.

Other resonances to David are found in the analeptic climax in II.12. Paulinus learns of Edwin’s mystical vision during his exile through divine means: *tandem, ut uerisimile uidetur, didicit in spiritu, quod uel quale esset oraculum regi quondam caelitus ostensum* (‘At length, as seems most probable, he was shown in spirit the nature of the vision which God had once revealed to the king’).[[286]](#footnote-286) God spoke to Paulinus through spirit in a way comparable to his use of the prophet Samuel to influence chosen kings. The spirit messenger who visits Edwin is also sent by God, just as Samuel had been when sent to anoint David; the connection between Edwin and David is supported by connections between Samuel and both Paulinus and the spirit messenger.

Edwin’s connection to David is supported by another indirect typological link in the exile story. Bede tells us that a friend warns Edwin about Rædwald’s potential treachery and encourages him to leave.[[287]](#footnote-287) This friend mirrors Jonathan, Saul’s son, who warns his friend David that Saul is plotting his murder.[[288]](#footnote-288) In both cases, a friend counsels a would-be victim to hide themselves and returns to let them know they are safe. The arguments which are used to persuade both Rædwald and Saul even bear resemblance: Rædwald’s wife tells the king that betraying Edwin is a dishonourable way to treat ‘his best friend’ (*amicum suum optimum*). Jonathan has a similar message for his father: ‘Sin not, O king, against thy servant, David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and his works are very good towards thee’ (*ne pecces rex in servum tuum David quia non peccavit tibi et opera eius bona sunt tibi valde*).[[289]](#footnote-289)

A biblical parallel to David can also be seen in Edwin’s response to the friend who warns him about Rædwald’s potential treachery. When warned to leave Rædwald’s court, Edwin says:

Gratias quidem ago beniuolentiae tuae; non tamen hoc facere possum quod suggeris, ut pactum quod cum tanto rege inii ipse primus irritum faciam, cum ille mihi nil mali fecerit, nil adhuc inimicitiarum intulerit. Quin potius, si moriturus sum, ille me magis quam ignobilior quisque morti tradat.

I thank you for your goodwill, but I cannot do what you say, as I should have to be the first to break the compact which I made with this great king; he has done me no wrong nor shown any enmity towards me so far. If I am to die, let me rather die by his hand than at the hands of some meaner person.[[290]](#footnote-290)

I have already discussed how effectively this statement emphasizes the depths of hardship upon which Edwin had fallen. It is also a powerful statement on kingship and the role of subjects to their kings. Edwin’s words are evocative of David’s experience when hiding in a cave in the desert. Saul, without realizing David is in the cave, steps inside to ‘ease nature’ and David’s friends urge him to kill Saul.

**I Sam. 24:7** dixitque ad viros suos propitius mihi sit Dominus ne faciam hanc rem domino meo christo Domini ut mittam manum meam in eum quoniam christus Domini est

And he said to his men: The Lord be merciful unto me, that I may do no such thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, as to lay my hand upon him, because he is the Lord's anointed.

David cuts a piece off of Saul’s hem and lets him leave, but after exiting the cave speaks openly to the king:

**I Sam. 24:13** iudicet Dominus inter me et te et ulciscatur me Dominus ex te manus autem mea non sit in te

The Lord judge between me and thee and the Lord revenge me of thee: but my hand shall not be upon thee.

David’s speech to Saul is a moving commentary on the place of a subject in exile and the rights and powers of anointed kings. Both David’s and Edwin’s words concern kings who mean them harm, yet reveal an understanding of their own lamentable states.

This connection to David is important in respect to Bede’s promotion of the converted Northumbrians as among God’s elect. The connection is strengthened when we examine the agreement Edwin makes with the spirit messenger while in exile. Consider the following extracts from the conversation between Edwin and the stranger:

‘Sed dicito mihi, quid mer/cedis dare uelis ei, siqui sit, qui his te meroribus absoluat, et **Redualdo suadeat** ut nec ipse tibi aliquid mali faciat, **nec tuis te hostibus perimendum tradat**.’

‘But tell me what reward you are willing to give to anyone who would free you from these troubles and **persuade Rædwald** not to do you any wrong himself **nor give you over to your enemies to perish**.’[[291]](#footnote-291)

‘Quod si etiam **regem te** **futurum extinctis hostibus** in ueritate promittat, ita ut non solum **omnes tuos progenitores** sed et omnes, **qui ante te reges in gente Anglorum fuerant, potestate transcendas**?’

‘And what’, said the stranger, ‘if he assured you **that your enemies would be destroyed** and that you would be a **king who surpassed in power** not only **all your ancestors**, but **also all who have reigned before you over the English**?’[[292]](#footnote-292)

‘Si autem is qui tibi tanta taliaque dona ueraciter aduentura praedixerit, etiam consilium tibi tuae salutis ac uitae melius atque uitilius quam aliquis de tuis parentibus aut cognatis umquam audiuit, ostendere potuerit, num **ei obtemperare** et monita eius salutaria suscipere **consentis**?’

‘If the one who truly foretold all these great and wonderful benefits could also give you better and more useful counsel as to your salvation and your way of life than any of your parents and kinsmen ever heard, **would you consent to obey him** and to accept his saving advice?’[[293]](#footnote-293)

Edwin agrees to the conditions of this agreement and receives the benefits offered to him by the spirit messenger: he is preserved from Rædwald, Æthelfrith is destroyed in battle, and he comes to wield greater power in England than any king before him. In exchange for these gifts, Edwin must obey God by obeying Paulinus and heeding his counsel.

This agreement recalls the Covenant established between King David and God. The terms of greater earthly power and protection in exchange for obedience are strikingly similar:

et fui tecum in omnibus ubicumque ambulasti et **interfeci universos inimicos tuos** a facie tua **fecique tibi nomen grande iuxta nomen magnorum qui sunt in terra**

And I have been with thee wheresoever thou hast walked, and **have slain all thy enemies** from before thy face: and **I have made thee a great man, like unto the name of the great ones that are on the earth**.[[294]](#footnote-294)

ex die qua constitui iudices super populum meum Israhel et requiem dabo tibi ab omnibus inimicis tuis praedicitque tibi Dominus quod domum faciat tibi Dominus

From the day that I appointed judges over my people Israel: and **I will give thee rest from all thy enemies**. And the Lord foretelleth to thee, that the Lord will make thee a house.[[295]](#footnote-295)

If the agreement between Edwin and the spirit messenger evokes the Davidic Covenant, then we have further evidence that Bede used biblical resonances to evoke comparisons between the English people and the Israelites of the Old Testament. Biblical suggestions between Anglo-Saxon and Old Testament kings, as mentioned earlier, can suggest relationships between the Israelites and early medieval subjects. Any claims to being part of a New Israel requires adherence to a New Covenant with God: acceptance of Jesus Christ as saviour. Bede refers to this New Covenant in recording the pact made between Edwin and the spirit messenger. Paulinus’ mission to the North disseminated the gospel of Christ for the first time in that region, but in Bede’s account the process by which the Northumbrians joined other Christians as God’s elect began with Edwin’s exile.[[296]](#footnote-296) I pursue this idea of election among the Anglo-Saxons further in the next chapter about Alfred.

**2.6: Conclusion**

In the closing chapter of Book II, Bede relates how Edwin was killed in 633 by the allied forces of Kings Cædwalla and Penda.[[297]](#footnote-297) The kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia were then divided between two apostate kings, with Deira being ruled by Edwin’s cousin Osric and Bernicia going to Eanfrith (one of Æthelfrith’s sons).[[298]](#footnote-298) A brief return to paganism followed until the return of Oswald (another of Æthelfrith’s sons) and the introduction of Ionan Christianity to Northumbria. After reading of these events, Edwin’s story is clearly only a part of Bede’s account of the establishment of the Church in England: with the king’s death, Paulinus’ mission is abandoned. While reading the narrative of Edwin, however, Bede’s audience can discern the author’s high regard for Edwin as a model of Christian kingship. Bede clearly portrays the king’s exile as a crucial turning point in the history of the Northumbrian and English Church: regardless of the untimely end to Paulinus’ mission, Bede uses Edwin’s story to emphasize that the roots of Northumbrian Christianity began with the Roman mission, and to present evidence for early decisions to establish York as a metropolitan see equal to Canterbury.

I have presented the literary devices and tropes Bede uses in his narrative about Edwin, but what were the actual results of Edwin’s restoration from exile? The first to be considered is Edwin’s familiarity with the southern kingdoms gained through his years of wandering and evidenced by his contact with the East Anglian court of Rædwald and Eorpwold, as well as by his marriage to the Kentish princess Ӕthelburh. Barbara Yorke notes that Edwin’s ability to wander through southern kingdoms during his exile, eventually finding protection with Rædwald, indicates that some relationship between Deira and the southern kingdoms must have existed already.[[299]](#footnote-299) Such relationships, especially that with the East Angles, led not only to Edwin’s assumption of the Northumbrian throne, but also aided in securing his place as the most powerful and influential king of Britain up until his time.

The very nature of Edwin’s restoration to rule displays a sense of the unified confederacy which Edwin came to adopt and expand later in his reign; his conquests and dominion heightened this unity by placing both British and English peoples under the control of one Anglo-Saxon warrior king. Edwin also fulfilled religious achievements: through his influence he encouraged other kings to convert to Christianity, and helped to establish York as a metropolitan see through his requests to Rome. A converted king could enhance the success of broader conversion efforts, a quality of Christian kingship which Bede was particularly keen to share. Little wonder, then, that Edwin drew Rome’s attention, bringing Northumbria into greater contact with the continent and the Roman Church; his marriage to Æthelburh and interactions with Paulinus would have strengthened continental contact. Furthermore, Edwin’s reign brought a period of unusual peace and a sense of order to Britain which was presumably absent beforehand; the biblical resonances of Edwin’s ‘sea to sea’ peace suggest that Bede saw such order as requisite of Christian kings.[[300]](#footnote-300)

Certainly, Edwin’s exile was substantially important for its own sake as the above accomplishments suggest. Bede knew this, and so amplified the importance of Edwin’s exile experience accordingly by presenting that episode as the analeptic climax in the narrative about the king, and by framing that analepsis with two thematic envelopes. What is vital to my discussion in this dissertation is that Bede presents Edwin’s exile not for its own sake, but as a vessel by which other ideas are carried forward. Bede adapted existing traditions about Edwin’s exile in such a way as to promote deeper messages concerning kingship, Roman primacy, and divine will. Bede surrounded his adaptation of Edwin’s exile story with envelopes that emphasized Edwin’s Christian kingship and characterized the king’s reign and conversion in terms of Roman practice and contact. He instilled these elements of analepsis and envelope with biblical echoes that contribute to the perceived significance of the king’s exile experience. Crucially, Bede offers typological resonances which encourage his audience to ruminate on the similarities between the newly converted Anglo-Saxon kingdom and the Old Testament tribes of Israel. For Bede, adoption and dissemination of Christianity bring Edwin and his people to be among God’s newly elect. This is a strong contributor to Bede’s running endorsement of unity throughout the *HE* and is perhaps the most noteworthy outcome of his careful manipulation of the king’s exile story.

Exile provides stimulus for change as well as a means through which changes may be encouraged or understood. Bede’s treatment of Edwin’s exile story clearly demonstrates how a restored royal exile story can be crafted to stimulate audience reception of themes and ideas beyond the story itself. In the next chapter, I examine the presentation of a later restored royal exile, Alfred of Wessex, in Asser’s *Vita Ælfredi*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and Alfred’s own law code. There I will further demonstrate how exile stories can be crafted to invite reflection on the implications of exile and to shape perceptions of kings and peoples.

**3. Chapter Two: Alfred of Wessex**

**3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will consider accounts of King Alfred (d. 899).[[301]](#footnote-301) Alfred sought refuge from Viking invasions in 878 by relocating to the wildernesses of Somerset, but resumed control over Wessex later the same year. The two extant sources which offer the most comprehensive reports of English and Viking activity during the reign of Alfred are the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (*ASC*)and Asser’s *Vita Ӕlfredi regis Angul Saxonum* (hereon referred to as the *Life*).[[302]](#footnote-302) The *Life* has been much studied and discussed, but its content regarding exile and the significance of dislocation in casting Alfred as a restored exile has not been explored in any depth previously. Here I shall discuss constructions of exile and dislocation in Asser’s *Life* to show what they reveal about the author’s preoccupation with exiles throughout the work and how they shape the portrayal of Alfred and his kingdom. Asser’s editorial choices can be best appreciated by his decisions to alternately adhere to or stray from accounts available to him in the *ASC* (or its source), and so I will assess the relevant continuities and divergences between the two sources within the political and cultural context of late ninth-century England.

I will begin by presenting evidence for Asser’s preoccupation with dislocation and identifying the numerous itinerant forms the author presents throughout the biography, including voluntary and involuntary exiles. I follow this with a closer analysis of Asser’s portrayal of Alfred and consider whether the king’s time spent in the marshes of Somerset depicts him as an exile figure or as the leader of an exile people, with special attention to the complexities of considering real and metaphorical exile and the many-stranded and diverse interpretations that stem from study of Asser’s *Life*. Biblical and historical resonances, including those of the Old Testament Moses, David and Solomon, and the Northumbrian King Edwin, will be assessed for their shaping of this portrayal. Finally, I turn to the introduction of Alfred’s law-code to consider how Asser’s presentation of Alfred as a suffering displaced king in the *Life* reflects the broader attitudes and agendum of the West Saxon court and kingdom as it recovered from Viking invasion and entered a new period of tentative strength.

It is first necessary to introduce the sources, beginning with Asser’s own informant: the *ASC*. Rather than consisting of one distinct work, the *ASC* comes down to us in eight separate manuscripts which have been given letter designations A-H. These manuscripts, though often in close agreement, diverge enough to be regarded as separate works which share one or more related sources.[[303]](#footnote-303) One of these sources, referred to as the ‘common stock’, no longer survives but is echoed by all versions from the beginning of the annals through AD 892.[[304]](#footnote-304) The oldest of these is A (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 173) written primarily in one hand through annal 891 and dated to the late ninth or early tenth century.[[305]](#footnote-305) Though A predates the other extant manuscripts, it is still at least two removes from the common stock. Furthermore, portions of A were erased in the eleventh century, apparently while held at Canterbury, in order to make room for a number of interpolations made there.[[306]](#footnote-306) Fortunately the interpolations are identifiable and the remains of MS. G (British Library Cotton Otho B.xi), a copy of A mostly destroyed in the Cottonian fire of 1731 but preserved by a sixteenth-century transcription, has been useful in reflecting how A may have appeared before the Canterbury additions and removals.[[307]](#footnote-307)

Asser’s version of the *ASC* was not the A version as we have received it. Charles Plummer had suggested in 1892 that the *ASC* version used by Asser was ‘of the southern type’ and differed from all surviving versions;[[308]](#footnote-308) W.H. Stevenson noted in 1904 that none of the extant versions had been ‘copied from a lost original that agreed exactly with the copy of the *ASC* used by the author (Asser)’.[[309]](#footnote-309) The version of the *ASC* used in composing the *Life* was, like A, two removes from the original version and there are points where Asser is in greater agreement with the other *ASC* versions.[[310]](#footnote-310) Richard Abels has suggested that Asser’s version would have agreed more closely with the ‘B’ manuscript, though he concedes that through 892 the content of all versions is basically the same.[[311]](#footnote-311) Conversely, the *Life* agrees with A on a number of occasions in which both sources differ from other versions of the *ASC*, excepting ‘F’ and ‘G’ which were both copied from A.[[312]](#footnote-312) Janet Bately’s assessment of the relationship of A to the other extant versions of the *ASC*, as well as to lost versions which served as root-stock for the surviving texts, builds upon the collective arguments of Charles Plummer, Frank Stenton, Dorothy Whitelock, Cyril Hart, and Bately’s own work. Bately concludes that A was an independent witness to the development of the *ASC*, drafted in an earlier phase and in many ways truer to the lost common stock than are other extant versions.[[313]](#footnote-313) Based on Bately’s conclusions, I will refer to the A version of the *ASC* in the discussion below.

Our chief source for Alfred is Asser’s *Life*. As the first known work primarily about the life of an English layman, the *Life* has often been held alongside Einhard’s earlier *Vita Karoli Magni*.[[314]](#footnote-314) Both give intimate portrayals of their subjects based on the authors’ first- and second-hand experiences while serving in their respective royal courts. However, whereas Einhard composed his work several years after Charlemagne’s death,[[315]](#footnote-315) Asser was working on the *Life* during Alfred’s reign. Asser was thus able to secure information from the king, other members of the court, and from his own memory during a period more immediate to the events he relates; he was not, as Einhard had been, limited to what he had witnessed and could remember.[[316]](#footnote-316)

Of course Asser also had at his disposal a version of the *ASC*, as discussed above, and nearly half of the *Life* is closely based on it.[[317]](#footnote-317) He was also familiar with a range of sources which inspired his own style and narrative construction, the aim of which seems to have differed from that of the Chronicler.[[318]](#footnote-318) Richard Abels, for instance, views the *ASC* as a history of the ‘rise of Wessex and the house of Alfred’, focussing on the trials and successes of warfare in an attempt to encourage its audience to support burdensome measures demanded by Alfred to secure defenses.[[319]](#footnote-319) This implies that the intended audience of the *ASC* was composed of individuals near to the court and the demands of government; Asser’s access to a version of the *ASC*, as a member of Alfred’s court, supports this view.[[320]](#footnote-320)

Identifying the potential audience for Asser’s *Life* may help to better understand the choices he made about exilic allusions and portrayals of exiles in his work. Like the *ASC*,Asser crafted the *Life* so as to encourage support for the king, although Asser’s intentions have been debated. Abels suggests that Asser gave his loyalty and love in response to Alfred’s largesse, saying ‘The *Life of King Alfred* was a manifestation of this love.’[[321]](#footnote-321) Also like the ASC, the *Life* was meant for the benefit of multiple audiences, including the royal court, the king’s sons, and Alfred himself, yet the potential for a Welsh audience, perhaps at Asser’s home monastery of St. David’s, has also been voiced.[[322]](#footnote-322) Keynes and Lapidge agree with the argument for a Welsh readership, as proposed first by Marie Schütt and supported later by Dorothy Whitelock.[[323]](#footnote-323) James Campbell, however, maintains that this may not have been exclusively intended by Asser, and that evidence supporting a Welsh readership could as easily be taken to reflect Asser’s own ‘Welshness’ rather than that of his audience.[[324]](#footnote-324) Though largely supportive of the Welsh argument, Campbell also suggests that, beyond royal interests involving Wales, Alfred himself was ‘the prime intended audience’ for Asser’s *Life*:

When a richly endowed author produces a work dedicated to his royal *dominus*, and presents him in a uniformly and intensely favourable light, is it not likely that it is for the royal eye that it is intended?[[325]](#footnote-325)

An Occam’s razor approach such as Campbell’s is compelling, and its adoption makes it easier to consider Asser’s intended audience to have been as broad, if not broader, than that of the Chronicler.

However, such speculation on the *Life*’s potential dissemination is made difficult by the work’s unfinished status; no ‘completed’ version of the *Life* survives in the limited manuscript evidence.[[326]](#footnote-326) The only known original manuscript was destroyed in the Cotton Library fire. A hand-drawn facsimile had been made nine years earlier, and written descriptions remain from early antiquarians who had viewed the manuscript prior to its destruction.[[327]](#footnote-327) There are also two transcripts which were copied prior to the manuscript’s destruction, including manuscript ‘Co’ (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 100), which was made for the use of its owner Archbishop Parker, and manuscript ‘B’ (British Library, Cotton MS. Otho A xii), of unknown origin but possibly dating to the late sixteenth century.[[328]](#footnote-328) Agreements between all of these are substantial. Because all transcripts and facsimiles were derived from the same source, we have no other version of the *Life* available for comparison and must trust that the eleventh-century copy was itself a fair representation of Asser’s original.

This is an appropriate point to mention recent contentions concerning the work’s authenticity which have weighed in my decision to write about the *Life*. It is important that we briefly establish for our own discussion the value of the work as an authentic contemporary account. Concern over the work’s veracity was voiced as early as 1842 by Thomas Wright, who had perceived supposed anachronisms (such as the word *parochia*) in the text, as well as the author’s dubious propensity for switching from the imperfect to the present tense when speaking of Alfred.[[329]](#footnote-329) V.H. Galbraith later echoed Wright’s doubts in his 1949 Creighton Lecture, and expanded upon these again in 1964 when he suggested that the *Life* was a forgery penned by Leofric, Bishop of Devon and Cornwall (1046) and later of Exeter (1050).[[330]](#footnote-330) More recently, Alfred Smyth’s 1995 monograph on Alfred the Great reopened the discussion on the authenticy of the *Life* while criticizing what he perceives as the willful acceptance of the source by the academic community.[[331]](#footnote-331) Smyth attributes Frank Stenton’s endorsement of Stevenson’s work and the *Life*’s authenticity to wartime nationalism, considers Dorothy Whitelock’s response to Galbraith as ‘greatly exaggerated’ and dependent on ‘heaping speculation upon speculation’, and attributes the absence of Galbraith’s and Wright’s arguments in the 1983 Penguin edition of the *Life* to the editors’ adoration of Whitelock.[[332]](#footnote-332)

Smyth maintains that the *Life* is a forgery made in the late tenth century by Byrhtferth of Ramsey.[[333]](#footnote-333) This would make any study of the *Life* an examination of that author, period, and audience, and would mean that the *Life* has limited use in assessing conditions during King Alfred’s own time. However, Smyth’s arguments and his critique of an ‘orthodox school of British historians’ have sparked considerable debate. For instance, Janet Nelson questions Smyth’s decision to omit from his book discussion about Alfred’s legislation and recent economic history.[[334]](#footnote-334) Furthermore, Nelson confronts Smyth’s contention that the portrayal of Alfred as an invalid diminishes the *Life*’s reliability. Nelson argues instead that such a depiction would have stood as a valid portrayal of heroism for a late ninth-century audience.[[335]](#footnote-335)

Perhaps the most comprehensive appraisal of Smyth’s allegations comes from Simon Keynes. Keynes accuses Smyth of disavowing sources which might corroborate the authenticity of the *Life* and for approaching any information within the work which cannot be verified as inherently false ‘or else explained in terms of ‘Pseudo-Asser’’s ability to draw on a good supply of tall stories’.[[336]](#footnote-336) He goes on to question a number of Smyth’s assumptions and arguments.[[337]](#footnote-337) Keynes then establishes and follows a system of enquiry to assess the authenticity of the *Life*, and presents evidence supporting the plausibility that Asser was the author of the *Life*.[[338]](#footnote-338) Keynes grants at the beginning of his article that the destruction of the original manuscript makes absolute certainty of the *Life*’s authenticity impossible,[[339]](#footnote-339) but he also offers the following advice:

There is no substitute, however, for perusing the *Life* itself, and for judging the matter from first and simplest principles.[[340]](#footnote-340)

Having done as Keynes suggests, I will now discuss Asser’s *Life*, along with the A version of the *ASC*, with regard to the constructions and realities of Alfred’s brief period of exile evident in the text. This discussion follows in agreement with Stevenson, Whitelock, Keynes, Nelson, and others who have argued for the authenticity of the *Life* as the work of Asser. With this in mind, I will take a new look at the *Life* through a discussion of authorial choice in Asser’s portrayals of exiles. As in the previous discussion on Edwin, exile provides a lens which reveals ideas about Christian kingship, divine election, typological and christological suggestions. Depictions of foreigners, pilgrims, royal exiles, refugees, and Alfred himself will be examined in turn to better interpret the author’s narrative preoccupation with exilic forms and allusion, and his promotion of King Alfred as an exilic hero restored.

**3.2 Foreigners, Pilgrims and Kings: Displacement in the *Life***

**3.2.1 Foreigners**

I will first examine a class of individuals that Asser presents examples of in the *Life*: foreigners. The foreigners described by Asser had traversed land and sea before settling in Alfred’s kingdom of Wessex. In many cases these were scholars and craftsmen who had come to Wessex, either by invitation or to seek new opportunities that had arisen during the latter half of Alfred’s reign. Asser, who was a foreigner himself, gives special attention in his work to this group of immigrants who had found new homes under Alfred’s rule. The purpose of this section is two-fold: to consider how comments and portrayals of foreigners in the *Life* reveal a portion of the author’s preoccupation with migration and dislocation, and to introduce Asser by his own self-depiction as a foreigner at Alfred’s court who had suffered exile previously. By looking at these details, we will see that Asser was deeply interested in presenting dislocated figures in the *Life*.

The foreigners mentioned by Asser in the *Life* arrived in Wessex during the years following Alfred’s restoration to power in 878. Asser presents Alfred as having a remarkable sympathy with, and interest in, those who had traversed political and cultural boundaries to arrive in his kingdom of Wessex. In c.76 of the *Life*, which portrays the king’s personal interests in hawking, hunting, reading, and prayer, Asser states:

***VÆ* c.76** Eleemosynarum quoque studio et largitati indigenis et advenis omnium gentium, ac maxima et incomparabili contra omnes homines affabilitate atque iocunditate, et ignotarum rerum investigationi solerter se iungebat. Franci autem multi, Frisones, Galli, pagani, Britones, et Scotti, Armorici sponte se suo dominio subdiderant, nobiles scilicet et ignobiles; quos omnes, sicut suam propriam gentem, secundum suam dignitatem regebat, diligebat, honorabat, pecunia et potestate ditabat.[[341]](#footnote-341)

He similarly applied himself attentively to charity and distribution of alms to the native population and to foreign visitors of all races, showing immense and incomparable kindness and generosity to all men, as well as to the investigation of things unknown. Wherefore many Franks, Frisians, Gauls, Vikings, Welshmen, Irishmen and Bretons subjected themselves willingly to his lordship, nobles and commoners alike; and, as befitted his royal status, he ruled, loved, honoured and enriched them all with wealth and authority, just as he did his own people.[[342]](#footnote-342)

Asser was among these, having come himself from Wales to serve in Alfred’s court, and was richly rewarded by the king with ‘wealth and authority’ just as he mentions.[[343]](#footnote-343) Elsewhere, Asser also names other foreign scholars invited by Alfred, chosen for their learning.[[344]](#footnote-344) Specifically named are: Werferth, bishop of Worcester, then part of Mercia; Plegmund, archbishop of Canterbury, ‘a Mercian by birth’; Ӕthelstan and Werwulf, Mercian priests; and from Francia, the priests Grimbald and John.[[345]](#footnote-345) Asser’s comment on the king’s attention to almsgiving for the aid of foreigners implies that there were great numbers of alien travelers in Wessex, and so it seems unlikely that the list in the above extract from c.76 refers solely to Alfred’s closest intellectual advisors. In c.80 Asser comments on the number of Welsh kingdoms which had submitted to Alfred’s overlordship and obtained the king’s protection from Mercian powers (the Mercian Ealdorman Ӕthelred is named specifically) as well as from other Welsh kings.[[346]](#footnote-346) King Elise ap Tewdwr, king of Brycheiniog, allied with Alfred to gain protection from King Anarawd ap Rhodri. The latter king eventually followed Elise’s example by submitting to Alfred in person and, for his trouble, was honoured, received gifts, and was symbolically adopted as Alfred’s son.[[347]](#footnote-347) Perhaps Asser had these kings in mind when describing Alfred’s generous treatment of foreigner visitors.

Such outreach to foreign powers would have strengthened Alfred’s network of allies and furthered the interests of Wessex. An interest in alliances may have been accompanied too by Alfred’s personal interest in the alien or exotic. Indeed, having traveled himself as a child to Rome, passing through Francia and other regions along the way, Alfred may well have developed an appreciation for foreign cultures and knowledge early in life. Clearly it was such an appreciation that, in part, led to his summons of Asser, Werferth, Grimbald, and the other scholars who came to serve in his court. Asser presents Alfred as a king who drew others to him to share their strengths, knowledge and services with him.

The departure of foreigners from their respective homes would have carried many of the challenges and fears inherent to sojourning *peregrinati*. It may be for this reason that Alfred was sympathetic to foreigners generally: he knew first-hand the hardships of travel and dislocation. Alfred was also aware of the potential benefits which immigration could bring to Wessex, expressed in his allocation of a portion of state revenues toward the support of foreigners in the kingdom. After describing how the king had devoted half of the annual budget to secular business, with two portions of this half being paid out for military concerns and to craftsmen, respectively, Asser states:

***VÆ* c.101** Tertiam autem eiusdem partem advenis ex omni gente ad eum advenientibus longe propeque positis et pecuniam ab illo exigentibus, etiam et non exigentibus, unicuique secundum **propriam dignitatem**, mirabili dispensatione laudabiliter et, sicut scriptumm est ‘Hilarem datorem diligit Deus’, hilariter impendebat.[[348]](#footnote-348)

With admirable generosity, in a praiseworthy manner and –as it is written, ‘God loveth a cheerful giver’—with a cheerful disposition, he paid out the third portion to foreigners of all races who came to him from places near and far and asked money from him (or even if they did not ask), to each one according to his **particular station**.[[349]](#footnote-349)

Asser’s details concerning these allotments suggest to the reader that the king placed real value on skilled and influential foreigners. The point that tax revenue was to be spent on foreigners in respect to their station implies that these funds were not disbursed indiscriminately but in accordance with the relative merits of the foreigners in question; this is not Christian charity in its purest form.[[350]](#footnote-350)

Asser’s statement concerning how Alfred distributed these funds based on ability also suggests that the foreigners entering Wessex were a varied lot and that the individual use to which each could be put determined their respective shares of funds. Having already seen portions of the budget allotted to military concerns and to craftsmen (which Asser states included men ‘from many races’),[[351]](#footnote-351) it may well be that some of the foreigners benefiting from the third portion of the secular tax revenue gave assistance toward programmes of national defense and construction. Asser tells us elsewhere that, from the half of tax revenue set aside for God, portions of state funding were set aside for the school Alfred had established and for monasteries.[[352]](#footnote-352) It seems unlikely that the funds appropriated from the secular budget specifically for foreigners would have been intended for services or entrances to institutions already provided for by half of all tax revenues.

Asser depicts Alfred as greatly immersed in the affairs of foreignersin Wessex, which may explain the large portion (up to one-sixth) of the kingdom’s tax revenues set aside for these relocated individuals. Asser describes Alfred’s programme of translating Latin works into the vernacular, a project which occupied the time of some foreign dignitaries within Alfred’s court, including Asser.[[353]](#footnote-353) Asser also informs us of the king’s ‘greed’ for knowledge and wisdom and his regret at not having been trained in the liberal arts while young.[[354]](#footnote-354) The applicable benefits of information shared by foreigners may have considerably influenced Alfred’s determination to provide for foreign visitors and immigrants. In his portrayal of Alfred’s appreciation of foreign travelers and immigrants to Wessex, Asser is thus able to promote the king’s intellectual characteristics.

Asser was himself a *peregrinus* too, a fact which must have informed his own interest in other foreigners in the *Life* and shaped his narrative focus on exiles and dislocation throughout the work. In a rare instance of early medieval autobiographical commentary, Asser tells us about the circumstances which led him to join Alfred’s court. Asser had received a summons from the king:

***VÆ* c.79** Cumque per multa terrarum spatia illum adire proposueram, usque ad regionem Dexteralium Saxonum, quae Saxonice Suth-Seaxum appellatur, ductoribus eiusdem gentis comitantibus, perveni...Cumque ab eo benigne susceptus fuissem, inter cetera sententiarum nostrarum famina, me obnixe rogabat, ut devoverem me suo servitio et familiaris ei essem, et omnia, quae in sinistrali et occidentali Sabrinae parte habebam, pro eo relinquerem: quae etiam maiori mihi remuneratione reddere pollicebatur. Quod et faceret. Respondi ego ‘Me talia incaute et temerarie promittere non posse. Iniustum enim mihi videbatur, illa tam sancta loca, in quibus nutritus et doctus ac coronatus fueram, atque ad ultimum ordinatus, pro aliquo terreno honore et potestate derelinquere, nisi coactus et compulsus.’[[355]](#footnote-355)

When I had taken the decision to travel across great expanses of land to meet him, I arrived in the territory of the right-hand Saxons, which in English is called Sussex, accompanied by some English guides...When I had been warmly welcomed by him, and we were engaged in discussion, he asked me earnestly to commit myself to his service and to become a member of his household, and to relinquish for his sake all that I had on the left-hand and western side of the Severn. He promised to pay me greater compensation for it (which indeed he was to do). I replied that I could not enter such an agreement incautiously and without due consideration. For it struck me as unfair to abandon those very holy places in which I had been brought up, trained, tonsured and eventually ordained, in favour of some other worldly honour and position, unless I were under constraint and compulsion...[[356]](#footnote-356)

From this account of Alfred’s summons, Asser presents his journey as voluntary but arduous. Even coming from Wales, Asser’s route ranged ‘across great expanses of land’ and required local guides. This is not merely a description of a medieval itinerary, but an account of a suffering, if willing, exile. Alfred’s request that Asser stay with him at court is phrased not only in terms of what Asser should gain by agreeing, but also by what he should ‘relinquish’ in doing so. Asser’s loss is all-encompassing; nothing which was his before would be so afterward. His geographic details describing his loss are non-specific but, alongside the monastic house where he grew up, define his abandoned home.

The sense that Asser was removing himself from his place of identity is significant, and encourages the reader to view him as an exile. He also defines the move from Wales to Wessex as a departure from one world into another in two important ways. The first is that, by agreeing to join Alfred, Asser would be removing himself from ‘holy places’ to enter the world of material concerns. The second, and most apparent, is that of a stranger in a strange land; not only is Asser’s physical displacement significant in terms of distance and the crossing of political boundaries, but also in terms of entering ‘the unknown’, with his mention of English guides underscoring his lack of understanding of the world into which he was travelling. In these ways, Asser presents his experience as long and difficult, leaving one world for another, and ultimately parting with the comforts and familiarity of his home at St. David’s.

Asser’s decision to join Alfred’s court, while technically voluntary, was not without some of the ‘constraint and compulsion’ he mentions in the above extract. After coming to an agreement with Alfred that he would spend alternating six-month periods with the king and at St. David’s, Asser travelled back to Wales to consult with his people. Troubles at home prompted Asser’s decision to adhere to this agreement, as he describes.

***VÆ* c.79** Sperabant enim nostri, minores tribulationes et iniurias ex parte Hemeid regis sustinere – qui saepe depraedabatur illud monasterium et parochiam Sancti Degui, Aliquando expulsione illorum antistitum, qui in eo praeessent, sicut et Nobis archiepiscopum, propinquum meum, **et me expulit aliquando sub ipsis**—si ego ad notitiam et amicitiam illius regis qualicunque pacto pervenirem.[[357]](#footnote-357)

For our people were hoping that, if I should come to Alfred’s notice and obtain his friendship through some such arrangement, they might suffer less damaging afflictions and injuries at the hands of King Hyfaidd who often assaulted that monastery and the jurisdiction of St. David, sometimes by expelling those bishops who were in charge of it, as happened to my kinsman Archbishop Nobis; **he even expelled me on occasion** **during this period**.[[358]](#footnote-358)

Asser represents his decision as compulsory: by leaving to join Alfred, Asser might hope to afford some protection from Hyfaidd. These rationalizations suggest that Asser was taking a defensive stance, perhaps making apologies for his departure from St. David’s to join Alfred’s court.[[359]](#footnote-359) Yet this also reveals the roots of his empathy with those forced from their homes and familiar spaces: the author holds a special insight into the condition of his exiled subjects. Asser’s mention that he had been previously exiled or driven out by Hyfaidd, perhaps on multiple occasions, advances our sense of his deep understanding of exile and helplessness.

We can see, then, that Asser’s presentation of foreigners as a group requiring royal support by taxes and alms is likely to have been shaped by his own experiences as an exile and foreigner. This may help to explain his interest in groups and individuals who relocated to the promises of Alfred’s kingdom. We should recall that following the terms of treaty with Guthrum, the portion of England north of Watling Street had fallen under Viking control; it may be that a number of those foreigners flocking to Wessex post-878 found service under Alfred’s regime by crossing that boundary as refugees, though Asser does not say so explicitly. Still, Asser’s discussions concerning foreigners are among other instances of dislocation he portrays throughout the *Life*, and help to form a discourse of exile which underlies Alfred’s own removal from the throne. Also importantly, immigrants in the *Life* demonstrate a popular influx brought about by Alfred’s victories and governance following his return to power over Wessex.

**3.2.2 Pilgrims**

Asser’s comments on pilgrims provide an additional layer to his construction of a theme of relocation and removal in the *Life*. The first instance of pilgrimage in the *Life* is found in the genealogy given by Asser in c.1.[[360]](#footnote-360) Here, Asser traces Alfred’s ancestry back through the line of Cerdic, to continental and biblical predecessors, finishing at last with the first man, Adam (himself, of course, an exile of note). In this genealogy, Asser appears to follow the *ASC*’s entry for 855 marking the death of Alfred’s father Ӕthelwulf, although there are some important differences.[[361]](#footnote-361) Keynes and Lapidge have suggested that Asser’s genealogy was either based on a version of the *ASC* which is no longer extant and which differed from all known versions or was the product of Asser’s own changes, perhaps with knowledge Asser had gleaned elsewhere.[[362]](#footnote-362)

The genealogies included by both Asser and the Chronicler display a direct line from Alfred’s father Ӕthelwulf back to his seventh century ancestor Ingild.[[363]](#footnote-363) Ingild, while not a king himself, was the brother of King Ine of Wessex. Ine (688-726) receives special mention in both the ASC entry and in the *Life*; whereas most ancestors in the lists are named only in brief, both sources note Ine’s end-of-life journey to Rome. The Chronicler lists Ine in relation to his brother Ingild, notes Ine’s status as king of the West Saxons, and relates that Ine traveled to and died in Rome after his reign.[[364]](#footnote-364)

Asser provides the same information, but embellishes this by emphasizing Ine’s character and piety. By doing so, Asser establishes a connection between Ine’s pilgrimage and Alfred’s own journey/s to Rome, and promotes Alfred’s place as a lawful king in the tradition of a famous forebear. To begin with, Asser refers to Ine as the ‘famous king of the West Saxons’ (*famosus Occidentalium rex Saxonum*) and so should be recognized by the reader for his accomplishments as king of Wessex.[[365]](#footnote-365) Ine is best known for his law-code, the first written form of legislation in Wessex and one of the first Anglo-Saxon codes after that promulgated by Ӕthelbert of Kent.[[366]](#footnote-366) Alfred credits Ine’s laws for inspiring the formation of his own law-code.[[367]](#footnote-367) Ine was also formative in asserting West Saxon independence from Mercia, increasing trade through the establishment of *wics* and laws related to foreign merchants, and helping to reorganize and unify the church in Wessex.[[368]](#footnote-368) Furthermore, Ine’s laws hold the first mention of ealdormen and shires as units of localized administration, and it seems as though Ine may have been responsible for establishing these.[[369]](#footnote-369) It is not surprising then that Asser should refer to Ine as *famosa*; Alfred’s own efforts in reforming government administration, improving trade, and producing a written code of legislation may be viewed as continuing the work of his ancestral line and show a respect for Ine’s form of governance. Asser’s inclusion of a single word may have carried much information for potential readers, particularly those affiliated with Alfred’s court and government: *famosa* reminds the reader that Alfred’s ancestry was prestigious and pioneering in establishing the system of governance still operating in the mid-to-late ninth century, a reflection of a golden age.

It is striking that Asser does not specifically mention any of these benefits of Ine’s rule specifically. Instead, Asser foregrounds Ine’s final achievement: ‘Ine journeyed to Rome, and honourably ending this present life there he entered the heavenly land to reign with Christ’.[[370]](#footnote-370) This account of Ine in Asser’s genealogy is reminiscent of Bede’s comment that Ine had traveled to Rome ‘to spend some of his time upon earth as a pilgrim in the neighbourhood of the holy places, so that he might be thought worthy to receive a greater welcome from the saints in heaven’.[[371]](#footnote-371) Michael Lapidge’s thorough comparison of language and phrases between Asser’s *Life* and previous authors indicates that Bede’s *HE* (as well as his *De temporum ratione*) influenced Asser’s writing.[[372]](#footnote-372) The *HE* was certainly available to Asser in one form or another; the Old English translation of this work may have been undertaken during Alfred’s reign, and the Chronicler seems to have had access to a Latin or Old English copy as well.[[373]](#footnote-373) It may well be that Asser, like Bede before him, was more interested in Ine’s role as a pilgrim than as a king; as churchmen, this seems a likely occasion for agreement between the two authors. However, as Asser was using a version of the *ASC* different from A, it is also possible that his extended reference to Ine was due to a variant genealogy given in that lost version. Regardless, Asser’s comments on the terminal pilgrimage of Ine foreshadow Alfred’s own childhood journey/s to Rome within the *Life*, revealing the author’s intention to promote a further connection between the two kings and so reaffirm Alfred’s rightful place in the line of Cerdic.

Asser presents pilgrimage to Rome as a form of self-imposed dislocation to contribute to a broader construction of exile as a thematic element throughout his work. Asser creates a connection between Alfred and pilgrimage early in the *Life* by recounting that the king had been a pilgrim as a child, first in 853 and again with his father in 855.

***VÆ* c.8** Eodem anno Ӕthelwulfus rex praefatum filium suum Ӕlfredum, magno nobilium et etiam ignobilium numero constipatum, honorifice Romam transmisit. Quo tempore dominus Leo Papa apostolicae sedi praeerat, qui praefatum infantem Ӕlfredum oppido ordinans unxit in regem, et in filium adoptionis sibimet accipiens confirmavit.[[374]](#footnote-374)

In the same year (853) King Ӕthelwulf sent his son Alfred to Rome in state, accompanied by a great number of both nobles and commoners. At this time the lord Pope Leo was ruling the apostolic see; he anointed the child Alfred as king, ordaining him properly, received him as an adoptive son and confirmed him.[[375]](#footnote-375)

***VÆ* c.11** Eodem anno Ӕthelwulfus praefatus venerabilis rex decimam totius regni sui partem ab omni regali servitio et tributo liberavit, in sempiternoque graphio in cruce Christi, pro redemptione animae suae et antecessorum suorum, uni et trino Deo immolavit. Eodemque ano cum magno honore Romam perrexit, praefatumque filium suum Ӕlfredum iterum in eandem viam secum ducens, eo quod illum plus ceteris filiis diligebat, ibique anno integro remoratus est. Quo peracto, ad patriam suam remeavit, adferens secum Iuthittam, Karoli, Francorum regis, filiam.[[376]](#footnote-376)

In the same year (855) Ӕthelwulf, the esteemed king, freed the tenth part of his whole kingdom from every royal service and tribute, and as an everlasting inheritance he made it over on the cross of Christ to the Triune God, for the redemption of his soul and those of his predecessors. He also travelled to Rome that year in great state, taking his son Alfred with him, for a second time on the same journey, because he loved him more than his other sons; there he remained for a whole year. After this, he returned to his homeland, bringing with him Judith, daughter of Charles, king of the Franks.[[377]](#footnote-377)

Both the *ASC* and the *Life* tell of Alfred’s journey to Rome in 853 and Ӕthelwulf’s pilgrimage in 855, but only Asser states that Alfred also attended Ӕthelwulf for the second trip. Janet Nelson has previously discussed Alfred’s two alleged journeys to Rome as a child and argued in 1967 that it is unlikely that the journey was undertaken twice by the ætheling.[[378]](#footnote-378) Nelson reasoned that Alfred’s visit to Rome in 853, recounted in both the *ASC* and the *Life*, was a later invention of the Chronicler and that Alfred’s only journey to Rome was that taken with his father, Ӕthelwulf, in 855. The Chronicler, Nelson suggested, omitted Alfred’s visit to Rome in 855 because he also considered a second journey to be improbable.[[379]](#footnote-379) Since Nelson’s article, Simon Keynes has presented a more recent interpretation of events derived from the *Liber Vitae* of the monastery of St Salvatore at Brescia.[[380]](#footnote-380) The *Liber Vitae* lists visitors who stayed at St Salvatore en route to Rome, including that of the Mercian King Burgred, who was driven from his kingdom by Viking incursions in 874.[[381]](#footnote-381) Intriguingly, Alfred’s name appears twice in the *Liber*, although Keynes notes that the second ‘Alfred’ listed may have been another member of the royal party with the same name.[[382]](#footnote-382) Keynes concedes to some wishful thinking, but concludes that it is possible that Alfred made both journeys to Rome, and that the evidence of the *Liber Vitae* at Brescia makes it likely that he made the journey in 853, and probably again with his father Æthelwulf in 855.[[383]](#footnote-383) Janet Nelson now concurs that, based on the name evidence in the *Liber*, Alfred most likely did accompany his father on a second trip to Rome.[[384]](#footnote-384)

Importantly, Asser’s decision to record both journeys marks a break from his reliance on the *ASC*, which only mentions a trip in 853. It seems likely that Asser was aware of Alfred’s journey in 855, or had pursued further information about this journey after consulting the Chronicler’s account. If there had only been one trip to Rome then it would be strange for Asser, who made use of accounts from Alfred and his court, to state otherwise. It is probable, then, that Alfred had made the journey twice and that the omission is the Chronicler’s. It should also be recognized that historical veracity may not have been of primary concern in Asser’s work, and that his inclusion of both journeys was a matter of choice in constructing his narrative. Whether actual or constructed, Asser’s decision to relate the 853 and 855 pilgrimages has multiple effects upon the work: it heightens the reader’s sense of Alfred’s Christian piety, underscores the king’s ties to Rome, portrays the king as a participant in the longstanding tradition of Anglo-Saxon pilgrimage to Rome, and contributes to the theme of dislocation and return which persists throughout the *Life*.

**3.2.3 Displaced Kings**

There are more traditional, readily understood exile types than immigrants and pilgrims in the *Life.* Of particular interest here are Asser’s references to royal exiles and his portrayal of Alfred as an exile figure restored to power. Viking incursions of 878 led to a time in hiding for Alfred, marking the lowest point in the king’s reign; as will be seen, the account given by Asser suggests that he was promoting Alfred, in some ways, as a heroic exile figure. This idea is bolstered by Asser’s repeated mentions of royal exiles, pilgrimage, and foreigners, all contributing toward Asser’s theme of displacement. Typological similarities between Alfred and exile figures from the Hebrew Bible, as will be shown, reinforce this leitmotif. I will now examine those instances of royal exile which Asser included in the *Life* and their contributions to the theme of exile surrounding Alfred’s life. I will then discuss the king’s period in exile as related in c.53 of the *Life* and consider why this construction of exile may have been developed in the court of Alfred the Great.

Asser situates Alfred’s time on the run in Somerset within a larger construction of exile as a form of worldly suffering. The author’s preoccupation with exile, as has been shown, included accounts of pilgrims and foreigners, but Asser also presents a number of enforced exile figures in his narrative. There are several occasions within the *Life* which mention royal exile outside of Alfred’s personal experience. The first of these is in Asser’s account of the events of 851 during the reign of Alfred’s father, Ӕthelwulf, king of the West Saxons.

***VÆ* c.4** Eodem quoque anno magnus paganorum exercitus cum trecentis et quinquaginta navibus in ostium Tamesis fluminis venit et Doruberniam, id est Cantwariorum civitatem, et Lundoniam quae est sita in aquilonari ripa Tamesis fluminis, in confinio East Seaxum et Middel-Seaxum, sed tamen ad East Seaxum illa civitas cum veritate pertinet) depopulati sunt, et Beorhtulfum, Merciorum regem, cum omni exercitu suo, qui ad proeliandum contra illos venerat, **in fugam verterunt**.[[385]](#footnote-385)

In the same year a great Viking army, with 350 ships, came into the mouth of the river Thames, and ravaged Canterbury (the city of the men of Kent) and London (situated on the northern bank of the river Thames, on the boundary of Essex and Middlesex, though the city properly belongs to Essex); **they put to flight** Berhtwulf, king of the Mercians, who with all his army had come to do battle against them.[[386]](#footnote-386)

Being ‘put to flight’ in the context of a battle is not necessarily associated with exile, but usually connotes that one party or the other has been forced to retreat. It is, however, the Mercian King Berhtwulf specifically who is put to flight in Asser’s account; the Mercian army (*exercitu*) takes the ablative of accompaniment, whereas Berhtwulf (*Beorhtulfum*)takes the accusative case and is thus the direct object of the verb. Clearly Berhtwulf’s army was also forced to flee, but there may be reason to believe that Berhtwulf’s position was quite dire following the fight. Berhtwulf’s death is not recorded by either the *ASC* or the *Life*. Had he died at the battle of 851 this fact would presumably have been mentioned. What Asser and the Chronicler do tell us is that Mercia had a new king by 853, Burgred, who called on Ӕthelwulf for help in gaining the submission of the Welsh.[[387]](#footnote-387) The regnal list compiled by Simon Keynes in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* does not specify the date of the death of Berhtwulf and the accession of Burgred, but instead offers a speculative year of 852.[[388]](#footnote-388) It is unclear what finally happened to Berhtwulf after the Viking incursions into Kent and Essex in 851: we do not know whether he was forced into exile, died sometime within a year after the battle, or otherwise abdicated the throne. What we do know is that the last word on Berhtwulf’s status was that he was put to flight by Viking forces, and it is Berhtwulf’s individual flight which Asser emphasized in constructing his account of the battle.

Berhtwulf’s place in the list of Anglo-Saxon royal exiles is perhaps debatable, but his ‘flight’ in 851 stands as one component in Asser’s developing theme of exile. Less obscure components may be found elsewhere in the *Life*, including Asser’s entry about King Osberht of Northumbria (d. 867).

***VÆ* c.27** Eo tempore maxima inter Northanhymbros discordia diabolico instinctu orta fuerat, sicut semper populo, qui odium incurrerit Dei, evenire solet. Nam Northanhymbri eo tempore, ut diximus, legitimum regem suum, Osbyrht nomine, regno expulerant, et tyrannum quendam, Ӕlla nomine, non de regali prosapia progenitum, super regni apicem constituerant. Sed, advenientibus paganis, consilio divino et optimatum adminiculo, pro communi utilitate, discordia illa aliquantulum sedata, Osbyrht et Ӕlla, adunatis viribus congregatoque exercitu, Eboracum oppidum adeunt.[[389]](#footnote-389)

At that time a great dispute, fomented by the devil, had arisen among the Northumbrians, as always happens to a people which has incurred the wrath of God. The Northumbrians at that time (as I have said) had expelled from the kingdom their rightful king, called Osberht, and had established at the kingdom’s summit a certain tyrant called Ӕlle, who did not belong to the royal line. But, when the Vikings arrived, by divine providence and with the support of the best men, for the good of all, the dispute had calmed down slightly; Osberht and Ӕlle combined forces and assembled an army, and went to the city of York.[[390]](#footnote-390)

The secular players in this depiction of events are the ‘people’ of Northumbria, who have drawn God’s wrath by their political divisions: some supported Osberht, the ‘rightful’ (*legitimus*)king, while others sided with Ӕlle, a ‘tyrant’ (*tyrannus*) with no dynastic or divine claim to rule. The devil is another participant in events who, although blame is ultimately placed on the people themselves, serves as the agent for God’s punishment.[[391]](#footnote-391) Asser is not explicit about what the people of Northumbria had done to anger God or what the punitive *discordia* specifically entailed.[[392]](#footnote-392) Keynes and Lapidge, in their translation, use ‘dispute’ rather than ‘discord’ or ‘dissension’ for both instances of *discordia* in the chapter, resulting in an interpretation wherein the ‘dispute’ between two parties (Osberht and Ӕlle) is conceived and later subdued by divine will. However, the translators have not retained the explanatory *nam* in the second sentence, the inclusion of which would have suggested that the expulsion of Osberht was the crime which led to the ‘great dispute’ as a punishment. It seems as though there is a slight paradox here of divine and worldly cause and effect, but this confusion may be resolved if we look also to the entry for 867 in the *ASC*:

***ASC* ‘A’ 867** 7 þær wæs micel ungeþuærnes þære þeode betweox him selfum, 7 hie hæfdun hiera cyning aworpenne Osbryht 7 ungecyndne cyning underfengon Ellan, 7 hie late on geare to þam gecirdon þæt hie wiþ þone here winnende wærun.[[393]](#footnote-393)

And there was great civil strife going on in that people, and they had deposed their king Osbert and taken a king with no hereditary right, Ӕlla. And not until later in the year did they unite sufficiently to proceed to fight the raiding army.[[394]](#footnote-394)

The account of Osberht’s exile in the *Life* is clarified if we understand Asser to have meant (1) that the Northumbrians exiled Osberht and put Ӕlle in his place, (2) that the expulsion of Osberht was the crime which drew God’s wrath, (3) that God’s punishment came in the form of a civil war between Osberht and Ӕlle, effectively punishing the people of Northumbria who had caused the state of affairs, and (4) that God and ‘the best men’ acted to bring the opposing parties together to confront the Viking threat.[[395]](#footnote-395) Asser’s meaning may have been better presented were the chapter not deprived of vital context: Asser refers to the expulsion of Osberht by the Northumbrians ‘as we have said’ (*ut diximus*), yet Asser does not give information about this expulsion previously in the *Life*.[[396]](#footnote-396) Despite the omission, Asser’s stated intention to have included a separate mention of Osberht’s expulsion further demonstrates the author’s careful construction of an exile theme throughout the narrative. Asser offers a richer, more detailed account of Osberht’s story than that found in the *ASC* entry given above, and so amplifies the significance of Osberht’s exile and reveals his own preoccupation with exiles in the *Life*.

Thus Asser presents Osberht as his second example of royal exile, crucially using Osberht’s story to warn his audience that expulsion of a rightful king was an affront to God. Asser’s third example of royal exile is King Burgred, who had replaced Berhtwulf on the Mercian throne. In 874 Burgred was expelled from his kingdom by Viking forces.

***VÆ* c.46** Anno Dominicae Incarnationis DCCCLXXIV, nativitatis autem Ӕlfredi regis vigesimo sexto, supra memoratus saepe exercitus Lindissig deserens, Merciam adiit, et hyemavit in loco, qui dicitur Hreopedune. Burghredum quoque Merciorum regem regnum suum deserere et ultra mare exire et Romam adire contra voluntatem suam coegit, vigesimo secundo regni sui anno; qui, postquam Romam adierat, non diu vivens, ibi defunctus est, et in Schola Saxonum in ecclesia Sanctae Mariae honorifice sepultus, adventum Domini et primam cum iustis resurrectionem expectat. Pagani quoque post eius expulsionem totum Merciorum regnum suo dominio subdiderunt…[[397]](#footnote-397)

In the year of the Lord’s Incarnation 874 (the twenty-sixth of King Alfred’s life), the Viking army left Lindsey, went to Mercia, and spent the winter at a place called Repton. They forced Burgred, king of the Mercians, to abandon his kingdom against his wish, to go abroad and to set out for Rome, in the twenty-second year of his reign. He did not live long after he had arrived at Rome: he died there and was honourably buried in the church of St. Mary, in the Saxon quarter, where he awaits the coming of the Lord, and the first resurrection with the just. After his expulsion the Vikings reduced the whole kingdom of the Mercians to their authority.[[398]](#footnote-398)

In this episode of the *Life*, Asser presents a royal exile expelled from his kingdom by force and ending his days on pilgrimage to Rome. It should be noted that Asser presents Burgred’s experience in such a way as to build upon his theme of exile in both involuntary and religious forms, as well as in more traditional imposed forms of exile. It also reflects Asser’s promotion of a typological resonance with earlier kings, in this case between Burgred and the seventh-century kings Cadwalla and Ine.[[399]](#footnote-399) Burgred’s pilgrimage to and burial in Rome reflects the religious tradition adopted by numerous individuals since the time of Bede; Asser’s mention of a Saxon quarter in Rome gives the reader some idea of the extent to which this tradition had been followed as a cultural movement.[[400]](#footnote-400) Without straying too far from our examination of Asser’s royal exiles, it is worth noting Alfred’s own trip/s to Rome as a child and his personal interest in the Saxon quarter there; in a later chapter, Asser records the death of Pope Marinus in 885, noting that he had released the Saxon quarter from tribute and taxes ‘as a result of the friendship and entreaties of Alfred’.[[401]](#footnote-401) A special relationship between Alfred and the Anglo-Saxon tradition of pilgrimage to Rome is thus emphasized by Asser, and as a result the theme of exile in the *Life* is enhanced.

The fourth exile king mentioned in Asser’s *Life* is Charles the Fat, whose death is reported in c.85 as well as in the *ASC*.

***ASC* ‘A’ 887** 7 þy ilcan geare forþferde Karl Francna cyning, 7 Earnulf his broþur sunu hine .vi. wicum ær he forþferde beredde æt þæm rice, 7 þa wearþ þæt rice todeled on .v. 7 .v. kyningas to gehalgode. Þæt wæs þeah mid Earnulfes geþafunge, 7 hi cuedon þæt hie þæt to his honda healdan sceoldon forþæm hira nan næs on fedren healfe to geboren buton him anum.[[402]](#footnote-402)

And the same year Charles, king of the Franks, died; and six weeks before he died his brother’s son Arnulf had deprived him of the kingdom. The kingdom was then divided into five, and five kings were consecrated to it. It was done, however, with Arnulf’s consent and they said that they would hold it under him, for not one of them was born to it in the male line but him alone.[[403]](#footnote-403)

***VÆ* c.85** Eodem anno Carolus, Francorum rex, viam universitatis adiit; sed Earnulf, filius fratris sui, sexta, antequam defunctus esset, hebdomada, illum regno expulerat. Quo statim defuncto, quinque reges ordinati sunt, et regnum in quinque partibus conscissum est, sed tamen principalis sedes regni ad Earnulf iuste et merito provenit, nisi solummodo quod in patruum suum indigne peccavit.[[404]](#footnote-404)

In that same year Charles, king of the Franks, went the way of all flesh; but Arnulf, his brother’s son, had expelled him from the kingdom six weeks before his death. As soon as he was dead, five kings were consecrated and the empire was torn up into five parts. Nevertheless, the principal seat of the realm fell to Arnulf – rightly and deservedly (but for the fact that he had sinned shamefully in expelling his uncle).[[405]](#footnote-405)

Again, Asser is repeating information found in the *ASC*, yet we find that while both accounts relate essentially the same information, a subtle change is detectable in Asser’s work. The Chronicler states that Charles was ‘deprived’ (*berædan*)[[406]](#footnote-406)of his kingdom, a choice of words which suggests deposition. Asser diverged from the Chronicler’s account, slightly but significantly. By choosing to depict Charles as ‘expelled’ (*expellere*),[[407]](#footnote-407) Asser portrayed Charles in a fashion more akin to an exiled figure than to a usurped king. Asser also deviates from the *ASC* in the statement concerning the resulting state of the empire. Again, both sources offer the same information, but the empire which is so concisely ‘divided’ (*todælan*)[[408]](#footnote-408)in the *ASC* is ‘torn apart’ or ‘rent to pieces’ by Asser’s use of *conscindere.*[[409]](#footnote-409) The consecration of five kings over five parts of the empire presents another instance where Asser elaborates on the Chronicler’s account. The *ASC* states that the division of the empire occurred with Arnulf’s consent and that the other kings were subservient to him as a descendant of the royal dynasty. Asser’s assertion that the division of the kingdom took place ‘immediately’ (*statim*)upon Charles’ death demonstrates his opinion of Arnulf’s grasping nature. Asser does not mention Arnulf’s assent to the division, but does agree that Arnulf had a legitimate claim as a type of overlord over the other four kings. This defense of Arnulf’s legitimacy is tempered by Asser’s clear criticism of the usurper’s actions, which points to the moral deficiency and affront to God evident in exiling Charles.

Thus, through these elaborations and divergences from the *ASC*, Asser consciously establishes his account of Charles the Fat’s death as one of an exile wronged by his own family who committed the sin of driving out their legitimate king; the result was the fragmentation of a kingdom and military conflict between its divisions. This account of Charles’ exile closely mirrors events of 855 presented in the *Life* pertaining to Alfred’s father Ӕthelwulf.

***VÆ* c.12** Interea tamen, Ӕthelwulfo rege ultra mare tantillo tempore immoranted, quaedam infamia contra morem omnium Christianorum in occidentali parte Selwuda orta est. Nam Ӕthelbaldus rex, et Ealhstan, Scireburnensis ecclesiae episcopus, Eanwulf quoque Summurtunensis pagae comes coniurasse referuntur, ne unquam Ӕthelwulf rex, a Roma revertens, iterum in regno reciperetur.[[410]](#footnote-410)

However, while King Ӕthelwulf was lingering overseas, even for so short a time, a disgraceful episode – contrary to the practice of all Christian men – occurred in the western part of Selwood. For King Ӕthelbald and Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, along with Eanwulf, ealdorman of Somerset, are reported to have plotted that King Ӕthelwulf should never again be received in the kingdom on his return from Rome…[[411]](#footnote-411)

This event followed Ӕthelwulf’s pilgrimage to Rome, accompanied by his son Alfred as already discussed. Here again Asser diverges from the *ASC* to establish a theme of exile in the *Life*. The *ASC* makes no mention of the plot against Ӕthelwulf, succinctly offering the following: *7 æfter þam to his leodum cuom, 7 hie þæs gefægene wærun*.[[412]](#footnote-412) Perhaps the Chronicler’s omission of the plot to overthrow Ӕthelwulf was due to the story’s roots in hearsay, yet Asser determined to include this ‘reported’ information in the *Life*. In choosing to do so, Asser introduces a fifth instance of royal exile, however brief, closely associated with Alfred’s personal experience.

Indeed, it may be that Æthelwulf was never meant to return from his sojourn, and that his trip to Rome in 855 was not a simple pilgrimage, but the result of usurpation by his son.[[413]](#footnote-413) This would help to explain his undertaking of a second journey, and so soon after the trip in 853, but it also presents controversy. Asser states that the scheme to prevent Æthelwulf’s return was hatched while the king was overseas.[[414]](#footnote-414) If Æthelwulf travelled to Rome because he had been expelled, then Asser demonstrates some effort to obscure this fact. It is difficult to interpret why he would have done this: he is perfectly willing to castigate Æthelbald regardless. However, if Asser was attempting to mislead his audience then we may wonder why he felt it was important to his own work that Æthelwulf not be depicted as an exile, despite his successful return; is it possible that Asser was preventing Alfred from being somehow tainted by the shadow of his father’s exile? With Alfred accompanying his father in 855, any attempt to exile Ӕthelwulf, if successful, would invariably have prevented young Alfred from returning as well. Fortunately for both Ӕthelwulf and Alfred, the plot did not come to fruition and instead an agreement was made between Ӕthelwulf and Ӕthelbald. Asser goes on in the same chapter to restate the situation and present its outcome.

***VÆ* c.12** Nam redeunte eo a Roma, praedictus filius regis Ӕthelwulfi cum omnibus suis consiliariis, immo insidiariis, tantum facinus perpetrare tentati sunt, **ut regem** **a regno proprio repellerent**: quod nec Deus ita fieri permisit, nec nobiles totius Saxoniae consenserunt. Nam, ne irremedicabile Saxoniae periculum…atrocius et crudelius per dies singulos quasi clades intestina augeretur, ineffabili patris clementia et omnium astipulatione nobilium, adunatum antea regnum inter patrem et filium dividitur…[[415]](#footnote-415)

When King Ӕthelwulf was returning from Rome, his son Ӕthelbald, with all his councillors – or rather co-conspirators – attempted to perpetrate a terrible crime: **expelling the king from his own kingdom**; but God did not allow it to happen, nor would the nobles of the whole of the Saxon land have any part in it. For, in order that the irremediable danger to the Saxon land…might not become more horrible and cruel as each day passed, the previously united kingdom was divided between father and son…[[416]](#footnote-416)

Inclusion of this story, despite the apparent failure of the conspirators to force Ӕthelwulf into exile, gives Asser the opportunity to express the view that the expulsion of a rightful king is ‘disgraceful’ and ‘contrary to the practice of all Christian men’.[[417]](#footnote-417) It also illumines Asser’s beliefs about the connection between king and kingdom. Whereas the *ASC* does record the division of Wessex, it presents this division as between two succeeding sons of Ӕthelwulf following their father’s death in 858.[[418]](#footnote-418) Asser’s account, alternatively, consciously ties the division of Wessex to the alleged plot to remove Ӕthelwulf from power; the schism between father and son thus takes on a physical manifestation in the partitioning of the ‘previously united kingdom’. David Pratt has similarly argued that the king and kingdom act as mirrors of each other in Asser’s work, with Alfred’s physical sufferings reflecting the hardships of Wessex during years of Viking incursions.[[419]](#footnote-419) By including the account of the attempted coups against Ӕthelwulf, Asser not only reinforces the theme of exile in the *Life* but also uses the opportunity, as he did with his account of Charles the Fat, to express the severe ramifications of royal exile upon entire kingdoms.

Before turning to the experience of Alfred, one further instance of exile should be noted. Asser recounts, as recorded also in the *ASC*, a diaspora of an entire community. In c.52, Asser recounts the Viking occupation at Chippenham in 878. A comparison between this and the Chronicler’s entry for 878 is revealing.

***ASC* ‘A’ 878** Her hiene bestel se here on midne winter ofer tuelftan niht to Cippanhamme 7 geridon Wesseaxna lond 7 gesæton 7 micel þæs folces 7 ofer se adræfdon, 7 þæs oþres þone mæstan del hie geridon…[[420]](#footnote-420)

In this year in midwinter after twelfth night the enemy army came stealthily to Chippenham, and occupied the land of the West Saxons and settled there, and drove a great part of the people across the sea, and conquered most of the others…[[421]](#footnote-421)

***VÆ* c.52** Anno Dominicae Incarnationis DCCCLXXVIII, nativitatis autem Ӕlfredi regis trigesimo, supra memoratus saepe exercitus Eaxeancestre deserens, Cippanham, villam regiam, quae est sita in sinistrali parte Wiltunscire, in orientali ripa fluminis, quod Britannice dicitur Abon, adiit, et ibi hyemavit. Et multos eiusdem gentis ultra mare compulit hostiliter et **penuria atque pavore** navigare et maxima ex parte omnes illius regionis habitatores suo subdiderunt dominio.[[422]](#footnote-422)

In the year of the Lord’s Incarnation 878 (the thirtieth of King Alfred’s life), the Viking army left Exeter and went to Chippenham, a royal estate situated in the left-hand part of Wiltshire, on the eastern bank of the river called *Abon* in Welsh; and they spent the winter there. By strength of arms they forced many men of that race to sail overseas, through **both poverty and fear**, and very nearly all the inhabitants of that region submitted to their authority.[[423]](#footnote-423)

At first glance the two accounts of this Viking incursion appear remarkably similar. However, Asser again provides details which do not appear in the *ASC*. For instance, both accounts depict the Viking army driving an unspecified but apparently significant number of West Saxons overseas, but only Asser comments on the conditions of these people; they journey in ‘poverty and fear’. The suffering of these West Saxon exiles receives no mention in the *ASC*’s narrative of events.

Such minor distinctions between the two sources may be due to a divergence in the narrative focus between the Chronicler and Asser. In looking at the details given by the Chronicler, we see that the Viking army did not just arrive at Chippenham, but that it ‘came stealthily’ (*bestel*), giving some idea to the reader about the tactics of the *here* while also presenting their arrival as having been an unexpected surprise; West Saxon forces at Chippenham were caught unawares. The *ASC* also states that the Viking forces ‘settled’ (*gesæton*) at Chippenham. While *sittan* can be regarded as ‘to make a camp’, which is by nature a temporary condition, it should be noted that previous entries in the *ASC* are more explicit concerning the brevity or permanence of Viking movements.[[424]](#footnote-424) The Chronicler’s use of *sittan* for 878 lends an air of permanence to the intentions of the Viking forces and suggests a desire on their part to settle.

Asser, in this instance, was not overly concerned with the tactics or long-term intentions of the Viking army, but states succinctly that the Viking army arrived and spent winter at Chippenham. This does not necessarily mean that Asser didn’t think such details were important, but rather that they were not relevant to his narrative focus in the *Life*. Asser chose to present information which was crucial to his own narrative, the central figure of which was, lest we forget, King Alfred.[[425]](#footnote-425) Thus Asser enhances the account of the Chronicler by supplying Chippenham’s status as a *villa regia*. This detail directs the story away from being one of a local invasion by enemy forces and instead presents a direct attack upon the king and his property: in essence, wounding the heart of the kingdom. Here again we see a mirroring of king and kingdom which may explain Asser’s brief but powerful comments on the West Saxon exiles. By losing Chippenham, Alfred found himself deprived of home and safety, forced to raid and scavenge to provide for himself and his small group of soldiers; as the king suffered, so too did his people, and *vice versa*.

It is clear by Asser’s recurrent mention of exile and dislocation that these comprise a prominent theme in his work. That this theme was established intentionally is suggested by the choices Asser made to adhere or diverge from the *ASC*, choices which brought the concept and condition of removal to the fore in his narrative. Royal exile is particularly prominent in the *Life*; it enables Asser to comment upon legitimacy of rule, the severity of the sin of expelling legitimate kings, and the widespread ramifications of royal exile upon kingdoms, wherein the king’s condition comes to reflect that of his realm. However, while the exile experiences of Osberht of Northumbria and Charles the Fat, and the brief expulsion of Alfred’s father Ӕthelwulf, resulted in deaths and fractured realms, this was not the case for Asser’s primary subject. Indeed, we may even argue whether Alfred’s experience should be considered properly or fully exilic, either in actuality or in portrayal. The matter is controversial and my discussion needs to be framed by an awareness of distinctions between ‘real’ exile and an exilic gloss. I will now consider this problem and examine Asser’s depiction of the events of 878 alongside the annals of the Chronicler.

**3.3 ‘Through the woods and fen-fastnesses’: Alfred’s Exile?**

In the previous chapter I discussed portrayals of Edwin of Northumbria, whose exile caused him to flee to safety beyond the boundaries of his kingdom to seek protection in other British and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. My chapter on Æthelred, below, considers the portrayals and responses concerning Æthelred’s flight overseas to find succor with his wife’s family in Normandy. These examples of physical displacement are typical where instances of imposed exile are concerned, yet Alfred’s experience differs from this notion: his removal from power did not require that he traverse the boundaries of his kingdom. In this section, I will discuss the presentations made by Asser and the Chronicler concerning a time of significant difficulties for Alfred and his kingdom, specifically during the early part of 878.

**3.3.1 Dislocation and Hardship: Alfred in Exile?**

Exploring Alfred’s status as a restored royal exile requires close examination of that episode of the king’s life found in both cc. 52 and 53 of Asser’s *Life* and the *ASC* entry for 878. The Chronicler’s entry provides details on this troubling time and, although already quoted above, I include it again here:

***ASC* ‘A’ 878** Her hiene bestel se here on midne winter ofer tuelftan niht to Cippanhamme 7 geridon Wesseaxna lond 7 gesæton 7 micel þæs folces 7 ofer se adræfdon, 7 þæs oþres þone mæstan del hie geridon 7 him to gecirdon buton þam cyninge Elfrede, 7 he lytle werede unieþelice æfter wudum for 7 on morfæstenum.[[426]](#footnote-426)

In this year in midwinter after twelfth night the enemy army came stealthily to Chippenham, and occupied the land of the West Saxons and settled there, and drove a great part of the people across the sea, and conquered most of the others; and the people submitted to them, except King Alfred. He journeyed in difficulties through the woods and fen-fastnesses with a small force.[[427]](#footnote-427)

The Chronicler goes on to give further details concerning the events which followed, but no more is said concerning Alfred’s difficulties in the wilderness. Here we see a troubled king at a low point in his career in a bid for survival, but the Chronicler includes three important points: Alfred did not submit, he remained within the borders of Wessex, and he was not alone.

Asser expands upon the Chronicler’s annal in cc.52 and 53.

***VÆ* c.52** Anno Dominicae Incarnationis DCCCLXXVIII, nativitatis autem Ӕlfredi regis trigesimo, supra memoratus saepe exercitus Eaxeancestre deserens, Cippanham, villam regiam, quae est sita in sinistrali parte Wiltunscire, in orientali ripa fluminis, quod Britannice dicitur Abon, adiit, et ibi hyemavit. Et multos eiusdem gentis ultra mare compulit hostiliter et penuria atque pavore navigare et maxima ex parte omnes illius regionis habitatores suo subdiderunt dominio.[[428]](#footnote-428)

In the year of the Lord’s Incarnation 878 (the thirtieth of King Alfred’s life), the Viking army left Exeter and went to Chippenham, a royal estate situated in the left-hand part of Wiltshire, on the eastern bank of the river called *Abon* in Welsh; and they spent the winter there. By strength of arms they forced many men of that race to sail overseas, through both poverty and fear, and very nearly all the inhabitants of that region submitted to their authority.[[429]](#footnote-429)

***VÆ* c.53** Eodem tempore Ӕlfred [saepe supra memoratus rex], cum paucis suis nobilibus et etiam cum quibusdam militibus et fasellis, per sylvestria et gronnosa Summurtunensis pagae loca in magna tribulatione inquietam vitam ducebat. Nihil enim habebat quo uteretur, nisi quod a paganis et etiam a Christianis, qui se paganorum subdiderant dominio, frequentibus irruptionibus aut clam aut etiam palamm subtraheret.[[430]](#footnote-430)

At the same time King Alfred, with his small band of nobles and also with certain soldiers and thegns, was leading a restless life in great distress amid the woody and marshy places of Somerset. He had nothing to live on except what he could forage by frequent raids, either secretly or even openly, from the Vikings as well as from the Christians who had submitted to the Vikings’ authority.[[431]](#footnote-431)

It is clear from both accounts of the Viking encampment at Chippenham that the king was, for the time, ‘king’ in name only; he had not been officially deposed, and yet what control he held over the land in Wiltshire previously was lost with the arrival of Viking forces. The language of both the Chronicler and Asser indicates that the remaining inhabitants of Wiltshire had become subjects of Viking rule; the phrases *him to gecirdon* in the *ASC*, and *suo subdiderunt dominio* in the *Life* both acknowledge that a shift in loyalties had taken place. Alfred’s subjects may have seen no alternatives except to submit to the Vikings or to depart entirely from Wessex.[[432]](#footnote-432) Though acting under duress, the local inhabitants and leadership were now recognizing, according to our sources, Viking authority and had effectively ceased to be Alfred’s subjects.[[433]](#footnote-433)

Of course we should take care in evaluating the extent of Alfred’s losses based on the records of Asser and the Chronicler. There is, and has been, uncertainty concerning how much of Wessex had submitted to Viking forces, and how much remained relatively free of occupation. Davis famously argued that sources which likely emerged from the court of Alfred would avoid criticism of the king, and might even go so far as to exaggerate circumstances so that Alfred’s ultimate victory would appear all the more remarkable.[[434]](#footnote-434) Davis suggested also that there are problems interpreting the Chronicler’s intended meaning of words such as *geridon* and *gesæton*: should they mean ‘to ride over’ and ‘to stay for a time’, or ‘take possession of’ and ‘to settle’?[[435]](#footnote-435) Davis also pointed out that the people driven ‘across the sea’ may only have crossed the Bristol Channel, rather than the English Channel, which would suggest that very little of Wessex was actually occupied by Viking forces.[[436]](#footnote-436)

Confronting Davis’ arguments, Dorothy Whitelock agreed with the proposed motivations for propagandizing: the heavy burdens of rebuilding, fortifying and administrating post-878 Wessex would require persuasion and royal promotion.[[437]](#footnote-437) However, Whitelock argued that the *ASC* was not employed to distort facts in the king’s favour, largely because of the dating of the work; the *ASC* was not distributed prior to 890, by which time such propagandizing would have been unnecessary.[[438]](#footnote-438) Further, Whitelock noted that had the *ASC* been intended as a promoter of royal power it could have included much more information to enhance Alfred’s image, such as information gleaned from charters, coins, and Asser’s *Life*.[[439]](#footnote-439) Besides suggesting that intentional distortion of facts would be ‘against Alfred’s character’, Whitelock also questioned Davis’ arguments concerning misinterpretation of language by contending that *geridan* and *gæsittan*, when used with a direct object, usually do mean ‘to get by riding’ and ‘to settle/occupy’, respectively.[[440]](#footnote-440) Whitelock also considered the audience’s understanding of the *ASC*. If *ofer sæ* was meant to mean ‘across the Bristol Channel’, then this would only have been understood by residents of Somerset and North Devon, whereas Asser and others would have interpreted this as ‘across the English Channel’.[[441]](#footnote-441) Furthermore, surviving members of the court and aristocracy would have remembered what actually happened and whether they had submitted to the Danes or not, which would make the distortion of facts ineffective.[[442]](#footnote-442)

Whitelock did concede that the Danish occupation of Wessex was probably regional rather than total, and that the Chronicler may have been imprecise with his expression ‘conquered and occupied the land of the West Saxons’.[[443]](#footnote-443) However, she questioned why Alfred would have had to travel ‘in difficulty with a small band’ if the greater part of the kingdom was unoccupied, or why it should take an otherwise little-effected kingdom five months to gather an army:

There seems no doubt that what the chronicler is describing is a near collapse of Wessex early in 878, and not merely a Danish occupation of a very limited area of the kingdom.[[444]](#footnote-444)

A tempered interpretation was adopted by Keynes and Lapidge, who state that Viking control of Wessex must have been unstable outside of Chippenham, but that the land had been ‘effectively conquered’ nonetheless.[[445]](#footnote-445) Still, more recently Malcolm Godden has weighed in on the events surrounding Chippenham in 878. Godden notes, for instance, that a number of scholars have stated that Alfred was nearly captured by surprise, but that this notion is unwarranted and may have been derived from an account of Guthrum’s use of spies in the later Latin *Life of St Neot*.[[446]](#footnote-446) Furthermore, Godden agrees with an assertion by Smyth that Alfred would have been foolish to spend Christmas at Chippenham, close by enemy activities, without having armed forces close to hand.[[447]](#footnote-447) Although Alfred may have been deprived of Chippenham, Godden proposes that this does not mean he was physically driven from that royal estate.

We should not, therefore, view Alfred’s experience as in keeping with the fullest sense of exile: though likely restricted from entering parts of Wessex and consigned to hiding, he did so within the nominal borders of his kingdom. There is also no evidence that there had been a movement by the aristocracy to remove the king by force or by law, apart from some possible treasons of a small number of leading men.[[448]](#footnote-448) Furthermore, the ability of English forces to organize a counterstrike may have taken some months to enact, but this demonstrates nonetheless that Alfred was not wholly powerless or without resources.

To view Alfred as an exiled king in the literal sense, directly comparable to Edwin and Æthelbald, would require a broad, flexible understanding of the term; as I have discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, exile may be interpreted by physical, spiritual, spatial, official, or conditional standards, with distinctions made between actual exile and exilic typologies. Did contemporaries view Alfred as an exile? This is difficult to ascertain, although I will soon discuss in what ways Asser and the Chronicler may have imparted the notion. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, which was composed in either the mid-tenth or early-to-mid-eleventh century,[[449]](#footnote-449) does present, however, a later Anglo-Saxon account of Alfred’s experience which offers some intriguing comparisons between Alfred and two other exiled kings:

***HSC* c.17** Sic uisitauit, confortauit, docuit, iuuit iste sanctus confessor Christi Cuthbertus Elfredum, sicut olim in Anglica historia legitur sanctus Petrus Eadwino regi pagano crucem auream dextera gestans apparuit, se Petrum principe esse apostolorum asseruit, coronam ostendit, et ut paganismum relinqueret praecepit, et sic eum ubique uictorem futurum praedixit, sicut etiam Samuel Dauid regi fecit.

Thus that holy confessor of Christ, Cuthbert, visited, comforted, instructed and assisted Alfred, just as once, as can be read in English history, St Peter appeared to Edwin the pagan king bearing a golden cross in his right hand, asserted himself to be Peter prince of apostles, held forth a crown, commanded that Edwin relinquish paganism, and thus predicted that he would be victorious everywhere, just as Samuel did for King David.[[450]](#footnote-450)

This northern interpretation of southern affairs compares Cuthbert to St Peter and, indirectly, to the Old Testament prophet Samuel. In doing so, the anonymous author of the *HSC* indicates that he viewed Alfred’s position as similar to those of Kings Edwin and David. Edwin, as previously discussed, was visited by a spirit messenger, perhaps St Peter, while living in exile. David was only a child when he was anointed by Samuel, but famously spent a number of years living as an exile in the wilderness.[[451]](#footnote-451) These comparisons alone would suggest that the author was portraying Alfred as an exile as well. He is, however, even more explicit in his view of Alfred’s situation in a later chapter concerning the death bed instructions of Edward the Elder to his son Æthelstan:

***HSC* c.25** … et ut sanctum Cuthbertum diligeret et supra omnes sanctos honoraret diligenter inculcauit, notificans ei qualiter patri suo regi Elfredo in paupertate et **in exilio misericorditer** subuenisset et qualiter eum contra omnes hostes uriliter iuuisset….

…and diligently instructed him to love St Cuthbert and honour him above all saints, revealing to him how he had mercifully succoured his father King Alfred **in poverty and exile** and how he had boldly aided him against all enemies…[[452]](#footnote-452)

It seems that the author of the *HSC* interpreted Alfred’s hardships of 878 as an exile experience, to which he could append his own northern traditions concerning St Cuthbert.

The *HSC* reveals that at least one late Anglo-Saxon churchman either interpreted Alfred’s 878 experience as exilic, or otherwise chose to adapt his presentation of the king’s time on the run as an exile experience. It may be that by the time of the author’s composition of the *HSC* a tradition had already developed which described Alfred as an exile. In the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* (*VSN*), which was composed between the late-tenth and mid-eleventh centuries,[[453]](#footnote-453) Alfred is again described as an exile. In c.11, *VSN* recounts Alfred’s loss of power and his retreat to the wilderness as an unsettled and lonely episode. The author of the *VSC* uses specific exile language later in c.12:

***VSN* c.12** Est locus in ultimis Anglorum Brittanie partibus ad occidentem situs cui nomen lingua Saxonum est Ethelingaige – quod apud nos sonat ‘clitonum insula’ – inmensis salis paludibus circumcirca septus, quantula in medio planicie retentus. Ibi ex insperato rex Æluredus **exul** intercidit **solus**.[[454]](#footnote-454)

There is a place in the remote parts of English Britain far to the west, which in English is called Athelney and which we refer to as ‘Athelings’ Isle’; it is surrounded on all sides by vast salt marshes and sustained by some level ground in the middle. King Alfred happened unexpectedly to come there as a lone traveller.[[455]](#footnote-455)

This extract is taken from the same chapter that contains the earliest story of Alfred burning the cakes and receiving the scorn of a swineherd’s wife.[[456]](#footnote-456) The author of the *VSC* was clearly expressing his own creativity and perhaps sharing a tradition which had developed around Alfred’s legend. The author adds to Asser’s geographic description of Alfred’s place of hiding, and attributes even greater levels of isolation to the king’s dwelling on an ‘island’ surrounded by salt marshes. Furthermore, the *VSC* author uses explicit exile language to refer to Alfred. The translation of *exul* as ‘traveller’ by Keynes and Lapidge here lacks the sense of the subject’s expulsion or banishment which *exul* connotes.[[457]](#footnote-457) In view of the extensive description of Alfred’s isolated surroundings, I would suggest that to translate *exul* as ‘exile’ is more in accordance with the *VSN* author’s meaning.

The *HSC* and *VSN* are the nearest sources which may convey a late Anglo-Saxon attitude toward Alfred as having been an exile; William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, completed in 1125, is the next narrative account to use exile language in referring to Alfred, employing the verb *refugere* to describe Alfred’s escape to Athelney.[[458]](#footnote-458) Yet William’s work is not necessarily reflective of contemporary or near-contemporary opinions of events, and we should note that neither Asser nor the Chronicler use typical exile terminology when referring to Alfred. In fact, for all of the hardships which Asser describes, the lack of exile language in his account of Alfred’s time in Somerset is notable. Ambiguities concerning Alfred’s position, in actuality and in portrayal, explain why many scholars of the period do not refer to this as an exile experience.[[459]](#footnote-459)

Is there any evidence that Asser was consciously invoking exilic typological resonances with Alfred despite a lack of explicit exile terminology? It may be useful to consider two other elements of Alfred’s experience presented in both the *ASC* and the *Life*: the first is the king’s physical displacement and the second is the hardship he suffered during this time. Both the *ASC* and the *Life* provide a geographic and environmental depiction of where Alfred lived during the Viking occupation. The *ASC* states that the king traveled into the ‘woods and fen-fastnesses’ (*wudum for 7 on morfæstenum*) and Asser echoes the Chronicler’s description of the king’s place of retreat (*sylvestria et gronnosa*). Both accounts thus give some idea about the type of terrain the king had escaped to as well as the nature of this environment: an unsettled wilderness suitable for hiding with a few loyal men. In effect, Alfred was dislocated from the world which had been his to rule and live in. This physical displacement to a figurative, if not literal, foreign setting suggests that the king endured an exile-like existence.

The second variable found in both accounts concerns the hardship of this experience; the Chronicler states that the king travelled ‘uneasily’ (*unieþelice*)[[460]](#footnote-460) and that his entourage was small, while Asser again repeats the *ASC*, acknowledging the paucity of the king’s available manpower and the difficulty he endured (*in magna tribulatione*).[[461]](#footnote-461) Mention of the king’s own suffering in both the *ASC* and Asser’s *Life* underscores the nature of Alfred’s dislocation. In neither account is the king depicted as unrestricted in his movements or as enjoying the comforts of stable rule. Although not necessarily indicative of exile, the conditions under which Alfred lived during this episode may be seen as impermanent, transitory and unpleasant and significantly exile-like.

The *ASC* entry for 878 is otherwise unforthcoming, but Asser gives additional information. The elements he adds enhance his construction of royal loss and dislocation. As previously stated, Asser notes Chippenham’s status as a royal estate, and so draws attention to the king’s personal loss in 878 while emphasizing Alfred’s lack of political and military control over the region.[[462]](#footnote-462) Asser thus encourages a view of Alfred, rather than his kingdom or government, as the target of the attack. Asser also specifies that Alfred hid in Somerset.[[463]](#footnote-463) This detail enhances our perception of Alfred’s movement within Wessex from Wiltshire to Somerset. Asser thus draws attention to the king’s dislocation not only by stating Alfred’s change in environs but also by demonstrating that a political boundary had been crossed in seeking safety. Finally, Asser adds to the *ASC*’s account of the king’s hardship by telling us directly that the king was unprovisioned, and experienced material want that necessitated indiscriminate raids for food and supplies. This information is significant in Asser’s construction of Alfred as a dislocated figure because of its two-fold effect: it highlights the grim depths of Alfred’s situation, heightening our understanding of the king’s suffering, while also underscoring the political reality that Alfred, deprived of the power to rule, was raiding former subjects ‘who had submitted to the Vikings’ authority’ (*qui se paganorum subdiderant dominio*).[[464]](#footnote-464) Asser, in short, shows us a king living as an outlaw. Such desperate subsistence evokes the tribulations of exile in the reader’s reception.

So was Alfred an exiled king, and in what sense can we say that he is depicted as one? Both the *ASC* and Asser’s *Life* suggest that, despite the king’s continued presence in the kingdom, Alfred’s movements must have been significantly limited; the avoidance of population centres and retreat to the ‘woods and fen-fastnesses’ were necessary precautions for the troubled king. Asser and the Chronicler both present Alfred’s experience in terms of political and military powerlessness, physical displacement and worldly suffering. However, whereas the Chronicler’s brief account centred on the state of the kingdom and the Viking invasion, Asser made choices for inclusion and comment that served his own narrative focus by emphasizing the king’s personal experience. Because of these choices, Asser seems to wish to depict Alfred as living the life of an exile --- a depiction which was later adopted and made more explicit by the later *HSC* and *VSN*.

**3.3.2 Getting Out of the Woods**

Alfred reclaimed his position later in 878 and so restored himself from the itinerant hardships he had endured. Having presented Alfred’s unhappy state of affairs, Asser turns in c.54 to describe a second invasion into Wessex, simultaneous to the capture of Chippenham. This second army, led by an unnamed brother of Ivar and Halfdan, besieged a number of the king’s thegns at Countisbury, Devon.[[465]](#footnote-465) Lapidge and Keynes agree with Whitelock’s suggestion that with assaults on both Chippenham and Devon, the two armies may have been working in tandem, hoping to capture Alfred in their endeavour.[[466]](#footnote-466) If Alfred was the primary target, then this personal attack further explains Alfred’s retreat to the wilderness for refuge, particularly if he had only a small band of men.

In his account, Asser notes that the Vikings slaughtered many Christians along the way, a detail not mentioned by the Chronicler. Asser may have included this detail to call attention to the religious divide between English and Scandinavian forces (which he does throughout the *Life*)[[467]](#footnote-467) and so promote an assertion that divine intervention drove events. With English forces sheltering in the stronghold at Countisbury, the Vikings determined to lay siege to the fort; the evident lack of preparation for an extended standoff may have inspired Viking hopes that the English would give up from hunger and thirst.[[468]](#footnote-468)

***VÆ* c.54** Quod non ita, ut putabant, evenit. Nam Christiani, antequam talem penuriam omnino subire paterentur, divinitus instigati, multo melius iudicantes aut mortem aut victoriam mereri, diluculo super paganos ex improviso irrumpunt, et a primo tempore hostes hostiliter cum rege suo maxima ex parte, paucis ad naves per fugam elapsis, prosternunt.[[469]](#footnote-469)

But it did not turn out as they thought. For the Christians, long before they were liable to suffer want in any way, were divinely inspired and, judging much better to gain either death or victory, burst out unexpectedly at dawn against the Vikings and, by virtue of their aggressiveness, from the very outset they overwhelmed the enemy in large part, together with their king, a few escaping by flight to the ships.[[470]](#footnote-470)

The ‘divine inspiration’ which led to an English victory here will be discussed further below, but for now we should note that this account of the siege at Countisbury demonstrates a remarkable reversal in Alfred’s fortune in the *Life* which heralds the king’s emergence from exile. Without proffering extensive details, Asser tells us in c.55 that after Easter of 878 Alfred established a stronghold at Athelney, manned by the few men who accompanied him in league with the thegns of Somerset.[[471]](#footnote-471) From here he appears to have led small skirmishes against Viking forces, and though no specifics are given in the *Life* or the *ASC*, Alfred’s efforts seem to have drawn the attention of both present and potential supporters, whose reception of the king at Egbert’s Stone is mentioned in both the *ASC* and the *Life*.[[472]](#footnote-472)

***ASC* ‘A’ 878** 7 him to comman þær ongen Sumorsæte alle 7 Wilsætan 7 Hamtunscir se del se hiere behinon se was 7 his gefægene wærun[[473]](#footnote-473)

…and there came to meet him all the people of Somerset and of Wiltshire and of that part of Hampshire which was on this side of the sea, and they rejoiced to see him.[[474]](#footnote-474)

***VÆ*** **c.55** Ibique obviaverunt illi omnes accolae Summurtunensis pagae et Wiltunensis, omnes accolae Hamtunensis pagae, qui non ultra mare pro metu paganorum navigaverant; visoque rege, **sicut dignum erat**, **quasi redivivum** post tantas tribulationes recipientes, immenso repleti sunt gaudio.[[475]](#footnote-475)

And there all the inhabitants of Somerset and Wiltshire and all the inhabitants of Hampshire – those who had not sailed overseas for fear of the Vikings – joined up with him. When they saw the king, receiving him (not surprisingly) **as if one restored to life** after suffering such great tribulations, they were filled with immense joy.[[476]](#footnote-476)

Asser’s account of Alfred’s reception echoes closely that of the king’s father, Ӕthelwulf, whose son Ӕthelbald (Alfred’s eldest brother) attempted to prevent Ӕthelwulf from returning to his rightful throne in 856, as discussed above.[[477]](#footnote-477) Upon Æthelwulf’s return from Rome, and presumably after dealing with the conspiracy to prevent his return, Asser states that ‘the whole nation was so delighted (**as was fitting**) at the arrival of their lord’ (*tota illa gens,* ***ut dignum erat****, in adventu senioris ita gavisa est*).[[478]](#footnote-478) Asser retains the interpolation *ut dignum erat* and the general sense of his meaning is clear: both Æthelwulf and Alfred were beloved by their subjects. This mirroring of Ӕthelwulf’s return to the throne would have reminded Asser’s audience of Alfred’s lineage and legitimacy, suggested parallels between the qualities of Alfred and his father, and underscored Alfred’s position as a restored hero gladly received upon his return as his father had been.

**3.3.3 Return and Restoration**

Asser clearly depicts this event as marking a return and restoration, even though Alfred had never technically left the kingdom. In the *ASC* entry concerning Alfred’s emergence from the wilderness, the Chronicler’s statement that the people ‘rejoiced to see him’ is succinct but telling. Keynes and Lapidge have noted that this jubilant reception may be a sign of both the previous suffering and inborn fealty of the populace, a point which agrees with the Chronicler’s narrative focus on the state of the kingdom during the Viking incursions.[[479]](#footnote-479) Reshaping the same story from the Chronicle, Asser again supplies additional details to direct his narrative focus to the king’s dislocation. Here he does so by depicting Alfred’s return from the marshes as on a par with death and resurrection, thus justifying and emphasizing the jubilation with which the king was received while drawing parallels between the restored king and the Biblical figures of Jesus Christ and Lazarus.[[480]](#footnote-480) The use of *redivivus* in c.55 to mean ‘restored to life’ or ‘reborn’ implies a previous state of death and underscores the depths from which king and people had arisen.[[481]](#footnote-481) That the king was in effect ‘dead’ to his people during his time on the run in Somerset emphasizes the hardships of his experience and loss of worldly power.

Both the Chronicler and Asser present Alfred as a weakened and dislocated king in 878, yet Asser goes further in constructing and embellishing this representation of the king in the *Life*. The inclusion of material about foreigners, pilgrims, and royal exiles establish a prominent theme around which his portrayal of Alfred’s time in Somerset may be better understood as a hardship very similar to exile. The resulting portrayal of the king and his people in the *Life* may be further understood by the typological resonances Asser presents. These will now be discussed in the following subsection.

**3.4 Inheritance and Legitimacy: Typological Comparisons**

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that Asser elaborated a theme of exile and dislocation in the narrative of the *Life* and that he embellished certain events recorded in the *ASC* in a way which articulated this theme and directed his narrative focus onto the hardships of Alfred and the English. Asser’s *Life* tells of a nation and a king suffering in periods of loss and confusion, enduring periods of exile in the depths of their suffering, and finally emerging to be restored to order and strength. Accordingly, we should concern ourselves with what Asser’s aims may have been as he developed the topos of exile in the *Life* and how this theme was meant to be received by the work’s audience.

A work’s purpose may be linked to its apparent intended readership but, due to a lack of any evidence for its widespread distribution, the intended audience of the *Life* remains a matter for speculation. I have already noted how Marie Schütt, building upon a comment of W.H. Stevenson, argued strongly and convincingly for a Welsh audience.[[482]](#footnote-482) Schütt’s argument was accepted and further bolstered by Dorothy Whitelock and has been adopted by the most recent editors of the work’s English translation.[[483]](#footnote-483) D.P. Kirby concurred, in part, though he also argued that the work as we have received it is a compilation of smaller treatises which served as propagandist tools for Alfred’s court, and that the aims of these treatises varied over time with the changing needs of the Wessex dynasty; for instance, select parts of the *Life* may reflect Alfred’s need for alliances with Welsh kings and the support of the Welsh church.[[484]](#footnote-484) Alternatively, Matthew Kempshall has pointed out that the purpose and intended audience of the *Life* may be inferred from the influences Asser drew upon in crafting his work; Kempshall notes that the *Life* is dedicated to the king and examines how Asser’s use of various sources, particularly Gregory the Great’s *Regula Pastoralis*, suggests a concern with early medieval Christian kingship and thus a royal audience.[[485]](#footnote-485) This concurs with James Campbell’s contention that Alfred was the primary audience for the *Life*, as mentioned above.[[486]](#footnote-486)

I am persuaded by all of these arguments: each is as plausible as the next. Of greater importance here is how Asser may have expected any contemporary audience to read and interpret the *Life*, particularly in respect to typological connections between persons of that period and figures from the Old and New Testaments. I have discussed typology and the application of typological resonances in historical narratives in the preceding chapter and a full introduction is unnecessary here.[[487]](#footnote-487) However, Asser knew Bede’s work and echoes several classical and patristic authors familiar to Bede, such as Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus and Augustine.[[488]](#footnote-488) Also like Bede, Asser quoted extensively from scripture and makes at least twenty-four biblical references in recording his narrative on Alfred.[[489]](#footnote-489) As will be shown, Asser had similar views to Bede’s regarding the writing of history and the interactions between God, Man and the Bible.

Typological interpretations of Alfred and the events of ninth-century England invite discussion. Some elements of Asser’s account of Alfred which at first seem tenuous or to have been otherwise ignored can be seen, when interpreted typologically and held alongside other *figurae*, to contribute to a carefully crafted scheme of representation and interpretation. How did Asser shape the *Life* to better appeal to the typological worldviews of contemporary audiences, especially to Alfred and his court? To explore and expand upon this question, I will discuss how Asser uses exile as one element in his tapestry of typological connections between Alfred and Old Testament and earlier Christian kings. The extension of these typological connections to incorporate the English more generally will be explored in the following section on Solomon and Alfred’s law-code. I will then examine how exile and dislocation in the *Life* function as a theme of typological significance that links the sufferings and successes of Alfred and the English to those of the Chosen People of the Covenant. Ultimately, these uses of exile make Asser’s *Life* not only an instructive, cautionary tale for ecclesiastical and lay audiences, but also an endorsement for the legitimacy of Alfred and the house of Wessex couched within a contemporary *Heilsgeschichte* of a people redeemed through their king.

The story of Alfred diverges from those of other exiled kings in the *Life* in that Alfred remains in his kingdom, despite potential dangers. He is thus able to emerge later from his exile-like existence in the wilds to reclaim his kingdom. The presentation of this experience is similar to King David’s time in the wilderness (I Sam. 24) and eventual ascendency to the throne of Israel (II Sam. 2:1-4). We should recall that David was anointed as a child by the prophet Samuel, fled into exile from King Saul’s court, and claimed his rightful office after Saul’s death at the battle of Gilboa.[[490]](#footnote-490) A typological likeness to David in the event of Alfred’s brief exile is supported by similar connections between the two kings in the *Life*. In c.42, Asser comments on Alfred’s succession, noting that this was after his brother King Ӕthelred had died and that Alfred took the throne by the will of God and the people.[[491]](#footnote-491) Asser goes on in the same chapter to mention that Alfred, had he wished, could have taken the kingdom from his brother earlier but did not feel himself worthy of being king. Alfred’s proficiencies as a hunter and a warrior are next mentioned as royal qualities contributing to Alfred’s throne-worthiness in the view of his people. In each case we may find a typological parallel with David. The most apparent may be in relation to David’s martial abilities, whether in warfare or on the hunt.[[492]](#footnote-492) J.M. Wallace-Hadrill noted the use of David in ninth-century Carolingian texts and art to reflect contemporary continental thoughts on kingship; Notker’s presentation of Charlemagne as a Davidic figure includes his virtues as a Christian king but also as an ‘iron warrior’, while the Stuttgart Psalter has illustrations of David as a warrior and hunter, fully armed while protected, anointed and crowned by God’s hand.[[493]](#footnote-493)

Alfred’s typological connection to David as a warrior king agrees well with traditional roles of Anglo-Saxon kings, but the humbling experience of dislocation makes the shared virtue of royal humility, another link to David, one of the strongest typological associations between the two. In his account on how Alfred became king, Asser comments on Alfred’s reluctance to rule, despite his potential to have taken over during the life of his brother King Ӕthelred.[[494]](#footnote-494) This further connects Alfred to David by their shared qualities of humility and recognition of the divine appointment of kings.[[495]](#footnote-495) Respect for royal office is evinced by David who, given the opportunity to kill his oppressor, prevented his men from murdering Saul.

**I Sm. 24:7-8** dixitque ad viros suos propitius mihi sit Dominus ne faciam hanc rem domino meo christo Domini ut mittam manum meam in eum quoniam christus Domini est et confregit David viros suos sermonibus et non permisit eos ut consurgerent in Saul porro Saul exsurgens de spelunca pergebat coepto itinere

And he said to his men: The Lord be merciful unto me, that I may do no such thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, as to lay my hand upon him, because he is the Lord’s anointed. And David stopped his men with his words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul: but Saul, rising up out of the cave, went on his way.

In this way, despite his exilic existence, David showed his humility to God as well as to his earthly king Saul. Asser promotes a typological resonance between Alfred and David by voicing their mutual sense of propriety: neither chooses to overthrow God’s appointed king despite the opportunities afforded to them. Alfred, as the youngest son, maintained his position as ‘heir-apparent’ (*secundarius*)until the time came for him to legitimately claim the throne. The idea that Alfred’s life up through the reign of his brother Æthelred was spent awaiting his ultimate ascension echoes loudly not only the positions of Alfred and David as anointed by God from childhood, patiently waiting for their turns to rule, but also with their shared familial positions as the youngest of their brothers.[[496]](#footnote-496)

Typological resonances with David’s humility are present in other ninth-century sources unrelated to Asser, and so suggest that these resonances were broadly recognizable. Deshman’s discussion of Charles the Bald’s psalter, made between 846 and 869 for the Carolingian king’s personal use, focuses on the place of David in two panels.[[497]](#footnote-497) In one, David’s humility through repentance is shown in his acceptance of the prophet Nathan’s chastisement for the killing of Uriah, while in the second David’s humility is expressed in his decision not to kill Saul in the cave.[[498]](#footnote-498) Carolingian contemporaries clearly saw important lessons in David’s experience. The concept of humility as a royal virtue could certainly have been promoted or strengthened at Alfred’s court by the churchmen John and Grimbald: both were recruited by Alfred from France.[[499]](#footnote-499) Continental ideas on kingship, as Wallace-Hadrill has noted, varied slightly but agreed on the benefits of humility as a royal virtue to be imitated.[[500]](#footnote-500) In highlighting Alfred’s reluctance to usurp the rightful king, his brother Ӕthelred, Asser signals Alfred’s humility in senses both literal and typological. Such emphases on the connection between Alfred and David gain added meaning and significance from Asser’s narrative of Alfred’s time of hiding in Somerset: Alfred’s life experiences are repeatedly drawn into connection with David’s, as are his behaviours and kingly virtues.

There is also a typological connection between the two kings in the prophecies which predict their reigns; just as Samuel had foreseen David’s future as king of the people of Israel, Alfred’s future rule could be seen to have been adumbrated, in a way, by his childhood anointment by Pope Leo IV.[[501]](#footnote-501) Despite Alfred’s having three older brothers, Asser and the Chronicle state that he was ordained king at the age of five in 853.[[502]](#footnote-502) This ordination at such an early stage in Alfred’s life suggests prophecy, and Janet Nelson has noted that it is for this reason that Aelred of Rievaulx was later ‘to endow Leo IV with the vision of Samuel’.[[503]](#footnote-503) That the typological connection between Alfred and David was perceived by an author in the twelfth century suggests the potential impact of Alfred’s anointment story, and we have already mentioned this comparison made in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*.[[504]](#footnote-504) Continental rulers had long adopted the practice of royal anointing by the time of Alfred’s reign, and recognized the importance of this rite in establishing a king’s Christian legitimacy through fulfillment of biblical custom.[[505]](#footnote-505) Asser may thus have encouraged his own ninth-century readership to see Alfred’s typological connection to David through their shared experiences of prophetic anointment.

Alfred’s childhood anointing and the personal behaviors attributed to him by Asser support, and are supported by, conceptions of the king’s exile-like experience as a further reflection of the experiences of David. Asser carefully constructs his account of Alfred’s life in such a way as to invite the reader to notice parallels and resonances between the two kings, and in doing so very nearly departs from the realm of analogy to suggest instead a real fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The importance of this typological connection to Alfred’s time on the run in Somerset may be explained by the biblical role of exile as a form of suffering that precedes exaltation, just as David had experienced before his elevation to the throne.

Exile as an arduous path to glory extends the typological link shared by Alfred and David to include the ‘David’ of the New Testament, Jesus Christ. The typological connection between David and Christ is expressed clearly in the Book of Matthew.[[506]](#footnote-506) There the birth of Jesus as the typological fulfillment of David’s prophetic life is explained through Jesus’ genealogical relationship with David and the numerical significance of generations; that is, fourteen generations separate Abraham from David, again between David and the Israelites’ captivity in Babylon, and once more between their release from captivity and the birth of Christ.[[507]](#footnote-507) The life experiences and behaviours of David and Christ invite readers to see parallels: David’s anointing by Samuel corresponds to Christ’s baptism from John the Baptist; David’s period in exile adumbrates Christ’s forty days in the wilderness, as well as his suffering on the cross; David’s mercy to Saul, though an expression of one’s place under a king anointed by God, finds typological resonance in Christ’s teachings, expressed in the Sermon on the Mount and upon the cross, on how to treat one’s enemies.[[508]](#footnote-508) Christians learned to see from these biblical suggestions that both David and Christ are beloved of and in close communion with God, and both are exalted after, and perhaps because of, their worldly sufferings.

Asser’s depiction of Alfred, discussed above, fulfills all of these aspects of life experience and virtue. Asser was surely aware that connections made between Alfred and David could, through typological parallels between David and Christ, be construed as linking Alfred to the heavenly king Christ. Apart from the typological and christological parallels already noted, Asser offers two further accounts which suggest that his linking of Alfred with Christ was intended. In c.89 of the *Life* Asser makes a clear connection between Alfred and a biblical figure, albeit neither a king nor deity, in his discussion on Alfred’s handbook:

***VÆ* c.89** Nam primo illo testimonio scripto, confestim legere et in Saxonica lingua interpretari, atque inde perplures instituere studuit, ac veluti de illo felici latrone cautum est, Dominum Iesum Christum, Dominum suum, immoque omnium, iuxta se in venerabili sanctae Crucis patibulo pendentem cognoscente; quo subnixis precibus, inclinatis solummodo corporalibus oculis, quia aliter non poterat, erat enim totus confixus clavis, submissa voce clamaret: ‘Memento mei, cum veneris in regnum tuum, Christe,’ qui Christianae fidei rudimenta in gabulo primitus inchoavit discere. Hic aut aliter, quamvis dissimili modo, in regia potestate sanctae rudimenta scripturae, divinitus instinctus, praesumpsit incipere...[[509]](#footnote-509)

Now as soon as that first passage had been copied, he was eager to read it at once and to translate it into English, and thereupon to instruct many others, just as we are admonished by the example of that fortunate thief who recognized the Lord Jesus Christ – his Lord and indeed Lord of all things – hanging next to him on the venerable gallows of the Holy Cross, and petitioned Him with earnest prayers. Turning his fleshly eyes only (he could not do anything else, since he was completely pinned down with nails), he called out in a reverential voice: ‘Christ, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom’. This thief first began to learn the rudiments of Christian faith on the gallows; the king likewise (even though in a different way, given his royal station), prompted from heaven, took it upon himself to begin on the rudiments of Holy Scripture...[[510]](#footnote-510)

The typological connection here is not to Christ but to a humble thief crucified alongside him.[[511]](#footnote-511) Asser compares Alfred’s recognition of the value of scriptural learning to the thief’s recognition of Christ as the king of heaven. Again, we should recall the kingly virtues of humility and piety reflected in the prayers of a thief. Still, it is a curious choice for Asser to have made in lieu of numerous other exemplars of humility and piety; Asser clearly recognizes the inherent problem of comparing his king to a criminal, explaining in the above passage that Alfred’s situation was different because of his royal status. In the following chapter, he directly comments on this comparison:

***VÆ* c.90** Sed, sicut a quodam sapiente iamdudum scriptum est invigilant animi, quibus est pia cura regendi, magnopere invigilandum mihi censeo in eo, quod ante aliquam, quamvis dissimili modo, similitudinem inter illum felicem latronem et regem composuerim: namque patibulum exosum est unicuique, ubicunque male habet. Sed quid faciat, si non possit se inde eripere aut etiam effugere, vel qualicunque arte causam suam meliorare ibidem commorando? Debet ergo, velit, nolit, cum moerore et tristitia sufferre, quod patitur.[[512]](#footnote-512)

But, just as it was written by a certain wise man a long time ago, ‘The minds of those in whom there is conscious concern for ruling are ever alert’, I think I should be particularly alert, since I have just suggested a comparison (albeit of different degree) between the fortunate thief and the king: for the gallows are hateful to anyone who finds himself in trouble. But what can he do, if he cannot extricate himself from it, or even run away, or by some manner of means improve his lot by remaining there? He ought therefore to endure – willy-nilly – in pain and sorrow what he is suffering.[[513]](#footnote-513)

Here Asser makes some small apology for having previously likened Alfred to the thief, alluding back to his depiction of the king as living like a bandit in Somerset, but then points to the equalizing properties of torment: ‘anyone’ can find themselves in dire situations and sufferings, and all have little choice but to bear their hardships and carry on. Asser thus apparently feels that he has to defend what might be perceived as an inappropriate comparison between king and thief. However, Asser may also have had a second, more subtle purpose here. By noting in c.89 that Alfred’s situation differed from the thief’s through his royal station, and then forming an argument for suffering as an equalizer of the meek and the powerful, Asser may be intimating that Alfred’s experience is not unlike the thief’s, but neither is it unlike Christ’s. One begins to question whether the thief was not the typological connection Asser wished to make, but rather supplied a figure through which the reader might be encouraged to see the similarities Alfred shared with Christ. The thief would thus have served to foster a christological comparison without the need for a direct, and perhaps irreverent, comparison to Christ.

Indeed, the grisly details Asser provides on the thief’s immobility, ‘pinned down with nails’, heighten our awareness that the thief shared in Christ’s worldly torment and so was, both figuratively and literally, brought nearer to Christ. This imagery is renewed in c.91 in a metaphor which Asser clarifies by explanation.

***VÆ* c.91** Erat itaque rex, ille multis tribulationum clavis confossus, quamvis in regia potestate constitutus; nam a vigesimo aetatis anno usque ad quadragesimum quintum annum, quem nunc agit, gravissima incogniti doloris infestatione incessanter fatigatur, ita ut ne unius quidem horae securitatem habeat, qua aut illam infirmitatem non sustineat aut sub illius formidine lugubriter prope constitutus non desperet. Praeterea assiduis exterarum gentium infestationibus, quas sedulo terra marique sine ullius quieti temporis intervallo sustinebat, non sine materia inquietabatur.[[514]](#footnote-514)

King Alfred has been transfixed by the nails of many tribulations, even though he is invested with royal authority: from his twentieth year until his forty-fifth (which is now in course) he has been plagued continually with the savage attacks of some unknown disease, such that he does not have even a single hour of peace in which he does not either suffer from the disease itself or else, gloomily dreading it, is not driven almost to despair. Moreover, he was perturbed – not without good reason – by the relentless attacks of foreign peoples, which he continually sustained from land and sea without any interval of peace.[[515]](#footnote-515)

This reference to ‘nails’ follows just two chapters after the first reference to the nails holding the thief onto the cross in c.89. Asser may then be reminding us of the parallels between Alfred and the thief, but Asser’s reference may even allude to the nails which held Christ. This form of ‘roundabout’ or indirect typology is not unique to Asser’s *Life*. David Pratt has noted Christ’s place of importance within the mystical clauses of each of Alfred’s psalm introductions, effectively presenting the words of David as Christ’s own.[[516]](#footnote-516) As well as evincing a continued view on the typological links between David and Christ in the ninth century, the introductions also demonstrate an opinion of Alfred’s court, or of Alfred himself, that the king was like David and, therefore, like Christ.[[517]](#footnote-517) Asser, by suggesting a comparison between Alfred’s trials and those of Christ through the analogous ‘nails’ of the king’s suffering, constructed a narrative account which encouraged a christological view of the West Saxon king.

As a member of the court with a close relationship to the king, we may rightly ask whether Asser was using a similar technique to draw christological comparisons between Alfred and Christ, in this instance through the agency of the crucified thief. Asser does not mention the thief in c.91, signaling a shift from his typological comparison of Alfred to the fortunate thief toward a more nuanced statement of the king’s christomimetic experience.[[518]](#footnote-518) He also reminds us of Alfred’s status as king, the primary differentiation made in both c.89 and c.90 between the king and the thief; again, this may suggest his intention was to draw a comparison closer to Christ, the ‘King of kings’.[[519]](#footnote-519) Alfred is also ‘invested’ (*constitutus*) with royal authority,[[520]](#footnote-520) implying that Alfred’s position was granted rather than claimed: the portrayal of Alfred is as one chosen by God.

Asser likens Alfred’s metaphorical nails to his lifelong, continued illnesses, as well as to the sufferings he endured from Viking attacks throughout his reign. Here we may consider the hardships the Vikings brought to the king in Asser’s narrative which had contributed to this other ‘nail’. While Asser comments on Alfred’s military reaction to the Viking incursions, only the king’s experience in the Somerset marshes is presented as a time of particular hardship. Alfred’s other encounters with the Vikings in the *Life* are little more than subtly embellished restatements of entries from the Chronicle. As noted above, this decision may have resulted from Asser’s priorities as an author, revealing less interest in the military aspects of Alfred’s life and a greater concern for describing the king’s virtues, sufferings, and general behaviour. Asser describes Alfred’s difficulties convincing his people to cooperate with building projects of cities and fortresses, marking the troubles of administration as one of the ill-effects of the Viking invasions.

More will be said of Alfred’s problems as a ruler below. For now I would like to consider the idea that Alfred’s second ‘nail’ was, notwithstanding the usual annoyances of command, forged primarily from the king’s brief period living like a thief in Somerset. No other event in the *Life* casts the king in so diminished a position, for there Alfred is depicted more like Asser’s fortunate thief than a king. We should remember that Alfred’s time in the ‘wilderness’ marks a remarkable turn of events for the king and the English people; only afterwards was Alfred able to gain the upper hand through military reorganization, fortress-building and divine will, ultimately compelling Viking forces to terms of surrender and forestalling further attacks through the remainder of his reign. While Alfred’s exilic experience is not mentioned directly in c.91, Asser may allude to the king’s time in Somerset, as well as the state of the English generally, further on in the chapter:

***VÆ* c.91** Sed tamen ille solus divino fultus adminiculo susceptum semel regni gubernaculum, veluti gubernator praecipuus, navem suam multis opibus refertam ad disideratum ac tutum patriae suae portum, quamvis cunctis propemodum lassis suis nautis, perducere contendit, haud aliter titubare ac vacillare, quamvis inter fluctivagos ac multimodos praesentis vitae turbines, non sinebat.[[521]](#footnote-521)

Yet once he had taken over the helm of his kingdom, he alone, sustained by divine assistance, struggled like an excellent pilot to guide his ship laden with much wealth to the desired and safe haven of his homeland, even though all his sailors were virtually exhausted; similarly, he did not allow it to waver or wander from course, even though the course lay through the many seething whirlpools of the present life.[[522]](#footnote-522)

This metaphor between Alfred and a ship’s captain labouring to reach home is remarkably poignant.[[523]](#footnote-523) The image of a ship lost at sea, its crew dispirited and weary, ultimately reaching safe harbor through the determination of their captain, offers a heroic portrayal of Alfred as an able and strong king supported by God.[[524]](#footnote-524) The metaphor also suggests a prior condition of helplessness and confusion coming to an end through safe delivery home, a period of suffering leading to deliverance, and an end to an exilic state.[[525]](#footnote-525) Alfred’s time in Somerset, as the strongest depiction of the king’s suffering in the *Life*, encapsulates this state of confusion most clearly in Asser’s work; Alfred’s dislocation is the second ‘nail’ endured by the king. In this way, enforced expulsion helps to form a typological connection between Alfred, David and Christ in fulfilling one aspect of their shared life experiences, as well as in Asser’s attempt at drawing a christological connection to Alfred through his metaphorical use of the nails of crucifixion in cc.89-91.

We find similar portrayals of christological kingship on the continent in the ninth century. I have already discussed Wallace-Hadrill’s remarks on illustrations found in the Stuttgart Psalter, including the war-like images of David; the psalter holds similar images of Christ as ‘much the same sort of warrior-king’.[[526]](#footnote-526) These images effectively display at least one ninth-century concept of both biblical figures as involved in the duties of kingship. Deshman too, in his above-noted examination of the prayerbook of Charles the Bald, suggests that the king’s humbling act of proskynesis (a worshipful act of prostration) is imitative of Christ’s own humbling upon the cross.[[527]](#footnote-527) Further, Deshman points out the relationship between the wounds born by Christ and the worldly sins of Charles reflected in the titulus to the royal portrait.[[528]](#footnote-528) Deshman goes on to note the link between humility and elevation and the importance of this link in images portraying a king acting in imitation of Christ.[[529]](#footnote-529) Thus the royal portrait served as ‘affirmation that Charles the Bald was worthy to govern others because he was the exalted servant, the humble imitator, and the terrestrial representative of Christ, the crucified monarch of the heavens.’[[530]](#footnote-530) Such concepts of kings as christ-like figures, as with ideas of typological connections to biblical figures and royal virtues, would have been familiar to Alfred’s court of scholarly emigres, particularly those transplanted churchmen from Francia who became Asser’s colleagues. The transformative process of elevation through humility and worldly suffering, undergone by David, Christ, and continental kings, might easily have been seen as fulfilled in Alfred’s exile in Somerset. The transformative nature of an experience akin to exile forms the second ‘nail’ endured by Alfred in the *Life*, and thus serves to present a christological link, as well as a typological one.

Before continuing further, it should be noted that the typological connection between Alfred and David may also be supported by similarities shared by Alfred and the seventh-century King Edwin of Northumbria. Prior to Asser’s writing, typological parallels between Edwin and David had emerged in the second book of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[[531]](#footnote-531) Michael Lapidge has noted that Bede’s work influenced Asser on the basis of shared phrases in the *Life* and the *HE*.[[532]](#footnote-532) This being the case, Asser may have noted Bede’s portrayal of Edwin’s life and perceived the typological connection between Edwin and David, as well as similarities with the experience of his own subject, Alfred.

Edwin’s status as an English royal saint makes him an exceptional example for Alfred to follow; his decision to convert to and support Christianity in the North in 627 and his struggle against foreign pagans find parallel in Alfred’s experience against Viking invaders. There are also manners of conduct shared by Alfred and Edwin, such as their contemplative natures.

***VÆ* c.92** Nam, cum de necessitate animae suae **solito cogitaret**...[[533]](#footnote-533)

For when in his usual manner **he had taken stock** of what was most essential for his soul…[[534]](#footnote-534)

***VÆ* c.99** ...solitosuo more **intra semetipsum cogitabat**, quid adhuc addere potuisset, quod plus placeret ad piam meditationem...[[535]](#footnote-535)

...**he thought to himself** in his usual manner about what more he might add that would be more in keeping with his holy resolve.[[536]](#footnote-536)

***VÆ* c.103** ...etiam quid a proprio corporis sui et mentis servitio Deo offerret, **prudenter excogitavit**...[[537]](#footnote-537)

...he reflected thoughtfully on what he might offer to God.[[538]](#footnote-538)

***VÆ* c.104** **His aliquandiu excogitatis**, tandem, invento utili et discreto consilio...[[539]](#footnote-539)

When **he had thought about these things for some time**, he at last hit upon a useful and intelligent solution.[[540]](#footnote-540)

Clearly, Asser went to some lengths to present Alfred as a thoughtful, contemplative king who approached both his secular and religious duties earnestly and with care. This behaviour is remarkably reminiscent of Bede’s account of Edwin: ‘He himself being a man of great natural sagacity would often sit alone for long periods in silence, but in his innermost thoughts he was deliberating with himself as to what he ought to do…’.[[541]](#footnote-541) Indeed, Edwin’s contemplative character is mentioned three more times in the story of his exile in *HE* II.12:

***HE* II.12** Abeunte igitur amico, **remansit Eduini solus foris**, residensque mestus ante palatium, **multis coepit cogitationum aestibus affici**, quid ageret quoue pedem uerteret nescius. Cumque diu tacitis mentis angoribus…

So his friend went away, but **Edwin remained alone outside**, sitting sadly in front of the palace **with his mind in a tumult (with great agitation beginning to affect his thinking),** not knowing what to do or which way to turn. He remained long in silent anguish of spirit…[[542]](#footnote-542)

Et cum regius iuuenis **solus** **adhuc ibidem** **sederet,** gauisus quidem de conlata sibi consolation, sed multum sollicitus **ac mente sedula cogitans**…

The young prince continued to **sit there alone**, rejoicing in the consolation he had received but much concerned **and anxiously wondering**…[[543]](#footnote-543)

Cum ergo praedicante uerbum Dei Paulino rex credere differret, et per aliquod tempus, ut diximus, **horis conpetentibus solitaries sederet**, et quid agendum sibi esset, quae religio sequenda, **sedulous secum ipse scrutari**…

King Edwin hesitated to accept the word of God which Paulinus preached but, as we have said, **used to sit alone for hours at a time, earnestly debating** within himself what he ought to do and what religion he should follow.[[544]](#footnote-544)

Bede presented Edwin’s contemplative disposition in a way that would appeal to a practitioner of contemplative living such as Asser. Indeed, Asser makes repeated statements about Alfred’s own contemplative nature and so reveals his admiration for the patient reasoning of the king. Such statements might resonate in the minds of an author and audience familiar with Bede’s account of Edwin, and so contribute to a typological link between Alfred and Edwin. Furthermore, Bede’s comments about Edwin, with one exception, all come from the chapter about Edwin’s time in exile, and so the descriptions of Alfred’s contemplative nature would be particularly reminiscent of that episode and perhaps promote Alfred’s image as a restored figure. The charitable nature of the two kings is a further typological link. Asser notes Alfred’s particular concern for the poor and says that the king contributed greatly to charity and alms.[[545]](#footnote-545) This concern for the common people echoes that of Edwin, who Bede famously relates had established a practice of keeping bronze bowls at springs near roadways and had established security for the most vulnerable of travelers, namely women and children.[[546]](#footnote-546)

By depicting Alfred’s experience and character as a reflection of biblical tradition, Asser strengthens perceptions of Alfred’s reign as divinely appointed and in agreement with Christian legitimacy. Asser may have been influenced by his Frankish counterparts in constructing these connections, but his exposure to Bede’s *HE* may also have presented a model in King Edwin. Edwin’s place as a Christian king and a hero of Bede’s narrative history adds a further degree of legitimacy to Alfred who rules in the tradition of forebears extending beyond his own bloodline. If Alfred ruled in the manner of Edwin, then we should also recall how that restored exile held, according to Bede, *imperium* ‘over all the inhabitants of Britain, English and Britons alike’; Asser’s typological suggestions would fit well with Alfred’s own aims and achievements for consolidating power in England.[[547]](#footnote-547)

The story of Alfred’s suffering in the wilds of Somerset, when considered alongside his personal characteristics, gave Asser a device with which to make typological and christological links to his ninth-century subject. Alfred’s exile-like experience was invaluable to presenting these connections to David, Christ and Edwin. However, these are not the only typological connections which can be identified in Asser’s *Life*, nor are they the most clearly shown by the author. Alfred’s dislocation and the more broadly-experienced state of exile in England contribute to wider statements concerning the West Saxon king and the people under his rule. This will be explored in the next section concerning Solomon, the Covenant, Moses and Alfred’s *domboc*.

**3.5 Solomon, Alfred’s *Domboc*, and the Mosaic Covenant**

The typological parallels discussed above are important for their own sake, but they also reinforce other crucial connections between Alfred, scripture and Christian unity. These links create strong messages about kingship and God’s favour. As we have seen, Asser presents four instances of royal exile and the troubles which accompanied these, with civil war or foreign invasion following in three cases.[[548]](#footnote-548) For instance, Asser recounts the failed expulsion of Alfred’s father Ӕthelwulf and the resulting division of the kingdom.[[549]](#footnote-549) He then immediately goes on to tell about a string of Viking incursions and settlements in England which eventually led to the submission of much of Wessex to Viking authority and, as Asser notes, the flight of numerous English subjects from the kingdom. The chapter which follows this account of diaspora tells of Alfred’s suffering in the marshes of Somerset. Rightful kings in the *Life* are inextricably bound to their kingdoms; their expulsions, particularly if brought about through betrayal, come to be mirrored by the state of their former kingdoms.

This sequence of exiles, conquest and expulsions recalls the history of the Israelites. Examples from the Hebrew Bible may clarify the coherence of these narrative patterns and help to explain Asser’s development of exile as a theme of his work. Addresses to the Israelites recorded in Deuteronomy and I Samuel have signal importance:

**Dt. 28:36-37** ducet Dominus te et regem tuum quem constitueris super te in gentem quam ignoras tu et patres tui et servies ibi diis alienis ligno et lapidi et eris perditus in proverbium ac fabulam omnibus populis ad quos te introduxerit Dominus

The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king, whom thou shalt have appointed over thee, into a nation which thou and thy fathers know not: and there thou shalt serve strange gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt be lost, as a proverb and a byword to all people, among whom the Lord shall bring thee in.

**I Sm. 12:13-15** nunc ergo praesto est rex vester quem elegistis et petistis ecce dedit vobis Dominus regem si timueritis Dominum et servieritis ei et audieritis vocem eius et non exasperaveritis os Domini eritis et vos et rex qui imperat vobis sequentes Dominum Deum vestrum si autem non audieritis vocem Domini sed exasperaveritis sermones eius erit manus Domini super vos et super patres vestros

Now therefore your king is here, whom you have chosen and desired: Behold the Lord hath given you a king. If you will fear the Lord, and serve him, and hearken to his voice, and not provoke the mouth of the Lord: then shall both you, and the king who reigneth over you, be followers of the Lord your God. But if you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but will rebel against his words, the hand of the Lord shall be upon you, and upon your fathers.

In these passages about the Israelites and their kings, it is clear that the people chose to have a king appointed over them.[[550]](#footnote-550) In the passage from Deuteronomy, Moses includes the king with the people who will suffer for breaking the Covenant, indicating none will be spared God’s wrath however high their status. The Samuel passage presents obeisance to the king as part of the compact made with God and emphasizes the connection between the fate of Israel and their adherence to the king’s will. When the people overthrow or disobey this king, it is forecast that dire results will come to them; to question or disobey God’s appointed monarchs is equivalent to challenging God’s will.

This idea of the importance of obedience to the king as a matter of divine concern would have found receptive audiences in ninth-century England, and would have appealed to those around the king eager to evoke loyalty. Asser makes his own feelings clear in a diatribe against Alfred’s disobedient subjects in the following passages.

***VÆ* c.91** Qui maxima, excepto illo dolore, perturbatione et controversia suorum, qui nullum aut parvum voluntarie pro communi regni necessitate vellent subiere laborem.[[551]](#footnote-551)

And what of the mighty disorder and confusion of his own people – to say nothing of his own malady – who would undertake of their own accord little or no work for the common needs of the kingdom?[[552]](#footnote-552)

Asser here points to the tumultuous nature of Alfred’s early reign and is inclined to cast blame upon Alfred’s subjects for the prolonged state of chaos. Asser is more explicit in his reproach later:

***VÆ* c.91** Nam assidue suos episcopos et comites ac nobilissimos, sibique dilectissimos suos ministros, necnon et praepositos...leniter docendo, adulando, hortando, imperando, ad ultimum inoboedientes, post longam patientiam, acrius castigando, vulgarem stultitiam et pertinaciam omni modo abominando, ad suam voluntatem et ad communem totius regni utilitatem...[[553]](#footnote-553)

For by gently instructing, cajoling, urging, commanding, and (in the end, when his patience was exhausted) by sharply chastising those who were disobedient...he carefully and cleverly exploited and converted his bishops and ealdormen and nobles, and his thegns most dear to him, and reeves as well...[[554]](#footnote-554)

Asser thus lists the king’s actions as corrective ruler and, by listing, emphasizes the difficulties Alfred faced: the loyalty of his people, even of his leading men, was weak. Despite continued correction, Alfred’s subjects were remarkably slow in seeing the king’s will put into action.

***VÆ* c.91** At si inter haec regalia exhortamenta propter pigritiam populi imperata non implentur, at tarde incepta tempore necessitatis ad utilitatem exercentium minus finita non provenirent...aut nimium tarde inceptis ad perfectum finem non perductis, et hostiles copiae terra marique irrumperent, aut, ut saepe evenit, utraque parte, tunc contradictores imperialium diffinitionum inani poenitentia pene exinaniti verecundabantur.[[555]](#footnote-555)

But if, during the course of these royal admonitions, the commands were not fulfilled because of the people’s laziness, or else (having been begun too late in a time of necessity) were not finished in time to be of any use to those working on them...and enemy forces burst in by land and sea (or, as frequently happens, by both!), then those who had opposed the royal commands were humiliated in meaningless repentance by being reduced to virtual extinction.[[556]](#footnote-556)

The negative outcomes of disobedience were not, therefore, by the king’s hand but through failure to adhere to the king’s wisely thought-out edicts.

***VÆ* c.91** Sera igitur poenitentia nimium attriti poenitent, et regalia se praecepta incuriose despexisse dolent, et regalem sapientiam totis vocibus collaudant, et quod ante refutaverunt, totis viribus implere promittunt, id est de arcibus construendis et ceteris communibus communis regni utilitatibus.[[557]](#footnote-557)

Those who were severely afflicted, therefore, are contrite in untimely repentance, and are sorry that they had negligently scorned the royal commands; now they loudly applaud the king’s foresight and promise to make every effort to do what they had previously refused – that is, with respect to constructing fortresses and to the other things of general advantage to the whole kingdom.[[558]](#footnote-558)

In these extracts, Asser is sharply critical of the English people, particularly the nobility, for their reluctance to follow the commands of their rightful king. He presents his criticism as pragmatic, well-reasoned advice on following orders meant to protect the kingdom. The implication is that the king’s wisdom supersedes individual opinions about defense; failure to obey Alfred’s right-thinking decrees could lead to death and disaster. However, Asser instills a deeper meaning in his criticism and warnings by portraying death as a ‘meaningless repentance’ for this failure to obey. Keynes and Lapidge have chosen ‘repentance’ in their translation of *poenitentia*, which suggests a state of general contrition or self-reproach. However, if we consider *poenitentia* as carrying the added meaning of ‘penance’ or ‘penitence’,[[559]](#footnote-559) then Asser’s words hold a more religious connotation, implying punishment for sin. The sin in this instance is disobeying God’s appointed king; the penalty, as supplied in 1 Samuel 12:15 quoted above, is the Lord’s wrath. Penance at this stage is ‘meaningless’ to Asser’s mind, coming too late to be of any help to the souls of the contrite. Importantly, disobeying Alfred is not only foolish because he is wise, but more especially because he is an anointed king.

Asser’s ideas on obedience to those divinely appointed by God are emphasized in the chapters which follow his diatribe in c.91. Cc. 92 through 98 concern Alfred’s efforts to promote monasticism in England by founding two monasteries: one for monks at Athelney, and a second for nuns at Shaftesbury. As well as commenting on the lack of English participation in monastic life,[[560]](#footnote-560) Asser includes a story concerning the monastery at Athelney and the attempted murder of its abbot. In c.94 the abbot, John, is introduced as a priest and monk appointed to the new abbacy by Alfred.[[561]](#footnote-561) Two plotting monks, ‘aroused by envy at the devil’s prompting’, failed in their attempt to murder Abbot John and left his body at the doorstep of a known prostitute.[[562]](#footnote-562) Instead, John was wounded, perhaps mortally (though this is unclear), and the conspirators fled into the nearby marshes. The assailants did not, in the end, make good their escape.

***VÆ* c. 97** Sed Dei misericordia tantum facinus impunitum fieri non permittente, latrunculi, qui hoc perpetraverunt, omnes tanti sceleris persuasores capti ligatique per varia tormenta morte turpissima periere. His ita relatis, ad incepta redamus.[[563]](#footnote-563)

For God’s mercy was unwilling for such a crime to go unpunished: the villains who had committed this deed, as well as all those who had instigated so great a crime, were captured and bound and underwent a terrible death through various tortures. Now that I have reported these events, allow me to return to my proper subject.[[564]](#footnote-564)

In the story, the conspirators are twice referred to as betrayers of their lord ‘in the manner of the Jews’. This puts them in a negative typological comparison to Caiaphas and the Pharisees in the Books of Matthew and John.[[565]](#footnote-565) This would also suggest a christological connection to Abbot John; Asser twice gives John the title of ‘lord’ (*dominus*) which both reinforces this association while also designating his authority as abbot.[[566]](#footnote-566) We should also recall that in the Rule of Benedict under which these monks lived, the abbot is Christ’s representative overseer, and so to disobey or turn against one’s abbot was equivalent to doing the same to Christ.[[567]](#footnote-567) Another parallel is formed here between Abbot John and Alfred; John is said to have prayed secretly at night, echoing Alfred’s practice of doing the same.[[568]](#footnote-568) Whether God’s concern here is meant to reflect divine judgment on the murder of Christ’s representative or whether a special concern was taken here because of John’s piety or royal appointment, the punishment meted out to the assailants is given divine agency; it is not that Alfred or his men brought the conspirators to justice that matters in Asser’s narrative, but that God allowed these criminals to be captured and executed. To return to our subject: by including this story Asser reveals his thoughts on divine agency as active in his world while cautioning against the opposition of God’s appointed.

Having shown how Asser conveys his strong views about divine appointment, we should also recognize that establishing one’s reign in terms of divine legitimacy could be crucial in securing loyalties in periods of turmoil and hardship. Janet Nelson has suggested that Alfred’s time in the ‘woods and fen-fastnesses’ in 878 was due to betrayal by one or more of his men in Wiltshire, and the people of Wessex are said to have submitted to Viking rule.[[569]](#footnote-569) These apparent betrayals resonate with the expulsions of Osberht and Charles the Fat which Asser also mentions in the *Life*.[[570]](#footnote-570) Biblical warnings on loyalty to kings, such as that found in I Samuel 12:13-15 discussed above, should also be recalled. Under biblically-drawn conceptions concerning kingship and obedience to God’s will, Asser and his contemporaries could explain the Viking successes of 878: the disloyalty of the people to God’s appointed king brought the divine hand down upon Wessex. Repeated instances in the *Life* wherein divine providence takes a hand in the affairs of Alfred and Wessex make it clear that, in Asser’s view, God’s will was for Alfred to be king.[[571]](#footnote-571) The betrayal of Alfred, therefore, would have been an affront to the divine plan for Wessex and England.

We may see, then, that it is the English denizens of Wessex who are the primary exiles in the *Life*, with a king whose condition mirrors the uncertain movements and sufferings of his people. Asser, refraining from using explicit exile language when referring to the king’s time in Somerset, may have had further typological comparisons in mind when depicting Alfred’s restoration and care of his kingdom. For instance, perhaps the most striking typological link presented in the *Life* is that between Alfred and King Solomon.[[572]](#footnote-572) In his discussion on Alfred’s boyhood education, Asser notes the king’s regret that he had not been properly schooled in the liberal arts; from this the author draws a connection between Alfred and Solomon.

***VÆ* c.76** In hoc pium et opinatissimum atque opulentissimum Salomonem Hebraeorum regem aequiparans, qui primitus, despecta omni praesenti gloria et divitiis, sapientiam a Deo deposcit, et etiam utramque invenit, sapientiam scilicet et praesentem gloriam.[[573]](#footnote-573)

In this respect he resembled the holy, highly esteemed and exceedingly wealthy Solomon, king of the Hebrews, who once upon a time, having come to despise all renown and wealth of this world, sought wisdom from God, and thereby achieved both (namely, wisdom and renown).[[574]](#footnote-574)

Solomon is also mentioned toward the end of the *Life* in a quotation, from the Book of Proverbs, used to explain Alfred’s exercise of wisdom gained ‘from on high’.[[575]](#footnote-575) In both cases, Asser’s comparisons to and naming of Solomon clearly reveal the author’s promotion of a typological resonance between Alfred and Solomon. This association is evident throughout the *Life*, and is not exclusive to Alfred’s desire for and attainment of wisdom. Matthew Kempshall’s discussion of Asser’s ‘exegetical expertise’ presents other parallels between the two kings: Alfred shares Solomon’s wisdom, and similarly acts as a judge, instructor, and composer of written work.[[576]](#footnote-576) Both kings adopted a three-part division of their workforces, introduced administrative districts in place of traditional boundaries, rebuilt cities and established fortifications, built ships, recruited craftsmen from abroad, and were innovative creators of candles and lamps.[[577]](#footnote-577) In all of these respects, it is clear from the *Life* that Asser intended for his audience to see Solomon as a precursor and model for Alfred’s reign.

The typological connection between Alfred and Solomon would have promoted the Christian legitimacy of Alfred’s reign by underscoring the wisdom and judgement shared by the two kings. There is still another strong comparison to be made between the two kings that Asser does not explicitly mention in the *Life*, and that is that both Alfred and Solomon famously reaffirmed the Mosaic Covenant through legislation. Although typological connections in Asser’s narrative would have functioned as effective legitimizing agents, it is possible that the comparisons to Solomon were also meant to remind Asser’s audience that Alfred’s role as king, like that of Solomon, included serving as guarantor and keeper of the Covenant with God. As a result, Alfred may be likened to Moses who first established this Covenant between God and Israel.

The connection between this formal observance of God’s Law and Asser’s underlying theme of exile will be made clear below, but first a brief examination of Alfred’s legislative effort is necessary. Alfred’s law-code, or *Domboc*, may be viewed as a three-part work. The first part includes a brief prologue, followed by a number of excerpts from the Mosaic Laws of Exodus. This first section concludes by explaining that adherence to the precepts of Mosaic Law had long ago been modified by an early Church council.[[578]](#footnote-578) The second section contains a more extensive prologue wherein the king addresses his efforts in compiling his lawcode and his debt to previous English legislators, particularly Ine whose own code is appended to Alfred’s.[[579]](#footnote-579) The third part of the code reflects the work of Alfred’s own editorial skills in selecting and adapting previously issued laws, including a few instances of his own legislative originality in composing law governing secular affairs.[[580]](#footnote-580)

Of primary interest here is the first part of the *domboc* and the Exodus extracts included there. Patrick Wormald argued for the ideological significance of including Mosaic Law in the *domboc*. As well as making up a substantial portion of Alfred’s code, the Exodus extracts are followed by 120 chapters of English law which Wormald marks as noteworthy for the numeric significance of ‘120’ as representing ‘law’ by early medieval exegetes.[[581]](#footnote-581) These forty-eight chapters outline the laws given to Moses by God and are followed by some statements on the continued use of these laws.

**Af. c.49** Þis sindan ða domas þe se ælmihtega God self sprecende wæs to Moyse 7 him bebead to healdanne; 7 siððan se ancenneda Dryhtnes sunu, ure God, þæt is hælend Crist, on middangeard cwom, he cwæð, ðæt he ne come no ðas bebodu to brecanne ne to forbeodanne, ac mid eallum godum to ecanne; 7 mildheortnesse 7 eaðmodnesse he lærde.[[582]](#footnote-582)

These are the laws which the almighty God himself had spoken to Moses and bade him to keep; and after the Lord’s only begotten son, our God, who is the saviour Christ, came unto the earth, he said that he had not come either to break or to prohibit these commandments, but to increase/augment with all good things; and he preached mercy and humility.

The concluding chapter of this section, followed by the preface to Alfred’s West Saxon laws, binds the laws of God and the Old Testament kings to Alfred’s new legislation.[[583]](#footnote-583) By reminding the audience of how the early Church had adjusted traditional adherence to meet the needs of new converts, Alfred’s *domboc* implies that Mosaic Law may yet meet the needs of Alfred and his contemporaries.

Why is this relevant to Alfred’s kingdom and Asser’s narrative? Adherence to Mosaic Law was the preeminent condition to be met by the Israelites in the Covenant established after their departure from Egypt; God in turn provided them with protection as well as a land in which to settle.[[584]](#footnote-584) Later Solomon, by proclaiming the laws of Moses to the Israelites, used his office as king to reconfirm this Covenant between the people of Israel and God as established by Moses. Alfred similarly proclaimed Mosaic Law to his people through the promulgation of his *domboc*, effectively establishing the same Covenant between God and the English under Alfred’s rule. Kempshall notes this shared approach to kingship by the two kings and presents other Old Testament examples, namely Hezekiah and Josiah, who like Solomon before them reconfirmed the Covenant and proclaimed it to the people of Israel.[[585]](#footnote-585) Both Charlemagne and his grandson Charles the Bald were compared by contemporaries to Josiah for including scripture in their legislative efforts;[[586]](#footnote-586) it is likely that Alfred was influenced by these Carolingian kings and similarly followed the Old Testament examples of legislating kings.[[587]](#footnote-587) Typological comparisons are not always observations of remarkable coincidence, but can also reflect conscious imitations by their subjects.

Alfred followed these Old Testament examples, and, by including a vernacular translation of the Mosaic Laws at the beginning of his own law-code, effectively established a Covenant between his own people and God.[[588]](#footnote-588) This mirrors Solomon who, at the dedication to the newly built Temple, publicly reminded the Israelites of the Covenant and its rewards for them, thus voicing the conditional arrangement between God and his chosen people.[[589]](#footnote-589) It may be that Alfred, in following the tradition of Israel’s kings, was inviting more than a comparison between himself and his royal biblical heroes; he may also have intended that the English people under his rule be seen as God’s newly chosen elect. We should consider the introduction to the Mosaic Laws issued by Alfred:

Drihten wæs sprecende ðas word to Moyse 7 þus cwæþ: Ic eom drihten þin God. Ic þe utgelædde of Egypta lande 7 of hyra þeowdome.

The Lord spoke these words to Moses, and thus said: I am the Lord your God. I led you out of the land of the Egyptians, and out of their bondage.[[590]](#footnote-590)

It is very tempting, from this and Asser’s narrative, to see a comparison between Alfred and Moses and between the English and the Israelites.[[591]](#footnote-591) With his frequent accounts of exile and dislocation, and his portrayal of Alfred’s experience in 878, Asser may have been constructing an exile and restoration story about a people rather than a person: the *Life* promotes a national and Christian identity that is closely tied to God and king. A.C. Charity, as mentioned earlier, noted the inherent relationship between God and ‘history’ perceived by the Israelites: there is no history without God.[[592]](#footnote-592) This understanding of the divine hand in worldly events was crucial in shaping Israel’s identity, as Charity states: ‘Thus, for Israel, the nation’s existence, its true being, lay in election. For thus she was constituted by God.’[[593]](#footnote-593) For Israel, this meant existence as a nation relied upon election. The relative comforts or anguish of God’s elect was dependent on adherence to God’s Law.

The question of election in Alfred’s reign is one of portrayal and perception: did the English see themselves as or among God’s New Chosen? Mary Garrison has cautioned against identifying concepts of election in the ‘literary flourishes’ of royal propaganda, and we should be careful to avoid uncritical reading of such works, including Asser’s *Life*.[[594]](#footnote-594) It is clear that the concept of election had been promoted by Carolingian and English rulers and authors. Tugene and Cowdrey both comment on ideas of election in Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, as discussed in the previous chapter.[[595]](#footnote-595) J.M. Wallace-Hadrill has discussed how Carolingian campaigns against Iberian Muslims were pereceived as ‘Christian’ victories, with Pippin III and the Franks undertaking a mission as God’s new Chosen People.[[596]](#footnote-596) This Carolingian mentality concerning election was partly inspired by insular writers and emigres, including Cathwulf and Alcuin, during the reign of Charlemagne: Charlemagne’s legislation, which included extracts from Mosaic Law, reflects this concept of Christian unity and of a people acting according to God’s will.[[597]](#footnote-597) Alfred’s legislation acted likewise, encouraging his readers and listeners to perceive a common identity of the English living under divine legislation.[[598]](#footnote-598)

Before pursuing Asser’s *Life* as exponent of this concept of national identity, we must first make one further excursion to consider the dating, utility and dissemination of Alfred’s legislation. This is particularly important because Asser does not mention Alfred’s legislative efforts or his reaffirmation of the Covenant in the *Life*. Whether this is because the laws of Alfred had not been drafted by the time of the *Life*’s completion is difficult to discern: the precise dating of the code’s promulgation has long been a matter for argument. Liebermann proposed a date of 892-3 for Alfred’s laws.[[599]](#footnote-599) This would mean the laws were issued at about the same time as Asser’s composition. However, Attenborough later noted the titular use of *Westseaxna cyning* in the law-codes as indicative of an earlier date; in contrast both Asser and later documents of Alfred’s reign use forms of *Angul-saxonum rex* or *Anglorum Saxonum rex*.[[600]](#footnote-600) Simon Keynes has suggested that use of these later titles may have expressed a political desire to more strongly unify the people of Wessex and Mercia under Alfred’s rule following the West Saxon takeover of Mercia;[[601]](#footnote-601) this in turn would give a *terminus post quem* of 886 to Alfred’s *domboc*. Accepting a broad range of possible dates, Whitelock attributes Alfred’s law to 885-899, basing her argument on Alfred’s apparent ability, or that of his by-then-acquired court scholars, to translate from Latin to the vernacular; Whitelock also notes the potential influence of Fulco, archbishop of Rheims, who wrote to Alfred c.885/6 and encouraged the king to use his authority to enforce justice.[[602]](#footnote-602)

If the code had been promulgated prior to Asser’s composition, itself dated to 893,[[603]](#footnote-603) then it is peculiar that Alfred’s legislation, a significant act of early medieval kingship, should have been omitted by Asser in the long list of the king’s accomplishments; Alfred’s was the first law-code issued by a West Saxon king in nearly two centuries.[[604]](#footnote-604) However, Asser does describe the king’s remarkable attention to judicial matters and to the performance of his thegns and ealdormen as judges, emphasizing the king’s interest in maintaining justice.[[605]](#footnote-605) A similar personal involvement in legal matters may be seen in Alfred’s *domboc*; though primarily a collected selection of previously issued laws, the law-code has some clauses which may be original to Alfred, such as provisions protecting the poorer members of English society.[[606]](#footnote-606) In the *Life*,Asser makes a particular point of mentioning the king’s concern for the legal needs of the poor:

***VÆ* c. 105** ...taediosus examinandae in iudiciis veritatis arbiter existebat, et in hoc maxime propter pauperum curam, quibus die noctuque inter cetera praesentis vitae debita mirabiliter incumbebat. Nam in toto illo regno praeter illum solum pauperes aut nullos aut etiam paucissimos habebant adiutores...[[607]](#footnote-607)

He was a painstaking judge in establishing the truth in judicial hearings, and this most of all in cases concerning the care of the poor, on whose behalf he was wonderfully solicitous day and night, amid all the other obligations of this present life. Throughout the entire kingdom the poor had either very few supporters or else none at all, except for the king himself...[[608]](#footnote-608)

This could suggest that Asser was aware of the king’s legislation at the time he was composing the *Life* but remained silent on the matter due to his greater concern for the contents of Alfred’s law-code rather than the significance of the code’s promulgation. Commentary on the king’s attention to the judgments of others suggests that Asser was aware of legal precepts already in place for use by the king and his acting judges.

***VÆ* c.106** ...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...denique si illi iudices profiterentur propterea se talia ita iudicasse, eo quod nihil rectius de his rebus scire poterant, tunc ille, discrete et moderanter illorum imperitiam et insipientiam redarguens, aiebat, ita inquiens...[[609]](#footnote-609)

...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...if the judges in question were to confess after all that they had indeed passed judgement in such a way because they had not known better in the circumstances, then the king, admonishing their inexperience and foolishness with discretion and restraint, would reply as follows....[[610]](#footnote-610)

The ignorance which some of Alfred’s nobles were guilty of seems to have been associated with ‘wisdom’ generally and the resulting inability of these men to decide upon cases with sagacity. The wisdom of Alfred’s nobles here is a matter of their ability either to determine guilt and innocence or to mete out just punishments for various crimes. Use of the verb *iudicare* in the above passage can be taken to mean ‘to judge’ generally,[[611]](#footnote-611) but Keynes and Lapidge have chosen the slightly variant meaning ‘to pass sentence’. If ‘sentence’ in terms of ‘punishment’ was Asser’s intended meaning, then this implies that either some of Alfred’s nobles had difficulty in discerning fair punishments or that they were ignorant of established sentences enacted by law for specific crimes. Though Alfred’s secular laws offer little guidance in establishing guilt or innocence, they do codify crimes with respective penalties in a way which may have proved useful to anyone unsure of what constituted a fair punishment. By reiterating laws from the Old Testament, Alfred followed Moses and Solomon in serving as a mouthpiece for the laws of the Covenant. This also extended the utility of his code as a primer in ‘wisdom’ for his audience, as Patrick Wormald has pointed out:

*Pastoral Rule* and *domboc* alike directed attention to the same ultimate source both of Wisdom and of The Law in Scripture. Whatever practical guidance judges received from a written code, it was the Bible that would teach them how to be judges.[[612]](#footnote-612)

The potential of the code’s utility for judges could only have been possible through its dissemination, either orally or in writing. Alfred specifically states in his code that he had shown his legislation to all of his councillors, so he presumably wished for them to be aware of its contents.[[613]](#footnote-613) Asser tells us that Alfred’s prescription for deficient judicial reasoning was for his nobles to pursue wisdom through reading or having texts recited to them, possibly including those ‘books which are most necessary for all men to know’ as described in the preface to Alfred’s translation of the *Regula Pastoralis*.[[614]](#footnote-614) It would be surprising if the king did not consider his own *domboc* to be among these works for encouraging sound judgement or ensuring fair sentences.[[615]](#footnote-615)

Patrick Wormald argues elsewhere that the primary aims of early Germanic legislators, including Alfred, were ideological and political in nature; by following Roman legislators such as Justinian and Theodosius, parallels could be drawn between the Roman Empire and recently formed Germanic kingdoms while also legitimizing a king’s position as a Christian law-giver.[[616]](#footnote-616) In examining the ideological aims of early Germanic legislators, Wormald is skeptical of the practical goals of law-making, arguing that a lack of evidence for contextual use of law-codes in legal cases suggests that their practical application was not a primary concern.[[617]](#footnote-617)

This is a controversial view. Wormald recognizes that Alfred included his own unique laws with those of his predecessors, that some of these laws seem to have been inspired by specific legal cases, and that they were written in the vernacular which would be more accessible to a nobility of limited levels of literacy.[[618]](#footnote-618) He also points to the survival of Alfred’s code in six manuscripts as well as the order by Edward the Elder, Alfred’s son, that reeves adhere to the *domboc* in their judgements.[[619]](#footnote-619) Keynes agrees with Wormald’s assessment of the ideological and political uses of legislation, but argues that Alfred’s written law may have had greater practical application than Wormald suggests.[[620]](#footnote-620) Keynes discusses the intentions of Alfred as presented in Asser’s *Life*, Alfred’s law-code, and the prologue to Alfred’s translation of the *Regula Pastoralis*, as well as references to the *domboc* in later law-codes of the tenth century.[[621]](#footnote-621) Keynes concludes:

We may not have the dog-eared copies of King Alfred’s code which the judges actually used, but tenth-century kings certainly issued laws which presupposed that copies of the code were widely available and that their judges were able to refer to them.[[622]](#footnote-622)

I am inclined to agree with both Wormald’s assessment of the ideological importance of the king’s legislation as well as Keynes’ openness to the possibility of the text’s practical uses by Alfred’s judges. It seems likely that Alfred’s *domboc* could have served multiple purposes: a handbook of law and punishment, a source of wisdom from the Mosaic Law of the Hebrew Bible, and an ideological promotion of the king’s legitimacy and political purpose. It also seems possible that the code could have been fairly well-known, if not necessarily ‘to-hand’, in line with Alfred’s aims regarding the legislative needs of his people and the wisdom of his judges. The only argument I would add to this is that Alfred himself knew, as evident from the compiling of his own *libellus*,[[623]](#footnote-623) the value of portable wisdom. In any event, if the New Covenant established through the promulgation of Mosaic Law was to be effective in securing an identity for English Christianity under Alfred, it would need to be disseminated or otherwise related beyond the king’s closest circles.

We may wonder, then, if Asser’s narrative about Alfred and the Christian West Saxons was part of a larger programme of national identification that included Alfred’s legislation. Having discussed dating and dissemination of the *domboc* we should return to our question of whether Asser’s narrative refers to Alfred’s law-code. It is possible that the promulgation of the law-code was inspired by the faults of Alfred’s nobles in overseeing justice and that Asser is commenting in the *Life* on initial steps taken by Alfred to correct these problems prior to legislation. I find this somewhat doubtful; Alfred’s opportunity to assert dynastic and Christian legitimacy through inclusion of the laws of Ine and Moses, to voice his own position as king through law-making, and to attempt to restore some social order in a kingdom recently upended by Viking invasion and regional divisions seems too important to have been delayed unnecessarily.

If we consider also that Alfred had regained his kingdom in 878, fifteen years prior to Asser’s writing; was in the process of gathering scholars to his court who would have been familiar with and helpful in composing royal legislation by the mid-880s; must have developed a relationship with one of these scholars, Werferth, Bishop of Worcester, prior to including Werferth in his will dated to the 880s; and that this will was apparently preceded by earlier drafts, indicating an even earlier presence of court scholars, then we can recognize that there was every possibility for the king to have issued his law-code prior to Asser’s writing in 893.[[624]](#footnote-624) The motivations and opportunity for legislation were clearly in place prior to the *Life*’s composition. Though Asser does not specifically mention the law-code, we should consider the strong possibility that Asser’s narrative on the king’s judicial labours was influenced by the author’s awareness of Alfred’s legislative efforts. Alfred’s admonition to the nobility, as reported by Asser, may thus imply an order to familiarize themselves with the law-code he had issued.

This discussion on the dating of the lawcode, its level of dissemination, and the likelihood of Asser being aware of the *domboc* prior to writing his *Life* raises a number of questions for which answers are, for the moment, tantalizingly out of our reach. Ultimately, whether Asser’s work came before or after Alfred’s law-code can not be confidently ascertained despite our best arguments. However, the chronology of events may not be as important as what the *domboc* and the *Life* both say about court mentality on kingship and the state of Wessex. As we shall see, issuing Mosaic Law in the *domboc* may have been a reflection of the mindset imparted in Asser’s narrative: the divine hand is at play with and through the king and his people, just as it had been with Moses and the Israelites.

Returning to the typological connections between Alfred and Solomon, we are now left asking what the relationship is between this discussion on the Covenant and Asser’s prominent theme of exile. We must consider the relevance of Alfred’s inclusion of the Mosaic Laws in his legislation, the conditional nature of his royal position, and the importance of reaffirming the Covenant with God. First, the question of why Alfred would be interested in establishing the Covenant calls for examination. Writers of the Hebrew Bible included numerous benefits rewarding adherence to the Covenant between Israel and God, as related to Solomon by God in first and second books of Kings.

**III Rg 6:12-13**  domus haec quam aedificas si ambulaveris in praeceptis meis et iudicia mea feceris et custodieris omnia mandata mea gradiens per ea firmabo sermonem meum tibi quem locutus sum ad David patrem tuum et habitabo in medio filiorum Israhel et non derelinquam populum meum Israhel

As for this house, which thou art building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments, walking in them, I will fulfil my word to thee, which I spoke to David thy father. And I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and I will not forsake my people Israel.

**IV Rg 21:7-9** posuit quoque idolum luci quem fecerat in templo Domini super quo locutus est Dominus ad David et ad Salomnem filium eius in templo hoc et in Hierusalem quam elegi de cunctis tribubus Israhel ponam nomen meum in sempiternum et ultra non faciam commoveri pedem Israhel de terra quam dedi patribus eorum sic tamen si custodierint opere omnia quae praecepi eis et universam legem quam mandavit eis servus meus Moses

He set also an idol of the grove, which he had made, in the temple of the Lord: concerning which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son: In this temple, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name for ever. And I will no more make the feet of Israel to be moved out of the land, which I gave to their fathers: only if they will observe to do all that I have commanded them, according to the law which my servant Moses commanded them.

These verses deal primarily with the rewards of honouring the pact with God by keeping his laws and obeying his will. Though directed to Solomon, they concern the people of Israel generally. In the first extract (III Reg.), God’s agreement is that he ‘will not forsake’ the people of Israel, a fairly general statement of God’s goodwill. The extract from the second book of Kings (IV Rg.) is more specific in removing the threat of exile in return for honouring the Covenant. Though presented as offering the benefits of affirming and keeping the covenant, divine punishment is implied in both extracts. ‘I will not forsake my people’ in III Rg. is dependent upon the people keeping the Covenant, suggesting that God might forsake them if they don’t. Similarly, the verses in IV Rg. suggest that God permitted or caused the exile of his people in the past, and may do so again should they fail to abide by his law. If Alfred and the English felt themselves to be God’s elect, and if they considered themselves to be ‘forsaken’ by God for previous improprieties, then including Mosaic Law in Alfred’s *domboc* might not only have served as a royal confirmation of the Covenant for his people, but also as a reminder to all of what this Covenant specifically required from them.

Exile is remarkably prominent among the penalties presented in the Old Testament regarding the Covenant; the Israelites, having undergone exile and exodus already, were in possession of the Land through God’s will alone, and could be expelled, or abandoned to expulsion, through disobedience. The threat of exile is found in numerous Old Testament warnings. Moses warns in three separate passages of Dt. 28 that the people of Israel will face exile should they break the Covenant.

**Dt. 28:25** tradat te Dominus corruentem ante hostes tuos per unam viam egrediaris contra eos et per septem fugias et dispergaris per omnia regna terrae

The Lord make thee to fall down before thy enemies, one way mayst thou go out against them, and flee seven ways, and be scattered throughout all the kingdoms of the earth.

**Dt 28:36-37** ducet Dominus te et regem tuum quem constitueris super te in gentem quam ignoras tu et patres tui et servies ibi diis alienis ligno et lapidi et eris perditus in proverbium ac fabulam omnibus populis ad quos te introduxerit Dominus

The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king, whom thou shalt have appointed over thee, into a nation which thou and thy fathers know not: and there thou shalt serve strange gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt be lost, as a proverb and a byword to all people, among whom the Lord shall bring thee in.

**Dt 28:62-65** et remanebitis pauci numero qui prius eratis sicut astra caeli prae multitudine quoniam non audisti vocem Domini Dei tui et sicut ante laetatus est Dominus super vos bene vobis faciens vosque multiplicans sic laetabitur disperdens vos atque subvertens ut auferamini de terra ad quam ingredieris possidendam disperget te Dominus in omnes populos a summitate terrae usque ad terminos eius et servies ibi diis alienis quos et tu ignoras et patres tui lignis et lapidibus in gentibus quoque illis non quiesces neque erit requies vestigio pedis tui dabit enim tibi Dominus ibi cor pavidum et deficientes oculos et animam maerore consumptam

And you shall remain few in number, who before were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because thou heardst not the voice of the Lord thy God. And as the Lord rejoiced upon you before doing good to you, and multiplying you: so he shall rejoice destroying and bringing you to nought, so that you shall be taken away from the land which thou shalt go in to possess. The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the farthest parts of the earth to the ends thereof: and there thou shalt serve strange gods, which both thou art ignorant of and thy fathers, wood and stone. Neither shalt thou be quiet, even in those nations, nor shall there be any rest for the sole of thy foot. For the Lord will give thee a fearful heart, and languishing eyes, and a soul consumed with pensiveness.

The severity of exile is impressed upon us by the nature of the other punishments described in the same chapter, including famine, thirst, pestilence and destruction. God, through Moses, promises a home for the Israelites should they honour the Covenant; expulsion from that home is a dire consequence of breaking God’s Law.

What then of the English and their home? Asser’s prominent and repeated references to exile in the *Life*, discussed in the previous sections, depict the English as a people experiencing significant hardships at the hands of the Vikings, with exile and displacement prominent among their sufferings. If the English saw themselves as among God’s elect during this distressing period they may have wondered what they had done to lose God’s favour. Asser provides some insights here in his comments on the English generally. For instance, in c.93 Asser discusses the decline in monasticism among the English and Alfred’s resulting need to install foreign monks at Athelney.

***VÆ* c.93** Nam primitus, quia nullum de sua propria gente nobilem ac liberum hominem, nisi infantes, qui nihil boni eligere nec mali respuere pro teneritudine invalidae aetatis adhuc possunt, qui monasticam voluntarie vellet subire vitam, habebat; nimirum quia per multa retroacta annorum curricula monasticae vitae desiderium ab illa tota gente, nec non et a multis aliis gentibus, funditus desierat, quamvis perplurima adhuc monasteria in illa regione constructa permaneant, nullo tamen regulam illius vitae ordinabiliter tenente, nescio quare, aut pro alienigenarum infestationibus, qui saepissime terra marique hostiliter irrumpunt, aut etiam pro nimia illius gentis in omni genere divitiarum abundantia, propter quam multo magis id genus despectae monasticae vitae fieri existimo; ideo diversi generis monachos in eodem monasterio congregare studuit.[[625]](#footnote-625)

The reason is that, at first, he had no noble or free-born man of his own race who would of his own accord undertake the monastic life, except for children, who could not as yet choose good or reject evil because of the tenderness of their infant years – not surprisingly, since for many years past the desire for the monastic life had been totally lacking in that entire race (and in a good many other peoples as well!), even though quite a number of monasteries which had been built in that area still remain but do not maintain the rule of monastic life in any consistent way. I am not sure why: either it is because of the depredations of foreign enemies whose attacks by land and sea are very frequent and savage, or else because of the people’s enormous abundance of riches of every kind, as a result of which (I suspect) this kind of monastic life came all the more into disrespect. In any case Alfred took pains to assemble monks of various nationalities in that monastery.[[626]](#footnote-626)

The English as a ‘race’ are regarded collectively here in their reluctance to adopt the cenobitic lifestyle. Asser’s comment that oblates were unable ‘to choose good or reject evil’ implies that adults had the capacity to do so, but did not. He points out that there were a number of monasteries available, thus pointing to the fact that English reluctance to live in monasteries was not for lack of these institutions. He finally suggests that this trend among the English was either due to a general fear of ‘foreign enemies’ (presumably the monastery-raiding Vikings), or to a moral fault brought on by England’s relative wealth. Asser’s depiction of the English as self-absorbed, miserly, materialistic, slothful and lacking in piety is expressed in two other chapters of the *Life*.

***VÆ* c.91** Qui maxima, excepto illo dolore, perturbatione et controversia suorum, qui nullum aut parvum voluntarie pro communi regni necessitate vellent subire laborem.[[627]](#footnote-627)

And what of the mighty disorder and confusion of his own people – to say nothing of his own malady – who would undertake of their own accord little or no work for the common needs of the kingdom?[[628]](#footnote-628)

***VÆ* c.105** Nam in toto illo regno praeter illum solum pauperes aut nullos aut etiam paucissimos habebant adiutores; nimium quia etiam pene omnes illius regionis potentes et nobiles ad secularia magis quam ad divina mentem declinaverant negotia: magis enim unusquisque speciali etiam in secularibus negotiis, quam communi.[[629]](#footnote-629)

Throughout the entire kingdom the poor had either very few supporters or else none at all, except for the king himself: not surprisingly, since nearly all the magnates and nobles of that land had devoted their attention more to worldly than to divine affairs; indeed, everyone was more concerned with his own particular well-being in worldly matters than with the common good.[[630]](#footnote-630)

In these chapter extracts, Asser’s view of the English is not favourable; indeed, there are few compliments paid to the English generally throughout the *Life*.[[631]](#footnote-631) Is the nation presented in Asser’s narrative meant to be viewed as the elect? One may ask how Asser could have considered the English to be God’s chosen; we may alternatively wonder how they could have been viewed in any other way. In discussing the Franks, Wallace-Hadrill pointed out that ‘what could happen in the Old Israel could equally happen in its successor, the New Israel’.[[632]](#footnote-632) The same could be said of the English who, turning away from God and pursuing their own worldly comforts, effectively placed the mundane above the divine. This is exactly the sort of behaviour that is bound to draw God’s wrath, particularly if the offending parties are among God’s elect.

Divine punishment, as noted above, may come in the form of exile or scattering of people. Referring again to the Hebrew Bible, exile continues to threaten the Israelites when the Sinaitic Covenant develops into the Davidic Covenant,[[633]](#footnote-633) introducing new concepts of kingship and royal obligation to Israel. This can be seen in another extract from III Rg, wherein God addresses Solomon.

**III Rg 9:4-7** tu quoque si ambulaveris coram me sicut ambulavit pater tuus in simplicitate cordis et in aequitate et feceris omnia quae praecepi tibi et legitima mea et iudicia mea servaveris ponam thronum regni tui super Israhel in sempiternum sicut locutus sum David patri tuo dicens non auferetur de genere tuo vir de solio Israhel si autem aversione aversi fueritis vos et filii vestri non sequentes me nec custodientes mandata mea et carimonias quas propusui vobis sed abieritis et colueritis deos alienos et adoraveritis eos auferam Israhel de superficie terrae quam dedi eis et templum quod sanctificavi nomini meo proiciam a conspectu meo eritque Israhel in proverbium et in fabulam cunctis populis

And if thou wilt walk before me, as thy father walked, in simplicity of heart, and in uprightness: and wilt do all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my ordinances, and my judgements, I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel for ever, as I promised David, thy father, saying: There shall not fail a man of thy race upon the throne of Israel. But if you and your children, revolting, shall turn away from following me, and will not keep my commandments, and my ceremonies, which I have set before you, but will go and worship strange gods, and adore them: I will take away Israel from the face of the land which I have given them; and the temple which I have sanctified to my name, I will cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb, and a byword among all people.

Once more, Old Testament sources remind us of the requirements of keeping the Covenant and the penalties for neglecting it, including expulsion from the Land God had given to Israel. Similar contractual bonds between king, people, and God can be found elsewhere in the Old Testament,[[634]](#footnote-634) but in this case the responsibility placed upon the king and the conditional nature of his office are more explicitly stated. The reward for preserving the Covenant extends into a promise to ensure a continuing dynastic line. This conditional promise of a royal dynasty is also found in the book of Psalms:

**Ps 131:11-12**  si custodierint filii tui pactum meum et testificationem meam quam docuero eos et filii eorum usque in aeternum, sedebunt super thronum tuum quia elegit Dominus Sion desideravit eam in habitaculum suum

If thy children will keep my covenant, and these my testimonies which I shall teach them: Their children also for evermore shall sit upon thy throne. For the Lord hath chosen Sion: he hath chosen it for his dwelling.

By incorporating Mosaic Law within his own legislation, Alfred was promoting the concept of keeping the traditional Covenant with God. From the Davidic Covenant ensuring perpetuity of a royal dynasty, the security of the king’s rule and dynasty, as well as the stability of his kingdom, may have been the desired rewards for formal observance of God’s Law.[[635]](#footnote-635)

David Pratt has convincingly argued that Alfred’s illnesses, another primary form of the king’s suffering portrayed in the *Life*, were honestly perceived by Alfred and Asser as divinely inflicted.[[636]](#footnote-636) Pratt notes the close parallel between Alfred’s ailments and the hardships of England brought by the Vikings; Alfred’s illnesses, which the king had prayed for to distract him from carnal desire, reflect the king’s own shouldering of the popular guilt which had drawn God’s wrath.[[637]](#footnote-637) Wallace-Hadrill has suggested, based on Alfred’s translations of Gregory’s *Regula Pastoralis* and Orosius’ *Historiarum Adversum Paganos*, that the king felt a connection between his actions and the state of the kingdom, making the king responsible for the welfare of his people.[[638]](#footnote-638)

In a view that sees such a connection between ruler and ruled, we may consider the ramifications of typological connections presented in the *Life*. Mary Garrison has pointed out that comparing a king to an Old Testament monarch may imply that a similar comparison can be drawn between the king’s kingdom and the Old Testament Israel.[[639]](#footnote-639) Though Garrison suggests that this extension of typological comparison may be fragile and would be dependent on audience response, she also notes the importance of these connections in early medieval sources on kingship.[[640]](#footnote-640) If Alfred, as portrayed in the *Life*, is connected so closely to his kingdom that the sufferings of both take on physical manifestations, then we may further argue that the typological comparisons made to Alfred in the same work imply divine election of Alfred’s people as among God’s newly Chosen.

There is one further point which needs to be made concerning ideas about English election as presented in Asser’s *Life* and promoted in Alfred’s *domboc*. Here we may look to Viking incursions, raids and invasion and consider the place held by the Vikings as a scourge sent by God to punish the English for their moral weaknesses. Asser’s chosen language in portraying the Vikings relies exclusively on the word *paganus*; the word is used ninety-eight times to refer to Viking forces in Asser’s work.[[641]](#footnote-641) Broad labeling of English forces, by comparison, are consistently referred to as *christianus* eighteen times.[[642]](#footnote-642) Simon Coupland and others have suggested that portrayals of Vikings through religious distinctions, found in ecclesiastical sources throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, may reflect a popular view that the English were a Covenant-people.[[643]](#footnote-643) Wallace-Hadrill argued likewise, noting that this trend of emphasizing the religious difference of the Vikings was also in place in Francia and Muslim Spain.[[644]](#footnote-644) He also considered how Viking attacks may have been perceived by Christian victims as divine judgement for having lost their way.

Matthew Townend has contributed to this discussion by noting that there may have been a consistent typological connection between the Vikings of Anglo-Saxon sources and the Assyrians of the Old Testament.[[645]](#footnote-645) This connection may be seen in the *Carta Dominica* which threatens a divine scourge of enemies from the North; this echoes the Book of Jeremiah, wherein repeated threats from the North are also made, here suggestive of the Assyrian-held kingdom of Samaria.[[646]](#footnote-646) If typological comparisons to the king, discussed above, can be extended to include the king’s people, then can the same be said when typological connections are applied to the enemies of the same people? For our discussion on Asser, no such typological connection is made in the *Life*,but this does not mean that the comparison wasn’t implied. English victories and defeats are consistently portrayed by Asser as resulting from divine cause, and then always in relation to *christiani* and *pagani*. Through selective language, Asser presented the English and the Vikings as peoples respectively unified by their religious polarities.

Old Testament scriptures portray the people of Israel as having been granted safety and stability, the security of which was dependent upon their observance of Mosaic Law and obedience to God’s will in a covenant bound between the Israelites and God through the agency of a divinely appointed king. The fortunes of the king and his dynasty were also preserved through the people’s adherence to the Covenant; the king was thus placed to encourage his people to obey God, while his people were likewise responsible for their own actions. For the Old Testament authors, failure by king or people to honour the Covenant would result in the downfall of the king’s dynasty as well as hardship and exile for the nation.

By including Mosaic Law in his legislation, Alfred reveals a marked attempt to reaffirm the Covenant between God and the English. In doing so, Alfred may have hoped to strengthen the security of his own reign and promote the continuation of the line of Cerdic through God’s promise. The series of disrupting Viking attacks and invasions before and during Alfred’s reign, the near end to the house of Cerdic, and the numerous expulsions and mass movements of the English caused by these, echo Old Testament fears concerning the Covenant and God’s wrath. It is fitting that Alfred, having regained power and stability through military and diplomatic endeavours and, reportedly, by the grace of God, followed the examples of Old Testament kings such as David, Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah by publicly reaffirming the Covenant. Alfred’s inclusion of Mosaic Law in his *domboc* echoes with and promotes the court mentality expressed by Asser: the English were among God’s Chosen, with a divinely appointed king and a people punished by invasion and exile just as the Israelites of the Hebrew Bible had before them. Through his own suffering, labour and devotion, Alfred brings his people home and reconfirms their relationship with God. If the exile theme in the *Life* reflects the English as an exile people, then perhaps the most crucial typological comparison Asser makes is between Alfred and Moses.

**3.6 Conclusion**

Mary Garrison states that ‘election becomes an ideology of legitimation when it is appropriated by ruling groups to justify political arrangements’.[[647]](#footnote-647) Typological resonance with Old Testament kings and prophets who affirmed the Covenant with God placed Alfred in a position to ensure the observation of a new Covenant and so preserve his people from the hardships and exile experienced prior to the treaty with Guthrum in 878. Such comparisons to Old Testament figures also reveal Alfred and his progeny to be in God’s care as the divinely appointed keepers of the Covenant. Typological similarities with the restored exiles David and Edwin strengthen the sense of Alfred’s ability and right to rule by depicting his life in a way that shows shared experiences and behaviours with these kings. Furthermore, Asser’s readers, seeing the hardships and disruption of their people in the text, may have come to see a relationship between themselves and the people of Israel through these connections.

While typological suggestions encouraged support for Alfred’s divinely anointed status, it should be remembered that Alfred, as the work’s dedicatee, was also likely to have read or heard the *Life* and so would have been presented with exemplars for a Christian king to follow. In this respect, it would be fascinating to know whether Alfred’s law-code preceded or followed Asser’s writing; was he inspired by Asser’s typologies or were these drawn from the king’s prior legislative activities? This latter idea finds support in Scharer’s proposal that the *Life* was modeled, in part, on Sedulis Scottus and was meant to be a didactic ‘mirror for princes’.[[648]](#footnote-648) With the evidence as we have received it we can only speculate, though I suspect, as noted above, that Alfred’s legislation was composed no later than Asser’s own writing. We should feel confident that, as well as serving as instructive examples, the typological suggestions in the *Life* would have lent strength to Alfred who could see his own hardships and triumphs presented as reflections of such illustrious forebears, particularly in the depths of exile and uncertainty which he shared with David and Edwin.

Because Alfred was restored from exile to regain control of Wessex and Wessex-controlled England, Asser was able to portray the king’s experience as the typological fulfillment of Old Testament rulers. He was also able to portray the king as a Christ-like figure who had endured great hardships while in Somerset before successfully stemming the Viking threat to England and reasserting himself as ruler over Wessex-controlled England. By portraying the Vikings as pagan counterparts to the English, Asser emphasized the unity of the English under a pious king who ruled with both dynastic and Christian legitimacy.

The promotion of Christian unity in Asser’s narrative is heightened by the theme of dislocation present in the *Life*, binding the king and his people through shared hardship and eventual elevation. That the king established a new Covenant with God by including Mosaic Law in his own legislation promotes the idea that Alfred and his advisors wished to portray the English as God’s chosen people (or, as Christians, among God’s chosen), further legitimizing Alfred’s claims to divinely appointed authority. Asser thus reveals through his narrative that the concepts of unity, election and Christian kingship were well in place in the Anglo-Saxon royal court by the time of his writing in 893.

I have discussed how Asser’s comments and descriptions of foreigners and pilgrims in the life contributed to a theme of dislocation in the *Life*. Descriptions of royal exiles also contributed to Asser’s theme, and perhaps suggest the author’s preoccupation with the subject. The removals of Berhtwulf, Osberht and Burgred are all discussed in the narrative, as is the coup against Charles the Fat in Francia. Wrongful removal of these kings explains later ailments afflicting their respective kingdoms and suggests that God’s interest in kingship was not exclusive to Alfred. The author’s concerns about royal exile are made clear in his narrative on the attempted expulsion of Alfred’s father, Æthelwulf, and in his commentary concerning the offending parties, particularly Alfred’s brother, Æthelbald; Æthelbald is roundly villainized for his rebellious actions and defiance of God’s plan. Asser’s choices in adopting and adapting material from the *ASC* in all of these stories, and his added comments on more widespread movements of the English from their homes, strongly suggests that his construction of a theme of exile and dislocation in the *Life* was carefully thought out.

Inclusions by the Chronicler and Asser pertaining to Alfred’s retention of soldiers and continued presence in the political bounds of Wessex make it difficult to take a definite stand on the king’s status as an exile. Although he suffered as an exile king would have suffered through political removal, physical displacement, and extreme hardship, the extent to which Alfred was ‘driven’ from power may have entailed regional losses only. Again, neither Asser nor the Chronicler refers to Alfred’s time in the wilderness with explicit exile language. Nonetheless, Alfred does, in Asser’s account, endure an exile-like experience; his ascension from these depths helps to define him as a Christian warrior king. The depths and heights of Alfred’s experience are enhanced by typological connections with Kings David, Solomon, Edwin, and even Jesus Christ. However, perhaps the more important subjects for typological comparison in the the *Life* are the English as a people. The expulsion of large groups of West Saxons and the restoration of stability that Alfred brings post-878 are important factors in the promotion of the English as among God’s elect. That Alfred’s *domboc* includes lengthy extracts from Mosaic Law strongly suggests that Alfred’s court wished to encourage a perception of the English as a fallen but restored people, brought back to God and stability through their own Moses or Joshua. This would further strengthen a sense in the English people of common cause against the Vikings and, necessarily, loyalty and obedience to their anointed king, Alfred, and his family.

In the next case study, I will examine documentary evidence from the reign of Æthelred II (987-1016). Æthelred’s exile presents unique problems and opportunities for inquiry. For instance, whereas both Edwin and Alfred had biographers to relate their stories, information on Æthelred’s exile is largely restricted to relevant entries in the *ASC*. Under such circumstances of limited narrative material, can we ask similar questions about th representation of exile as in our previous case studies? Fortunately, extant charters and law-codes from the reign of Æthelred may give clues concerning the restoration of the royal exile and the effects of this episode on royal documents. With closer examination I will demonstrate that portrayals and crafted responses of the restored exile king are evident even within such formal sources.

**4. Chapter Three: Ӕthelred II**

**4.1 Introduction**

Few English kings have had such an unfortunate legacy as that of Ӕthelred II (reigned 978-1013 and 1014-1016).[[649]](#footnote-649) Like Edwin and Alfred, Æthelred was forced into exile by military incursions and was later restored to the throne. However, whereas Edwin and Alfred came to be depicted as exemplary figures that emerged from exile to bring positive change to their home kingdoms, Æthelred has long been viewed as a sort of anti-hero: perhaps tragic, certainly flawed. Thomas Hodgkin, writing in 1914, offered this appraisal:

Was this man bereft of reason? If he had been absolutely insane we should probably have had a distinct statement to that effect in the Chronicle, but it may, perhaps, be suggested that there was some hereditary weakness in his family which in his case affected the fibre of his brain.[[650]](#footnote-650)

It is well known that Ӕthelred’s poor reputation is largely due to the tone and content of the *ASC*,a crucial primary source for this reign.[[651]](#footnote-651) Simon Keynes has shown that the Chronicler composed his entries about Æthelred after the king’s reign, and was thus able to include his own personal interjections and judgements into the annals.[[652]](#footnote-652) Despite the unsympathetic portrayal of the king in the *ASC*, the circumstances surrounding Ӕthelred II’s brief exile in 1013 and restoration in 1014 raise similar questions to those asked of Bede’s Edwin and Asser’s Alfred. Christian kingship, negotiations of power, political assembly, ecclesiastical concerns and ideology, the power of language, the power of property, and the value of traditional loyalties may all be discussed by examining portrayals of the king through the lens of exile.

In this chapter I will examine three bodies of evidence in turn. In the first section I will discuss the political logistics of Ӕthelred’s removal from and return to the throne. This section is primarily concerned with entries from the *ASC* in order to establish, within the bounds of the Chronicler’s reliability, the series of events and variables involved in the expulsion of the king. I will give particularly close attention to the Chronicler’s inclusions and silences about Æthelred’s exile to determine how this episode is portrayed.

In the second section I will give close scrutiny to the charters issued just prior to and following Æthelred’s restoration from exile in 1014. Selections of language and formulae, as will be shown, reveal the perspectives and intentions of those responsible for drafting more official documents. The distinct elements of these charters will be examined in turn to assess how their authors shaped grants of land and privileges into supporting documents of the restored king’s legitimacy as ruler. This will be followed by a brief discussion on the secondary literature regarding English unification and the relationship between the king and the nobility to demonstrate how the charter evidence may be construed within political contexts.

In the third and final section, I will discuss Æthelred’s legislation prior to and following his exile in 1013-14. Again, I will show how deliberate choice and construction in royal documents, responding to restoration from exile, can promote the restored king’s office and reflect the political context in which the legislation was promulgated. This section on legislation also looks at a cluster of chapters from the lawcode II Cn which have been argued to reflect a lost secular lawcode of Æthelred issued after his restoration of exile.

My previous discussions on the primary sources for Edwin and Alfred have dealt primarily with biographical sources, from which I have demonstrated the conscientious constructions of those exile kings as models of kingship. There are no such biographical materials that portray Æthelred and his life. Yet composers of Æthelred’s royal documents would have been equally careful and deliberate in the choices they made, especially during the politically sensitive time which followed the king’s restoration from exile. Below, I will show that the authors of Æthelred’s charters and law codes worked to construct portrayals of the king in response to the king’s precarious position as a restored exile. A brief introduction to the sources is given for each of the three sections below.

**4.2 The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Æthelred’s Return**

The fullest record of events from Ӕthelred’s reign comes from the *ASC*. Before I examine the contents of the Chronicler’s entries concerning Æthelred’s exile in 1013 and restoration in 1014, I will first briefly outline the *ASC*’s usefulness. I have already discussed the nature of this source in the previous chapter,[[653]](#footnote-653) but it is important to clarify here that while the *ASC* survives in eight different versions of varying degrees of agreement and ‘wholeness’, I rely most heavily upon the C version in this chapter.

Only a few versions of the *ASC* are useful for students of Ӕthelred. The A manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 173) does not record the reign of Ӕthelred as fully as C, D or E, ending as it does in 975 with only two entries following: one for 984, recording the death of Bishop Ӕthelwold and the consecration of Ӕlfheah, and one for 1001 detailing the Scandinavian raids of that year and the subsequent payment by the English to secure peace.[[654]](#footnote-654) Though these chronicle entries seem to have been written as events took place,[[655]](#footnote-655) or at least shortly afterward, A does not provide details on the remainder of Ӕthelred’s reign which is of primary interest here, namely 1009-1014. The B manuscript (London BL Cotton Tiberius A.vi) ends before the reign of Ӕthelred, with 977 marking its final entry.[[656]](#footnote-656) Manuscript G (London BL Cott. Otho B.xi) is an early eleventh-century copy of A and so also fails to cover events of Ӕthelred’s reign pertinent to an examination of the king’s exile and return.[[657]](#footnote-657) Manuscript F (London BL Cott. Domitian viii) is a late eleventh- or early twelfth-century work using E or the exemplar for E as an archetype,[[658]](#footnote-658) and H (London BL Cott. Domitian ix, f.9) survives as a fragment with entries for 1113 and 1114 only.[[659]](#footnote-659) Manuscripts C (London BL Cott. Tiberius B. i), D (London BL Cott. Tiberius B. iv) and E (Oxford Bodleian Lib., Laud Misc. 636) all cover the reign of Ӕthelred and are close in agreement from 983 through to 1022.[[660]](#footnote-660)

Though compiled at different times, the C, D and E manuscripts all appear to draw from a similar source or sources for the 983-1022 annals.[[661]](#footnote-661) The annals detailing Æthelred’s reign through 1016 were composed *en bloc* by a single author with knowledge of how Ӕthelred’s reign ended and the subsequent accession of Cnut to the throne; this Chronicler may himself have used some other annual record of events or exemplar as source material.[[662]](#footnote-662) While not contemporary to the events described in their narratives, entries for Ӕthelred’s reign appear to have been made a relatively short time after Ӕthelred’s death and, though perhaps tainted by the chronicler’s hindsight and personal judgements noted above, they nonetheless represent the best near-contemporary narrative source available.[[663]](#footnote-663) Unless otherwise noted, references to the *ASC* in this chapter concern the C text, with any relevant differences between the C, D and E versions noted as required.[[664]](#footnote-664)

**4.2.1 The Chronicler’s Portrayal: Conditions Leading to Æthelred’s Exile**

I begin by examining the C entries for 1013 and 1014 to identify those events which the Chronicler chose to include along with Æthelred’s exile and restoration. The entry for 1013 begins with the king’s appointment of Lifing as Archbishop of Canterbury.[[665]](#footnote-665) Danish soldiers under the command of Thorkell the Tall had murdered Archbishop Ӕlfheah of Canterbury in 1012, and the Chronicler’s recording of Ælfheah’s replacement reminds the reader of recent Viking incursions and atrocities in Kent.[[666]](#footnote-666) The Chronicler continues his entry for 1013 by recounting the arrival of a new invading force into that same part of England:

***ASC* 1013** 7 on þissum ylcan geare toforan þam monðe Augustus com Swegen cyning mid his flotan to Sandwic 7 wende þa swiðe raðe abutan Eastenglum into Humbra muþan 7 swa upweard andlang Trentan oð he com to Genesburuh.

And in this same year, before the month of August, King Swein came with his fleet to Sandwich, and then went very quickly round East Anglia into the mouth of the Humber, and so up along the Trent until he reached Gainsborough.[[667]](#footnote-667)

Swein’s arrival began the chain of events leading to Æthelred’s flight from England after Christmas that same year. The Chronicler was aware of the king’s eventual expulsion, and so may have given information here that partly explains how and why the king became an exile.[[668]](#footnote-668) The geographic details are particularly interesting. Sandwich, situated in the easternmost edge of Kent, had been a popular landing site during previous Viking incursions.[[669]](#footnote-669) From 1009 through 1012, Thorkell’s forces were stationed in and around Sandwich. They besieged Canterbury in 1011 and captured Archbishop Ӕlfheah, holding him for ransom before his death.[[670]](#footnote-670)

The Chronicler gives details that present the weakness of the kingdom and the precarious position of the king in 1013. Having spent nearly three years under Danish occupation, Sandwich would have been a particularly vulnerable location, with the local inhabitants likely still reeling from what Keynes has called ‘one of the most catastrophic events of [Ӕthelred’s] reign’.[[671]](#footnote-671) Repeated Viking stays in the area may also have nurtured local contacts in and around Sandwich and provided Swein with useful information and aid in 1013. The Chronicler does not mention any ravaging or other violence done by Swein while in Sandwich, and so the local population may not have had the wherewithal to give resistance. It is also possible that Sandwich was a friendly landing site for Swein’s fleet, choosing to accomodate Swein in defiance to Æthelred. This speculation is based on the Chronicler’s silence regarding Viking violence in the area and not on any direct statements by the Chronicler to that effect. However, as I shall demonstrate, the Chronicler provides further evidence that the English people were divided amongst themselves in 1013, with faltering loyalties eventually leading to Swein’s successful conquest and Æthelred’s exile. The Chronicler’s portrayal of Æthelred, then, is as a king without control of his kingdom.

The Chronicler’s mention of Swein’s departure to Gainsborough also indicates that Danish forces were attempting to visit friendly or familiar territory before proceding to other regions of Britain. Northumbria and the Five Boroughs had been part of the Danelaw established in Alfred’s treaty with Guthrum in 878;[[672]](#footnote-672) Gainsborough, which lies in Lincolnshire, is situated in what was the northernmost portion of the Five Boroughs and so was close by the southern boundary of Northumbria. Although the Danelaw was no longer an autonomous political entity by the reign of Ӕthelred II, it may be that Swein was counting on regional support from this area at the outset, suggesting that the unity of the English kingdom and the strength of the central monarchy were already in doubt. The shared cultural backgrounds and relative geographic independence from Winchester would have made Northumbria and the Five Boroughs promising candidates for an alliance against Æthelred’s remaining forces.

However, there are some signs that cultural divisions were not perceived by all members of England’s late tenth- and early eleventh-century society. James Campbell has pointed out that Ӕthelweard (d. c.998) used of the words *Angli* for ‘English’ and *Anglia* for ‘England’ in his chronicle, which would suggest the formation of a national identity in the kingdom.[[673]](#footnote-673) Susan Reynolds notes that the entry for 991 does not mention ethnic lines in the kingdom’s regions during the latter part of Ӕthelred’s reign and also that the poet of *The Battle of Maldon* expresses national solidarity under one king in the speech of Byrhtnoth.[[674]](#footnote-674) However, Æthelweard and the composer of *Maldon* are hardly representative of popular regional viewpoints throughout England, and their works predate the events of 1013 by at least twenty years. Waning regional loyaties to the king may help to explain the prompt submission of the North to Swein and the absence of pillaging or resistance in the Chronicler’s continued account of the invasion:

***ASC* 1013** 7 þa **sona** beah Uhtred eorl 7 ealle Norðhymbre to him 7 eal þæt folc on Lindesige 7 siððan þæt folc into Fifburhingum 7 **raðe** þæs eall **here** be norðan Wæclinga stræte, 7 him man sealde gislas of ælcere scire.

And then **at once** Earl Uhtred and all the Northumbrians submitted to him, as did all the people of Lindsey, and then all the people belonging to the district of the Five Boroughs, and **quickly** afterwards all the **Danish settlers** north of Watling Street, and hostages were given to him from every shire.[[675]](#footnote-675)

There is much to infer from the Chronicler’s statement that is relevant to our understanding of the nature of Æthelred’s exile. Curiously, there is no indication in the annal that the submission of Northumbria, Lindsey and the Five Boroughs resulted from military conflict: no battles or accounts of resistance are given. His extensive knowledge concerning the landing places and important locations of Swein’s movements, as well as details of battles he gives elsewhere, make it seem unlikely that the Chronicler was ignorant of any violence that had occurred. More probable reasons for the Chronicler’s silence are that either no significant resistance formed against Swein in the Danelaw, or that the Chronicler deliberately omitted such details. The Chronicler’s silence invites the reader of the 1013 annal to question the loyalties of the Danelaw regions and Æthelred’s control over parts of his kingdom.[[676]](#footnote-676)

The Chronicler also invites readers to perceive duplicity in the Danelaw by the language he chose to describe the region’s submission to Swein. Ryan Lavelle has pointed out that the use of *here* as an identifier for the residents of the Danelaw may have been intended to pair them with the actual Danish army and thus imply that the region submitted without a fight.[[677]](#footnote-677) The Chronicler’s choice of language in using *here* to refer to Danelaw residents thus indicates that he viewed the Danelaw as collaborative supporters of Swein and betrayers of Æthelred. Furthermore, the Chronicler uses *sona* and *raðe* to describe northern submission, strongly suggesting that capitulation was made with minimal hesitation.[[678]](#footnote-678) Furthermore, he emphasizes the absolute conditions of northern submission by repeating the word *eall* three times and concluding with *ælcere* to accentuate his point.[[679]](#footnote-679) Though the 1013 entry specifically names Ealdorman Uhtred (discussed further below), it is clear that the Chronicler wished to express the existence of a broad divide between the regions of the Danelaw and the otherwise unified English nation: *ealle Norðhymbre*, all the *folc* of Lindsey and the Five Boroughs, and indeed all of the *here* were culpable.

The Chronicler further implies regional factionalism by mentioning Watling Street, a boundary which had once served to distinguish the Danelaw from the rest of England. This echo of previous disunion is reinforced by the Chronicler’s later use of Watling Street as a boundary in the 1013 entry: it is only when Swein crosses Watling Street and enters the South that his army ‘did the greatest damage that any army could do’ (*worhton þæt mæste yfel þæt ænig here don mihte*).[[680]](#footnote-680) This is the Chronicler’s first mention of violence incurred by Swein’s invasion, and represents most clearly the annalist’s portrayal of Æthelred’s kingdom as a divided state. If fractures of loyalty in the unity of Ӕthelred’s kingdom contributed to his forced expulsion at the end of 1013 it may best be seen here with the swift and apparently non-violent occupation of nearly one-half of English territory by Swein’s forces.[[681]](#footnote-681)

This encourages us to reconsider arguments for the strength of English unity under Æthelred. In her defense of the reign, Susan Reynolds argues that the strength of English unity during Æthelred’s reign may be seen in the continuance of royal government with firm control of the kingdom despite adversity, and a form of centralized control that was not as ineffective as some have argued.[[682]](#footnote-682) Certainly, by 1013 the components of English unification under a single monarch were in place, and James Campbell has rightly argued for England’s status as a nation state by the end of the tenth century.[[683]](#footnote-683) However, the strength of this unity is clearly questionable during the last years of Æthelred’s reign. Simon Keynes affirms that the unified English kingdom over which Ӕthelred ruled was not overly sophisticated and that there was still great need for the traditional ties of kinship, lordship and oaths in maintaining a single-monarchy system.[[684]](#footnote-684)

Pauline Stafford has also intimated that English unity was not as strong as some may believe, stating that Swein’s invasion may be seen as a series of collapses in loyalty by English leaders, particularly Uhtred in the North and Ӕthelmær in Wessex, both of whom surrendered without resistance.[[685]](#footnote-685) Stafford suggests that the equally swift surrender of the Five Boroughs to Swein may have been a result of residual ill-feeling by the family of the south Northumbrian Ealdorman Ӕlfhelm. Ælfhelm was killed by royal command in 1006 and his sons, Wulfheah and Ufegeat, had been blinded; a lingering hatred for Æthelred may have prompted their readiness to adopt a new king.[[686]](#footnote-686)

The Chronicler states that Swein obtained provisions and horses from his newly acquired subjects, thus supplying the Danish army for further excursions against the English in the South.[[687]](#footnote-687) Although this assistance and the aforementioned swift surrender depicted by the Chronicler suggest regional fragmentation from England, the Chronicler also informs that every shire of the Danelaw gave hostages to Swein. Ryan Lavelle has put forward that the giving of hostages, an act intended to assure one’s conquerors of local cooperation, may mean that northern loyalties to Swein were not necessarily any stronger than their loyalties to Ӕthelred.[[688]](#footnote-688) However, Lavelle also argues that the giving of hostages signified submission and that the taking of hostages was a symbolic act of kingship over a people. While leaders of the Danelaw regions may not have loved Swein much more than they loved Ӕthelred, the giving of hostages to Swein symbolically reflected their recognition of his new position as king, and removed Ӕthelred as ruling monarch in the Danelaw.[[689]](#footnote-689) Ӕthelred’s deposition and exile, therefore, began with northern submission; though not removed entirely from office or kingdom, Ӕthelred’s power and safety in the North could no longer be assured.

The remainder of England soon fell to Swein’s army. We should recall the Chronicler’s comment on the extensive pillaging and violence which took place south of Watling Street.[[690]](#footnote-690) The Chronicler does not specify damages, but may have sought to explain the speed with which southern regions of England surrendered:

***ASC* 1013** Wende þa to Oxenaforda, 7 seo buruhwaru **sona** **beah** 7 gislude, 7 þanon to Winceastre, 7 hi þæt ylce dydon.

He then turned to Oxford, and the citizens **at once submitted** and gave hostages; and from there to Winchester, where they did the same.[[691]](#footnote-691)

The Chronicler expresses the quick submission of Oxford and Winchester by using the same vocabulary as that used for his description of the surrender of the Danelaw territories (*sona beah*). Whether or not fading loyalties played a role in the surrender of Oxford and Winchester is difficult to discern: the *mæste yfel* done by Swein’s army may have given sufficient cause for surrender.[[692]](#footnote-692) Crucially, the Chronicler again records that hostages were given, symbolically affirming the submission of Oxford and Winchester to Swein. Thus the Chronicler portrays how obeisance to Æthelred continued to crumble, even in the South, as Swein moved through England.

The Chronicler’s depiction of Swein’s encounter with the citizens of London is very different. According to the Chronicler, the presence of Ӕthelred and the support of Thorkell the Tall within the city inspired successful resistance against Swein’s army.[[693]](#footnote-693) This is the first point at which the Chronicler mentions a battle resulting from Swein’s campaign. Yet Swein had already gained the submission of the Danelaw, Oxford and Winchester, effectively severing London’s connection with the North and West of the English kingdom. Simon Keynes argues that the Chronicler may have been a Londoner himself, and so might be expected to present London’s resistance differently from that of the rest of the kingdom.[[694]](#footnote-694) Any resistance elsewhere, if it existed, appears to have failed, yet the Chronicler states that London’s defences forced Swein to abandon his attack on the city. The Chronicler attributes this brief success to the loyalty of the Londoners and the military strength afforded by Thorkell’s army: these were sufficient to keep the city from expelling Ӕthelred and yielding to the Danish army. If the Chronicler felt that loyalty was a deciding factor for successful resistance to Swein’s attack on London, then we may see disloyalty implied by rapid submission of other regions of Æthelred’s kingdom.

Unable to take London or capture Ӕthelred, Swein took his army to Wallingford and then to Bath. His arrival at Bath heralds the completion of the Chronicler’s account of the Danish invasion of 1013.

***ASC* 1013** Þa wende Swegen cyng þanon to Wealingaforda 7 swa ofer Temese westweard to Baþan 7 sæt ðær mid his fyrde, 7 com Ӕþelmær ealdorman þyder 7 þa westernan þegenas mid him 7 bugon ealle to Swegene 7 hi gisludon. Þa he ðus gefaren hæfde wende þa norðweard to his scipum, 7 eal þeodscype hine hæfde þa for fulne cyng, 7 seo buruhwaru æfter ðam on Lundene beah 7 gislude, forðon hi ondredon þæt he hi forðon wolde.

Then King Swein turned from there to Wallingford, and so west across the Thames to Bath, where he stayed with his army. Then Ealdorman Ӕthelmær came there, and with him the western thegns, and all submitted to Swein, and they gave him hostages. When he had fared thus, he then turned northward to his ships, and all the nation regarded him as full king. And after that the citizens of London submitted and gave hostages, for they were afraid that he would destroy them.[[695]](#footnote-695)

Once more, the Chronicler does not mention any military conflict at Wallingford or Bath, nor later at London which seems to have held out longer than the rest of the kingdom. One wonders at the conditions which led Ӕthelmær and the western thegns to meet with Swein; that all of the western thegns had been gathered together at Bath suggests a certain level of organization was involved and that the decision to submit was a collective one.

The Chronicler presents us again with a region led by men who were no longer willing to support Æthelred or to recognize him as king. Why did the western thegns consider capitulation to be their best course of action? Swein’s army had been turned back at London, with a number of Danes drowned during their initial crossing of the Thames,[[696]](#footnote-696) and the Danish army presumably took casualties from the *fullan wige* of London’s resistance. Is it possible that Swein’s forces, insufficient to capture London, were yet impressive enough to compel Ӕthelmær and the western thegns to readily surrender as one? The *ASC* does not indicate that military conflict took place at Wallingford or Bath, and the extent of Danish violence into the western portion of the kingdom south of Watling Street is unclear.

It may be that the violence of Swein’s army is to be assumed by his arrival at each new location. If this is the case, then why was the Chronicler so vague or dismissive, as we have seen, of any military action outside of London throughout Swein’s invasion? If the Chronicler was writing from a partisan stance, replete with hindsight and a spirit of defeat,[[697]](#footnote-697) then this outlook might explain such absences from the *ASC*. However, it may be that the Chronicler wished his audience to doubt the capabilities of the English military structure and the loyalties of those responsible for defending the kingdom. Much can be said without saying anything at all. The Chronicle’s resulting portrayal is of a swift, remarkably non-violent foreign invasion, encountering little resistance and ultimately resulting in the widespread betrayal of Æthelred.[[698]](#footnote-698)

There are a number of factors which may have weakened English resolve and affected loyalty and factionalism. Recall that England suffered three years of intensive pillaging from 1009 through 1012 during the raids of Thorkell the Tall’s army. Simon Keynes believes that the English were too weakened by the experience to successfully resist Swein’s invasion of 1013; the Chronicler’s list of overrun English territories in the annal for 1011 reveals the extent of Danish violence during this time.[[699]](#footnote-699) English resolve was further diminished by the killing of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1012.[[700]](#footnote-700) With the repeated and exorbitant payments to secure peace from Viking forces throughout Æthelred’s reign,[[701]](#footnote-701) it is quite plausible that the country was militarily, financially, and emotionally exhausted to the point of acquiescence to Swein, resulting in the expulsion of Ӕthelred; waning endurance, as well as waning loyalties, may have had a hand in the king’s exile.

Widespread fatigue may help to explain the speed and ease with which Swein received surrender in southern England, but it is not a wholly convincing argument for the portrayal of northern surrender in the *ASC*. In the entry for 1011 the Chronicler confined his list of areas overrun by Vikings to southern regions (East Anglia, Essex, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Kent, Sussex, Hastings, Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire).[[702]](#footnote-702) The absence of Northumbria, Lindsey and the Five Boroughs from this list suggests that these were unscathed during this period. Perhaps it is circumstantial that regions of the Danelaw were the first to capitulate to Swein in 1013, but it would be difficult to argue that they did so due to the largely southern hardships of 1009-1012. William of Jumiѐges, in his *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, tried to explain the circumstances of the Danelaw’s submission to Swein by stating that they did not expect help from elsewhere.[[703]](#footnote-703) This is possible, but Thorkell’s sparing of the Danelaw regions during his attacks from 1009-1012, Swein’s itinerary for the invasion of 1013 to begin with largely Anglo-Scandinavian locations, and the absence of a record of Danish violence before crossing Watling Street give cause to question any simple explanation for northern capitulation. It is more likely that some combination of circumstances, including waning loyalties to Ӕthelred and inability to resist Swein’s army, were at work in the quick submission of the Danelaw.

Having secured hostages, Swein’s invasion was made complete by a bloodless surrender of a terrified London, the final victory in what is presented as a relatively non-violent takeover of England.

***ASC* 1013** 7 seo buruhwaru æfter ðam on Lundene beah 7 gislude, forðon hi ondredon þæt he hi fordon wolde.

And after that the citizens of London submitted and gave hostages, for they were afraid that he would destroy them.[[704]](#footnote-704)

The Chronicler is careful to state that the entire kingdom acknowledged Swein as king prior to the submission of London, and that London only did so out of reasonable fear of Swein’s wrath. With Ӕthelred still alive and, technically, still king, one wonders whether accepting Swein as king was compulsory or voluntary, and whether the English could have continued to live as a subservient, occupied people without formally acknowledging Swein as monarch.

The Chronicler makes it clear that Æthelred had completely lost his kingdom, making his exile to Normandy necessary. The Chronicler suggests too the extent of English submission by referring to Swein as *ful cyng*, wherein *ful* suggests ‘complete’ or ‘entire’.[[705]](#footnote-705) Here *ful cyng* makes it plain that Swein was king in every respect and that those who submitted to him no longer recognized Ӕthelred’s rule. The term is unusual, but can be found again in the E annal for 1036:

***ASC* 1036** Sume men sædon be Harolde þet he wære Cnutes sunu cynges 7 Ӕlfgiue Ӕlfelmes dohtor ealdormannes, ac hit þuhte swiðe ungeleaflic manegum mannum, 7 he wæs þæh **full cyng** ofer eall Englaland.

Some men said about Harold that he was the son of King Cnut and of Ӕlfgifu, the daughter of Ealdorman Ӕlfhelm, but it seemed incredible to many men; and yet he was **full king** over all England.[[706]](#footnote-706)

In this entry, the legitimacy of Cnut’s son, Harold Harefoot, is discussed in terms of birthright. The Chronicler of the E annal for 1036 recognizes that there was some division as to public opinion regarding Harold’s legitimacy, but that despite such controversy Harold was *ful cyng*.[[707]](#footnote-707) Harold ruled England completely, regardless of his birth. Whether the composer of the 1036 annal and that of the 1013 entry interpreted *ful cyng* to mean the same thing is difficult to discern. It seems most likely that for Swein, who was king by conquest rather than by birth, *ful cyng* was intended by the Chronicler to mean ‘king in actuality’, if not ‘king by birth or divine right’. The Chronicler implies that Æthelred may have retained his status by birth, but had lost his worldly power entirely: by the inception of winter, Æthelred was no longer the king of England.

Understanding the Chronicler’s portrayal of Æthelred in the 1013 annal is challenging. Throughout this entry, the Chronicler presents the causes of Æthelred’s exile in a way that imparts the enormous forces at work against Æthelred: ruling over a kingdom weakened by years of Viking raids, Æthelred faced a massive Viking invasion that moved swiftly and strategically through regions of spurious loyalties. Furthermore, the Chronicler emphasizes the complete separation between king and kingdom and the transition of power from Æthelred to Swein: each advance for the Danes contributes to Æthelred’s loss of control and support. The Chronicler goes to pains to demonstrate the fragmented state of England and the inability or helplessness of the English to resist. The resulting portrayal is of a weak king unable to defend his right to rule or to prevent his ultimate deposition and exile.

However, if the Chronicler portrays Æthelred as a weak or incompetent ruler, unable to secure the loyalties of his subjects, we should also recognize evidence for the king’s persistence in the 1013 entry. The Chronicler’s only mention of military resistance here is the brief statement that the presence of Æthelred and Thorkell encouraged the Londoners to fight off Swein’s first attack of the city. The king’s obstinacy and determination is further expressed by the Chronicler’s description of the royal family’s departure to exile in Normandy. Initially the king does not cross the Channel, but instead sends his family across in the company of Abbot Ælfsige of Peterborough and Bishop Ælfhun of London.[[708]](#footnote-708)

The Chronicler tells us that Ӕthelred stayed behind with the remnants of his fleet in the Thames. This is not the portrayal of a king who has given up all hope, despite the remarkable setbacks he experienced. Instead, Æthelred lingered nearby, presumably waiting for some change in circumstances which might help him to reclaim the kingdom. It is not clear how long Ӕthelred remained in the Thames, but Swein’s invasion began shortly before August and was completed in time to demand winter provisions for his army.[[709]](#footnote-709) It is possible that the deposed king spent a month or more there before heading to the Isle of Wight, where he spent Christmas and so delayed his exile further. The Chronicler, therefore, portrays Æthelred as a defeated king in the 1013 annal, but the king’s defeat seems all the more tragic for his continued reluctance to depart England as an exile.

The Chronicler’s retrospective presentation shows that Æthelred’s exile came about gradually, beginning with Swein’s landing and occupation of the Danelaw and concluding with Æthelred’s eventual departure from the Isle of Wight to Normandy. The rapid submission of the English and the Chronicler’s silence about violent resistance suggests that regional loyalties, in the Danelaw and in the South and West, were extremely fragile by 1013. Though the Chronicler does not explicitly accuse the English of treason, he notes the speed and completeness of their surrender and only gives one example of noble defiance against the Danish army: the city of London, with Æthelred inside. Æthelred’s slow retreat into exile portrays both the king’s tenacity and desperation before finally joining his family in Normandy. This is not to suggest that the Chronicler felt either that the king was blameless for the loss of England, or that the weakened loyalties of the English shires were without cause. The Chronicler reveals the difficult relationship between the king and England’s aristocracy in the entry for 1014 and Æthelred’s return from exile.

**4.2.2 The Chronicler’s Portrayal: Conditions Affecting Æthelred’s Return**

Despite the absolute political and military losses Æthelred experienced in 1013, his exile in Normandy was remarkably brief. The entry for 1014 begins with the death of Swein (3 February), at which point the Scandinavian fleet elected Swein’s son Cnut to be king.[[710]](#footnote-710) However, Cnut was not acknowledged as king by the English, as the Chronicler states:

***ASC* 1014** Þa geræddon þa witan ealle þe on Engla lande wæron, gehadode 7 læwede, þæt man æfter þam cyninge Ӕþelrede sende, 7 cwædon þæt him nan hlaford leofra nære þonne hiora gecynde hlaford, gif he hi rihtlicor healdan wolde þonne he ær dyde. Þa sende se cyning his sunu Eadweard hider mid his ærenddracum 7 het gretan ealne his leodscype 7 cwæð þæt he him hold hlaford beon wolde 7 ælc þæra ðinga betan þe hi ealle ascunudon, 7 ælc þara ðinga forgyfen beon sceolde þe him gedon oþþe gecweden wære, wið þam ðe hi ealle anrædlice butan swicdome to him gecyrdon; 7 man þa fulne freondscipe gefæstnode mid worde 7 mid wedde on ægþre healfe, 7 ælfre ælcne deniscne cyng utlah of Engla lande gecwædon. Þa com Ӕþelred cyning innon ðam Lengtene ham to his agenre þeode, 7 he glædlice fram him eallum onfangen wæs.

Then all the councillors who were in England, ecclesiastical and lay, determined to send for King Ethelred, 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. Then the king sent his son Edward hither with his messengers, and bade them greet all his people, and said that he would be a gracious lord to them, and reform all the things which they all hated; and all the things that had been said and done against him should be forgiven, on condition that they all unanimously turned to him without treachery. And complete friendship was then established with oath and pledge on both sides, and they pronounced every Danish king an outlaw from England for ever. Then during the spring King Ethelred came home to his own people and he was gladly received by them all.[[711]](#footnote-711)

This extract is crucial to our understanding of the events which led to Ӕthelred’s successful return from exile as well as the circumstances which may have led to his expulsion in 1013. Frank Stenton recognized this episode as marking ‘the first recorded pact between an English king and his subjects’.[[712]](#footnote-712) The importance of this situation for the political logistics of exile and return cannot be overstated, particularly in terms of unification, loyalty and the power of language in reconciliation. I will now examine the different parts of this agreement in turn.

In the Chronicler’s account it is the king’s councillors, rather than the king, who initiate the process of Ӕthelred’s return.[[713]](#footnote-713) Ӕthelred was not reclaiming his power, but being granted his power through the assent of the nobility. The Chronicler thus portrays the king’s position after exile as dependent upon England’s nobles. He also suggests that the council’s decision was unanimous, or at least collectively agreed upon, by the king’s ealdormen, thegns, and churchmen.[[714]](#footnote-714) The unified support of these parties determined Ӕthelred’s ability to return to England as king.

If similar support was lacking during Swein’s invasion in 1013, as the Chronicler intimates, then there must have been a reason for their renewed backing of Æthelred after Swein’s death. The Chronicler states that the councillors considered Ӕthelred to be their ‘natural’ or ‘innate’ (*gecynde*) lord, with no other lord dearer to them for this reason.[[715]](#footnote-715) The notion of a ‘natural’ or hereditary lord was not a new concept. The A entry for 868 states that the people of Northumbria had removed their current king ‘and taken a king with no hereditary right, Ӕlla’ (*7 ungecyndne cyning underfengon Ellan*)[[716]](#footnote-716), with the suggestion that this was a major factor in the civil strife of Northumbria at the time. A similar meaning is found later in the entry for 1042, in which Edward the Confessor was made king ‘as was his natural right’ (*swa him gecynde wæs*)[[717]](#footnote-717). It may be that this sense of a ‘natural’ king was instilled deeply enough in the mindset of the Anglo-Saxon nobility and clergy to turn them from Swein’s son, Cnut, and restore their own ‘natural’ king, Ӕthelred.

While the unified aristocracy and clergy provided royal power by their support, dynastic heredity was an equally strong force in affecting Ӕthelred’s return from Normandy and should not be understated for its impact on the political logistics of Ӕthelred’s restoration. The importance of heredity is also reflected by the record of Ӕthelred’s son Edward serving as the king’s representative; sending a son to speak with the council would remind those in attendance that Ӕthelred had ‘natural’ sons by whom the royal dynasty could continue, thus offering the promise of governmental stability through recognized inborn leadership.[[718]](#footnote-718) Matters of royal legitimacy, encouraged by tradition, emphasized by the participation of an ætheling in negotiations, and supported by churchmen, are likely to have effected the *witan*’s decision to restore Ӕthelred.

However, the Chronicler shows that royal legitimacy was not sufficient to end Ӕthelred’s exile. The needs and desires of an aristocratic base with political leverage also had to be taken into account. The Chronicler includes the *witan*’sstipulation that Ӕthelred must ‘govern them more justly than he did before’ (*hi rihtlicor healdan wolde þonne he ær dyde*). This subtle indictment insinuates that the king had been unjust, though specific injustices are difficult to determine by the Chronicle’s account. The king’s promise to ‘reform all the things which they all hated’ shows that the king acknowledges the council’s complaints, but is similarly vague about what these complaints are. In my discussions below on the charters and law codes issued at the end of Æthelred’s reign I will consider some possible causes for aristocratic discontent. For the present, it is the Chronicler’s portrayal that is important: the aristocracy had been unhappy with Æthelred, and to secure his return from exile the king acquiesced to their demands.

Despite the king’s concessions to the council, the Chronicler reveals that Ӕthelred had his own demands: the question in 1014 was not only whether the council would permit the king’s restoration, but whether the king would agree to rule over them again. In the negotiations, according to the Chronicler, Æthelred promised to be ‘a gracious lord to them’ and offers to forgive those who had spoken or acted against him. From this the Chronicler suggests that the king felt betrayed by some members of the English leadership. The fear of betrayal is echoed in his condition ‘that they all unanimously turned to him *without treachery*’. The Chronicler’s account of Swein’s invasion and the exile of Æthered implies that regional loyalties to the king were strained in 1013, as I have discussed; the king’s provisions in 1014 strengthen the idea that some betrayal was perceived to have led to his exile.

When Swein invaded England, each region is said to have given hostages to secure and affirm their obeisance to him. Significantly, the Chronicler says that the loyalty and good faith of the council were secured through oaths and pledges. The councillors also outlawed Danish kings from England for all time, which would give some assurance to Ӕthelred that they would not switch their loyalties to another pretender (perhaps even Cnut) in future.[[719]](#footnote-719) Cecily Clark has noted the use of alliteration in this promise (*7 man þa fulne freondscipe gefæstnode mid worde 7 mid wedde on ægþre healfe, 7 ælfre ælcne Deniscne cyng utlah of Engla lande gecwædon*), which may suggest that the Chronicler was either drawing on an existing legal formula or sought to emphasize the passage’s content.[[720]](#footnote-720) Oaths and pledges were, as Keynes reminds us, of great importance in late Anglo-Saxon governance and so would have been received and given sincerely, if cautiously, by both sides.[[721]](#footnote-721) Ӕthelred’s emergence from exile and the confirmation of aristocratic loyalties was based on some consensual code of honour and the strength of oaths and oathbreaking in this code. Tradition, therefore, and the developing consensual mechanisms of power in England affected Ӕthelred’s return from exile.

We should not expect there to have been unanimous agreement among the nobles that the king should be restored. Susan Reynolds points out that disagreement among of the *witan* was common enough as to necessitate legislation earlier in Æthelred’s reign.[[722]](#footnote-722) However, the Chronicler also shows that many English interests were not involved in or supportive of the restoration process. He informs, for instance, that Cnut remained in Gainsborough through Easter 1014 and arranged for the collaboration of ‘the people in Lindsey’ (*þam folce on Lindesige*).[[723]](#footnote-723) For this apparent betrayal, the Chronicler states that Æthelred led the English army in a merciless attack against Lindsey, forcing Cnut to flee. Before sailing to Denmark, Cnut mutilated his father’s English hostages before turning them ashore at Sandwich.[[724]](#footnote-724) The Chronicler’s account of Lindsey’s continued support for Cnut, and the resulting violence exacted upon Lindsey by other English forces, further demonstrates the regional divides that had helped to bring about Æthelred’s exile in 1013.

The Chronicler accompanies this portrayal of regional factionalism with important details that demonstrate the newly formed unity of the English under their restored king. The first is Cnut’s action against the English hostages. Cnut apparently felt that any agreements secured by these hostages had been forfeited. The English leadership under Æthelred clearly considered previous compacts with Swein to have expired with that king’s death: either they had not expected that the hostages would be mutilated as they were, or they were willing to risk the welfare of the hostages in order to drive Cnut from the kingdom. In either case, it would be difficult for the English nobility to more fully express their renewed loyalty to Ӕthelred than by accepting the risk to English hostages by breaking their compact with the Danes and following Ӕthelred into battle. The fact that Æthelred himself led the English army in 1014 is significant as the first and only account of the king’s participation in martial affairs. The Chronicler thus portrays the king in a new way after his restoration, as a warrior with the strength of the nobles behind him.

The Chronicler suggests that Æthelred’s manner of rule had changed after his brief exile. The English themselves were affected by the king’s removal: if failing loyalties had been responsible for Ӕthelred’s initial expulsion in 1013, then these loyalties were successfully renewed after the king’s return in 1014. Despite these promising conditions, the Chronicler’s account lacks any enthusiasm for or celebration of Æthelred’s restoration. Recall that the Chronicler was writing with hindsight of the events up to and following Æthelred’s death, and so the mutilation of the hostages is only one of ‘all these evils’ (*eallum þissum yfelum*) which befell the English in 1014.

The Chronicler was aware, for instance, of a remarkable number of betrayals and reversals that persisted to the end of Æthelred’s reign. Sigeferth and Morcar, two northern thegns who had been close to Ӕthelred’s sons Edmund and Ӕthelstan, were killed by Earl Eadric Streona in 1015, apparently with the king’s consent if not by his command.[[725]](#footnote-725) Edmund then married Sigeferth’s widow and established himself as king in the North against his father’s will.[[726]](#footnote-726) Edmund himself was betrayed by his new ally, Eadric Streona, who then absconded with forty ships from Æthelred’s fleet and defected to Cnut’s returned Danish army.[[727]](#footnote-727) Edmund’s attempt to lead another army in 1016 faltered because of the army’s refusal to assemble without the presence of Ӕthelred or the aid of London; Æthelred agreed to join the soldiers, but warnings of a plot against him caused the king to return to London instead.[[728]](#footnote-728) The king’s newly acquired role as warlord was limited, then, to his routing of Cnut in 1014.

The betrayal of Earl Eadric would certainly have been damaging to Æthelred, and the Chronicler seems critical of the king’s continued faith in this individual. The rebellion of Æthelred’s son, however, is a startling demonstration of Æthelred’s weak grasp of power despite any initial successes after his restoration as king. Edmund was persistent in establishing his own power base and joined forces with Ealdorman Uhtred of Northumbria,[[729]](#footnote-729) further demonstrating the regional divisions which thwarted Æthelred’s control. Unfortunately for Edmund, Cnut had already advanced into Northumbria, received Uhtred’s submission, and taken new hostages. Uhtred himself was killed, perhaps by the advice of Earl Eadric (though this is only mentioned in the C manuscript).[[730]](#footnote-730) With nowhere left to turn, Edmund eventually joined his father who was still in London. Æthelred passed away on 23 April 1016, shortly after Edmund’s return. His kingdom in chaos and wielding extremely limited influence over his nobles and his son, Æthelred’s reign after exile is portrayed by the Chronicler in terms of failure.

Perhaps most tragically, Æthelred’s failures continued despite being given a second chance to atone for his weaknesses. The Chronicler’s portrayal of events at the close of Æthelred’s reign demonstrates the persisting lack of control that led to the king’s exile in 1013. Although Æthelred is defiant at the close of 1013, the Chronicler makes it clear that expulsion was brought on as much by the king’s lack of control over the nobility as by Swein’s armies.[[731]](#footnote-731) The Chronicler thus demonstrates an important shift that had occurred in the control of English government: the nobles determined both the king’s exile and his restoration.

The nature of this relationship between the crown and the nobility may help to explain the crisis of 1013: the development of failing loyalties would encourage regional capitulation to foreign invaders and the abandonment and exile of Æthelred. Ӕthelred’s original host of advisors and administrators was largely comprised of men who had served his slain brother Edward; there is no evidence of a purge of these noblemen following Ӕthelred’s consecration in 979.[[732]](#footnote-732) Pauline Stafford suggests that this may have been due to the political reality that these men were fairly entrenched in England’s governance, but that Ӕthelred (or at least his chief advisors) may also have wished to retain symbolic dynastic links by keeping those who had served his father, Edgar, noting that ‘conciliation was more politic for both sides’.[[733]](#footnote-733)

As Ӕthelred’s reign progressed, many of these earlier retainers grew old, passed away, or fell from royal favour. This situation should have assured vacancies with which to reward the king’s supporters and further secure their loyalties.[[734]](#footnote-734) However, the same system of rewards from the king had reduced once-large ealdormanries, with new men taking positions of power as reeves and ministers at the expense of ealdormen; the result was likely a rash of unrealized ambitions, new rivalries, and strained relations between Ӕthelred and England’s leading men.[[735]](#footnote-735) Simon Keynes has noted the significant reduction in chartersissued to laymen after the 980s, as well as the reappropriation of properties to their original monastic foundations.[[736]](#footnote-736) It may be that the faltering loyalties which led to Æthelred’s exile resulted from the king’s failure to grant sufficient land and title to meet the needs and aspirations of the aristocracy.

Exile in the Chronicler’s portrayal informs the reader that the nature of kingship and power in England had changed. Æthelred was made aware, by his agreement with the *witan*,of this need to adapt. Yet Æthelred’s reign continued to be plagued with betrayals and failures, as may be seen in the turmoil that continued shortly after his restoration. In the next section, I will look beyond the Chronicle’s portrayal to see how this changing role of kingship was met by the authors of Æthelred’s royal charters. The charters issued in the final years of Æthelred’s reign, as will be shown, reveal royal responses to restoration from exile, and contain evidence supporting the Chronicler’s portrayal of the changing relationship between the king and his nobles.

**4.3 Charters of Æthelred II**

Among the causes for change in the negotiation of power in England was the recent development of a new aristocracy and greater demand for land grants. The material needs of England’s leading men had increased over the reign of Æthelred. In her article on the extravagant consumption of the aristocracy of the tenth and eleventh centuries, Robin Fleming discusses trends in cuisine, fashion, donations to religious institutions and the acquisition of high-end artisinal items and how these served to imitate social superiors while demonstrating the nobility’s social superiority over others.[[737]](#footnote-737) Fleming also points out the means by which landowners were able to attain this lifestyle, primarily through land rents and crop production.[[738]](#footnote-738) Land was a vital part of the system of rewards between the king and the new aristocracy because it was land which permitted the aristocracy’s new extravagances. These allocations of land were given written expression by the issue of charters.

A charter (or diploma) is typically a short and self-contained text written in Latin on a single sheet of parchment, recording a grant of land or privileges by the king to a particular person or to a religious house, drawn up in accordance with prevailing (but changing) conventions and invested with all the force and formality of a legal instrument.[[739]](#footnote-739)

The above definition is a simple and functional statement of the most basic functions of royal charters and suggests a few of the practical uses to which charters may be put by modern historians.[[740]](#footnote-740) The basic elements of royal charters, including dates, descriptions of lands (or bounds), benefactors, and grantees, are useful in tracking important personalities and properties and their relationship to the monarch over time. Keynes further suggests by his definition that charters were composed to accomodate contemporary conditions and so were subject to change. Opportunities for enquiry are thus presented by changes to charter formulation, frequency, and recipients across periods. Expression of the ‘force and formality’ of charters is another mutable factor, and is particularly crucial to this study because charters often give voice to the king’s power. Before I examine the changing voice of Æthelred’s charters after exile, I will briefly discuss what Anglo-Saxon charters were and how the field of diplomatics has developed to influence my own inquiries.

Charters were originally introduced to England in the seventh century with the purpose of recording grants of land and privileges to the Church, but over time these came to also be used for grants to laymen.[[741]](#footnote-741) Dorothy Whitelock suggested that written charters were first introduced under Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus (668-690), noting references to written evidence of property rights in Stephen’s *Vita Wilfridi* and Bede’s famous letter to Bishop Egbert.[[742]](#footnote-742) Pierre Chaplais recognizes that Stephen and Bede suggest that written land grants were being issued by the time of Theodore’s episcopacy in England, but also argues that Augustine of Canterbury and the churchmen who accompanied him to Kent in 597 would likely have used charters for their own records of churchland.[[743]](#footnote-743) Patrick Wormald agrees that churchmen were primary in establishing charters in England, but is not convinced that these influences came from one source, and instead proposes that ‘the Anglo-Saxon charter was neither Italian nor Frankish nor Celtic but simply *sui generis*’.[[744]](#footnote-744)

The composition of Anglo-Saxon grants remained remarkably consistent throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, including an invocation, proem, superscription, dispositive section, sanction/anathema, boundary-clause (usually in Old English), dating clause and witness-list. This relative uniformity has brought some to argue for the existence of a royal chancery; this possibility was mentioned by S.B. Chrimes in 1966 and is more recently supported by Simon Keynes.[[745]](#footnote-745) However, the existence of a central writing office has been disputed by Chaplais, who notes the lack of direct evidence for a writing office and believes it more probable that the drafting of individual land grants was accomplished under the guidance of the bishops of respective dioceses.[[746]](#footnote-746) For my own purposes, it would be useful to know the origins of charter authorship to better assess their portrayals of the king. However, I am concerned with changing trends and formulations in charter development across the period of Æthelred’s exile and restoration, and so authorship is not of primary importance to my discussion. Whether composed by a writing office or a concerned churchman, the charters I will examine were issued or agreed to by Æthelred, and each gives a voice to the king in ways that respond to his position after restoration.

Change has marked the production of royal charters since their introduction to England. The scope, substance and expressiveness of charters changed along with the purposes and usefulness of their creation.[[747]](#footnote-747) Early charters were brief and straightforward, with little divergence in formulae, but later charters show the introduction of the three exemptions to an estate’s freedoms (i.e. maintenance of bridges, fortifications and the king’s army), more descriptive details for boundary clauses, and stylistic innovations involving rare words and references to classical mythology.[[748]](#footnote-748) This last factor of style is best seen in the charters of Ӕthelred II, as noted by Keynes and Whitelock who point to a trend toward originality in numerous individual charters of the reign.[[749]](#footnote-749)

The artistic license taken by the composers of Æthelred’s charters makes those documents a lucrative body of evidence for historic inquiry. Several historians, including Keynes, have come to realize the wealth of information which charters offer when the right questions are asked. David Bates has a trend in more recent charter studies to demonstrate supplementary concerns of context, discourse and construction added to these pursuits.[[750]](#footnote-750) Bates views this change as having a significant effect on the traditional dichotomy between the treatment of administrative documents and that of more literary or creative works.

There is, if I am not mistaken, a strong tide flowing in the direction of treating charters in the same way as what are broadly termed literary sources, if you like to ‘read’ them as ‘texts’. It is probable even that the tide has reached the shore.[[751]](#footnote-751)

This ‘tide’ described by Bates has been made possible, no doubt, by the enormous efforts over several decades to identify, organize, and share Anglo-Saxon charters, as Nicholas Brooks recognized in his 1973 survey of diplomatic resources.[[752]](#footnote-752) One example is Peter Sawyer’s *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated Bibliography*, a listing of extant charters with brief descriptions, remains a vital tool and is still referred and added to today.[[753]](#footnote-753) Handlists and transcriptions by Florence Harmer, H.P.R. Finberg, and Cyril Hart, and the British Academy’s series of editions of charters from individual archives have expanded access to these royal documents and allowed new discussions to develop in important ways.[[754]](#footnote-754) Particularly crucial has been the contribution of charter evidence to areas of enquiry usually dominated by narrative sources. For instance, Charles Insley’s recent study examines charters from the reign of Æthelstan (c. 924-939) to refute William of Malmesbury’s account of England’s ‘barbarous’ treatment of Cornwall.[[755]](#footnote-755) Malmesbury, writing nearly two hundred years after the reign of Æthelstan, had previously served as the only commentator on this aspect of the king’s reign, and so Insley’s charter study has made a significant contribution.

Of course Simon Keynes’ *Diplomas of King Æthelred ‘The Unready’* signalled a major shift both in charter studies.[[756]](#footnote-756) In his work, Keynes points out the diversity of structure and formulation in Ӕthelred’s charters, the introduction of discursive narratives in the dispositive section, marked changes in witness-list compositions, and the varying peaks and valleys of charter issuance over time.[[757]](#footnote-757) Keynes draws new interpretations questioning traditional views concerning the king’s weak strength of government, the reliability of his counselors, and the relationship between Church and crown. Keynes demonstrates how Ӕthelred’s charters may be utilized to supplement, support, or diminish interpretations based on contemporary texts; in his own words, Keynes sought to pursue a line of scholarship ‘intended to make some progress towards a reassessment of the period’.[[758]](#footnote-758) The result has been a new model for how charters may be used to counterbalance narrative sources in writing nuanced political history.

Keynes was particularly interested in the events and charters of the 980s and 990s, a period in which Æthelred II reversed errors of his youth by returning lands and privileges to religious houses in new charters.[[759]](#footnote-759) In a later study of Æthelred’s charters from the 990s, Pauline Stafford looks at the charters as a body of material that promotes ‘three histories’: history of the divine, history of the royal dynasty, and history of the king himself.[[760]](#footnote-760) Stafford’s assessment of the language, literary elements, and content of charters demonstrates that much can be gained through closer examination of charter groups.[[761]](#footnote-761) Close scrutiny of the components of individual charters can also aid in the formation of new interpretations. Catherine Cubitt’s study of a single charter (S 876) issued in 993 illustrates the shifting attitudes of Æthelred’s court in the 990s discussed by Keynes and Stafford.[[762]](#footnote-762) Cubitt’s arguments develop from the tone of the proem, the unusual choice of words in the invocation, the expression of the king’s fear of anathemas from earlier privileges he had broken, and the author’s mention of the royal assembly at which the charter was issued.

Stafford has shown that studying groups of charters can give insights on diverse subjects, including the workings of law, collective action and solidarities, lay values, and lay political theory. Cubitt reveals how close examination of even a single charter may qualify existing interpretations or present new ones. In my discussion below, I will look at charters both individually and in groups to demonstrate how trends in construction, tone, vocabulary, and themes shifted after the king’s return from exile. Following the examples of Keynes, Stafford and Cubitt, my own charter study focuses around a significant series of events in Æthelred’s life, but with specific questions regarding response to exile, restoration and changing ideas of royal power. Below I will examine the contents of witness lists, proems, dispositive sections, anathemas, superscripts and subscripts in the post-exile charters of Æthelred. The constructed views of the king and kingship, as will be shown, respond to conditions of continued factionalism and the changing relationship between the king and the aristocracy after Æthelred’s return from exile.

**4.3.1 Charter Participants: Beneficiaries and Witnesses**

Four extant charters can be dated to the period following Ӕthelred’s return from exile (1014-1016): S 932, 933, 934, and 1602c.[[763]](#footnote-763) The varying degrees of survival of these copies vary. The copyist of S 932 preserved nearly all of that charter, but omitted the attestations except for that of Ӕthelred. S 1602c is fragmentary, so only its abbreviated dispositive section (in which the land and recipient are mentioned) and a portion of the dating clause survive. S 933 and S 934 are complete, and along with the beneficiaries and royal subscripts of S 932 and S 1602c, give evidence of participants and relationships of power at Æthelred’s post-exile court and will be discussed in turn.[[764]](#footnote-764)

Beginning with S 932, I would point to the only attestation for that charter. Æthelred’s subscription is the only attestation included by the copyist of the charter. The language here is unique in Æthelred’s charters, and serves to reaffirm Ӕthelred’s royal status and power:

**S 932** Ego Ӕthelred non minus antecessoribus meis regali pollens gloria biblum hunc sub sancte crucis inpressione signatum instans corroboravi.

I, Æthelred, reigning no less than my predecessors in royal majesty, have willingly confirmed this charter under the sign of the holy cross.[[765]](#footnote-765)

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This is an intriguing choice of words for a king just returned from an exile brought about by foreign invasion and the subsequent defection of his leading men. There is a defensive tone in the statement that Æthelred rules in the same manner as his forebears, and an apparent reaffirmation of both the dynastic and divine legitimacy of his rule. The reference to his predecessors brings the legacies of earlier kings such as Edgar, Ӕthelstan and Alfred to mind.[[766]](#footnote-766) Such powerful and respected kings would have been fitting models for emulation given the circumstances of the Danish presence in England.[[767]](#footnote-767) Invoking their memories reminds the audience of this charter of the king’s dynastic legitimacy, and perhaps gives assurance that his return from exile will follow these good examples.

S 932 grants four hides at Mathon to Leofwine and is dated 1014 by its dating clause.[[768]](#footnote-768) As stated above, S 932 does not have a surviving list of attestations. Without a list of the names of those who recognized the charter, the dating clause of S 932 cannot be refuted or supported based on other evidence concerning the participation of witnesses at court. This lacuna in S 932 means that we must rely on the veracity of the dating clause, but outside information known about the beneficiary, Earl Leofwine, can help to reassure us that this is a post-exile charter.[[769]](#footnote-769) We know that Leofwine attested forty-one other charters, before and after Ӕthelred’s return from Normandy,[[770]](#footnote-770) and so remained an active court presence throughout the king’s reign. Ӕthelred’s grant of land to Leofwine in 1014 is, therefore, not unusual and would be an appropriate reward following the king’s restoration: Leofwine’s house held a great deal of sway in the kingdom, and so Æthelred’s post-exile gift marks a shrewd decision for a king wishing to secure or reaffirm the loyalty of a strong family.[[771]](#footnote-771) There is nothing in the charter itself that suggests that it is a forgery, and partly due to glosses made in its cartulary S 932 is considered to be reliable.[[772]](#footnote-772)

The idea that Æthelred may have been rewarding Leofwine for his continued service and loyalty is important to understanding the relationship between the king and the nobility. James Campbell and Patrick Wormald both argue that lands held by the English aristocracy, divided into small and widely-dispersed units, were an important element in assuring the loyalty of the aristocracy toward a centralized authority while also discouraging civil war.[[773]](#footnote-773) Pauline Stafford points out that noble leading families developed primarily as a result of tenth-century unification, with large areas of land entrusted to ealdormen and whole families supported by appointments to royal offices and grants of royal land.[[774]](#footnote-774) This is certainly evident in the number of charters issued to laymen, especially during the early stages of Ӕthelred’s reign when the securing of loyalties would have been vital.[[775]](#footnote-775) The common interests that grew from the wide distribution of these property holdings played a crucial role in maintaining ruling-class solidarity while also preventing the development of local desire for regnal aspirations.[[776]](#footnote-776) Campbell notes, for instance, that growing loyalties to local shire units, which were created to serve the purposes of a central authority, in turn reinforced loyalties toward the central monarchy.[[777]](#footnote-777)

We might expect that Æthelred’s return from exile would mark a period of significant royal engagement with this exchange of property for loyalty and power. It is intriguing, then, that three charters survive from 1014 (S 932, S 933 and S 1602c), but only two charters survive from 1015 and 1016 (S 934 and S 935, respectively), the latter a suspected late forgery.[[778]](#footnote-778) Three of the four authentic charters issued after Ӕthelred’s exile were issued in the year of his restoration. The small number of extant charters may be due to a preoccupation with martial affairs at royal councils, or perhaps a reduction in the number of royal assemblies after 1014. We should also recognize that charters from this period may not have survived Æthelred’s death or the accession of Cnut in 1016; Leofwine’s career continued after Æthelred’s death, but others, including Eadric Streona, were cut short during Cnut’s reign.[[779]](#footnote-779)

Of the three charters issued in 1014, S 932 gives land to ealdorman Leofwine, S 1602c to thegn Sealwyne,[[780]](#footnote-780) and S 933 to Sherborne Abbey. We do not know whether these charters were issued at different times or whether they resulted from the transactions of a single royal assembly. Had they been issued individually, then the sequence of the king’s gifts might tell us either to whom he felt most grateful or which parties more greatly required material rewards for loyalty. If the charters were issued at the same time, then this might signify that efforts to reward loyalty through land grants took place at just one time in 1014, with rewards halting afterward. Precisely when S 932 was issued in 1014 is difficult to discern, but Keynes points out that it must have been drafted following Ӕthelred’s return from Normandy in the spring.[[781]](#footnote-781) Keynes also notes that while other of the king’s æthelings are included in the attestations of S 933, the ætheling Ӕthelstan is absent, which may indicate that S 933 was issued after Æthelstan’s death on 25 June.[[782]](#footnote-782) We can not determine how soon Ӕthelred held an assembly after his return, nor can we assess his priorities. Still, granting land to an ealdorman, a thegn, and a religious house may have seemed an equitable approach to rewarding his supporters, and reflect a few of the recipients of such rewards given by a grateful king restored from exile.

Turning now to those post-exilic charters which are most complete in their extant form, we may find some evidence in the attestations of S 933 and S 934. The witness list of S 933, dated to 1014, begins with the attestation of Æthelred whose name is accompanied by the following subscription:

**S 933** gubernator sceptri huius insulae hanc nostri decreti breuiunculam almae crucis notamine muniens roboraui

wielder of the royal staff of this island, by the marking of the life-giving cross have approved this strengthening of our humble decretal[[783]](#footnote-783)

Here the author gives the king a personal voice that implies that the king was directly involved in the issuance of the charter. The subscription refers to the king’s position as ruler, with an intriguing reference to the sceptre of office and reminder of Æthelred’s traditional and dynastic right to rule. This statement hints at the relationship between the king and the Church by referring to the cross included with the king’s attestation. A small cross is normally found by the name of every witness to such charters, but by mentioning the cross here Æthelred alludes not only to his own obligations to God but also to the oaths taken by the noblemen who attest the charter under the same mark.

Ultimately the strengths and weaknesses of English unity depended upon the loyalty and service of the nobilityto a centralized government directed by the king, and Æthelred’s subscription alludes to this relationship. Simon Keynes argues that traditional bonds of pledge-making remained vital in encouraging loyalty through the reign of Ӕthelred.[[784]](#footnote-784) Indeed, allegiance to the king of the unified English kingdom was sealed by oath as evidenced in the laws of Edmund and mentioned in the laws of Ӕthelred.[[785]](#footnote-785) These loyalty oaths were symbolic gestures, but they came to serve a legitimizing role in the decisions of the king. The traditional place of the king as both dynastic and Christian ruler is made clear by Æthelred’s attestation of S 933, and the crosses beside the names of each witness marks the agreement of the Christian nobility to follow and obey the king. In a rewards-based system that had seen increasing demand for diminishing available lands, oaths may have been relied upon to encourage sustained loyalty to the king.

The king’s subscription is also notable because of the personal voice it gives to Æthelred. Personal voice is absent in the attestations of all other secular figures included in the witness-list; five ealdormen and nine thegns are named with their respective honorifics of *dux* and *minister* but no verbs of action are given to them. In contrast, the churchmen on the list are all accompanied by verbs of consent or support. Archbishop Wulfstan and four bishops (Lyfing apparently not having received the pallium as archbishop of Canterbury yet)[[786]](#footnote-786) ‘confirmed’, ‘strengthened’, ‘permitted’, or ‘solidified’ the charter; the exception here is that Ӕthelsige appears to have ‘drafted’ the document (*conscripsi*).[[787]](#footnote-787) This is not unusual for attestations of bishops, but it is rare, as Keynes points out, for abbots to have verbs of action in the witness-lists of Ӕthelred’s charters,[[788]](#footnote-788) and so it is exceptional that the author of S 933 included words of support or consent for all of the churchmen. Furthermore, the attestations of the abbots are made distinct from those of the bishops by the inclusion of adjectives to describe the manner of each abbot’s subscription. The abbots do not merely consent to or strengthen the charter, but rather do so ‘freely’, ‘humbly’, ‘kindly’, ‘joyfully’ and ‘mercifully’.[[789]](#footnote-789)

The author of S 933 reserved the use of personal voice for the king, bishops and abbots. In doing so, he gave greater emphasis to the king’s relationship to the Church and his role as a servant of God. The scribe’s exclusion of action verbs for ealdormen and thegns fits in well with the chaotic variation and originality so common in Ӕthelred’s later charters.[[790]](#footnote-790) In this instance, it is an unprecedented stylistic choice that sets the king and churchmen apart from and above secular councilors and encourages attesting laymen to recognize the king’s office as divinely appointed and supported by the English Church.

The omission of extensive attestations for lay figures may also reflect a diminished view of the ealdormen and thegns whose surrender to Swein failed both king and kingdom. Of the secular figures included in the attestations of S 933, five ealdormen are named: Eadric, Ӕlfric, Leofwine, Uhtred, Ӕthelmær and Godric, each with the honorific *dux*. They also appear in the attestations of S 934, except for Æthelmær. These individuals seem to have withstood any political upset caused by or following Ӕthelred’s return from exile. All had served as ealdormen for some time prior to Æthelred’s exile, and it is likely that they all had some part to play in Æthelred’s restoration; it is perhaps not surprising to find that their offices were retained. Notably, in keeping with the attestations of five pre-exile charters, Eadric’s name remains the first listed, which is indicative of his elevated position above the others.[[791]](#footnote-791)

The Chronicler tells us that Æthelmær and Uhtred surrendered to Swein in 1013, but the survival of the other three and their retention of power suggest that all five ealdormen had submitted to Swein.[[792]](#footnote-792) Their continued presence at court suggests that they had been forgiven of any duplicity that may have contributed to Swein’s success and Æthelred’s expulsion. Yet during the period of uncertainty following Swein’s death, alternatives to Ӕthelred’s rule would have entered into consideration. Swein’s son Cnut presented a Danish option: the Chronicler tells us that Cnut was elected king by the Danish fleet after Swein’s death.[[793]](#footnote-793) The English, whether expressing their loyalty to Æthelred or their disapproval of Cnut, did not side with the Danes, but instead invited their exiled king to rule over them again.

It is also probable that Æthelred’s retention of Eadric, Ӕlfric, Leofwine, Uhtred, Ӕthelmær and Godric at court was not affected by their earlier submission to Swein. After spending at least two months in exile, it is unlikely that Ӕthelred was in any position to make alterations to his court structure; his promise to forgive any evil done to him may have been obligatory. Furthermore, despite Æthelred’s rightful place as God’s appointed king, an idea which is promoted by the language in his subscription to S 933, the king’s power also relied upon the support of these powerful men and their families. The Chronicler’s mention of the part played by the king’s counsellors in affecting his return from Normandy supports this notion,[[794]](#footnote-794) as does the king’s previous and continued reliance upon his ealdormen and thegns for overseeing the military and administrative aspects of his government.

What reasons would Æthelred have had for replacing his chief lay counsellors? Apart from their submission to Swein, which may have been their only option given the circumstances, there may have been little impetus for Ӕthelred to tamper with a pre-existing government. Indeed, considering the olive branch extended by England’s leading men after Swein’s death, Ӕthelred may have been quite grateful for the second chance afforded to him and for those who helped to orchestrate his return. The conciliatory language of the offer to resubmit to Ӕthelred, as presented by the Chronicler, indicates that the aristocracy may have feared royal retribution for their surrender to Swein.[[795]](#footnote-795) The conditions of Ӕthelred’s return required that he forgive any previous wrong-doing, which would likely have included the submission of ealdormen and thegns to Swein. The retention of these counsellors, evident from their inclusion in the attestations of the post-exile charters, reflects the king’s acquiescence to this condition for his return. They in turn were protected from the king’s retribution for disloyalty.

The attestations of the king’s thegns in S 933 suggest that other changes took place after Ӕthelred’s return from exile. The names of the king’s *ministri* include Ulfcytel, Godwine, Ӕlfgar, Odda, Ӕthelweard, Wulfgar, Ӕlfmær and Wulfweard, in that order. Some of these were established members of the royal court. Ulfcytel’s subscription appears on seventeen extant charters from Ӕthelred’s reign, with the earliest dated to 1002.[[796]](#footnote-796) Godwine was similarly a long-standing counsellor, appearing in fourteen of Ӕthelred’s charters, including one dated to 1002 which granted ten hides of land at Little Haseley to ‘my faithful minister, called Godwine by name’ as a reward for the thegn’s service to the king.[[797]](#footnote-797) In view of their personal histories at court, it seems natural to find Ulfcytel and Godwine still attending royal assemblies and appearing at the top of the list of thegns.

Ulfcytel and Godwine may be listed first, but they are not the longest serving members of Æthelred’s court who attest S 933. Ӕlfgar, for instance, appears in twenty-two charters during the reign.[[798]](#footnote-798) Ӕthelweard appears in thirty witness-lists from the reign, the earliest dated to 981 (S 838), making him the longest serving member of the court. Wulfgar, though he does not witness as many charters as Ulfcytel and Godwine, had a longstanding relationship with the king; three hides of land at Drayton were given in 983 (S 851) to ‘my faithful man, called Wulfgar by name’.[[799]](#footnote-799) From his first attestation in 987 (S 890), Wulfgar only subscribed to nine charters;[[800]](#footnote-800) given his previous low level of involvement at court, his presence at the king’s side in 1014 suggests that Wulfgar may have found personal advancement following Ӕthelred’s return from exile, or that he felt his immediate support was necessary for the king. Similarly, Ӕlfmær’s subscription appears on only seven of Ӕthelred’s charters; the earliest is dated 981 (S 838)[[801]](#footnote-801) which would indicate that his history of attendance and participation at royal assemblies was limited. Yet he too is at the king’s assembly witnessing S 933 in 1014. Wulfweard’s record indicates even less enthusiasm for taking part in royal government, attesting only four charters of Ӕthelred, the earliest dated to 996 (S 978)[[802]](#footnote-802). If there is an argument for an organized and well-attended reception for the king, it may be found in the attestations of the normally absent Wulfgar, Ælfmær and Wulfweard. The long histories of these thegns at Æthelred’s court, despite varied levels of participation, may explain their retention as advisors after 1013. Indeed, Odda is the only newcomer in the list of thegns: his first attestion during Ӕthelred’s reign is in S 931b dated 1013.

In all of these cases, with the exception of the more recently elevated Odda, the *ministri* attesting S 933 either have a history of significant court activity as shown by their inclusions in witness-lists, or have a long-standing relationship with Ӕthelred extending back nearly twenty years into the king’s reign, and as far back as thirty-three years in the cases of Ӕthelweard and Ӕlfmær. Though a few of these men may have joined earl Eadric in siding with Cnut in 1016, it is clear that in 1014 they were publicly demonstrating support for Ӕthelred.[[803]](#footnote-803) S 933 thus reveals that positions of power among the aristocracy could be held for lengthy periods of time, and so reduce opportunities for newcomers to Æthelred’s court. By the same means, S 933 promotes the idea of continued service to the king by a faithful body of nobles.

Charters throughout Æthelred’s reign promoted loyalty to a legitmate king, but the post-exile charters did so in new ways. In the witness list for S 934, dated to 1015, we find another extensive subscription for the king.

**S 934** Ego Ӕðelredus industrius Anglorum basileos hanc meam donationem dilecto episcopo gratanti animo peretua largitus sum haereditate.

I Ӕthelred, zealous king of the English, with rejoicing spirit gave this my gift to the beloved bishop in everlasting inheritance.[[804]](#footnote-804)

The bishop receiving the king’s grant is identified earlier in the charter within the dispositive section. There Bishop Beorhtwald is called *amabilis episcopus*. It is unusual to find the beneficiary mentioned in multiple sections of a charter, and particularly rare to find them mentioned in the king’s subscript attestation. This could reveal the continued practice of originality in composing charters, but it also serves to doubly remind the witnesses and audience of the charter that the king had a strong relationship with the Church.

S 934 is an unusual charter in other ways too: whereas the superscript is generally used to state the king’s actual position as king of England, in S 934 this was reserved for the subscript attestation at the end. The exclusion of Æthelred’s title and extent of his domain in the superscript may be another creative anomaly found throughout his charters. However, the superscript does adhere to precedents by promoting the king’s divine right to rule: ‘I Ӕthelred, royal worth relying upon a sense of duty to almighty God...’[[805]](#footnote-805) The superscript and subscript in S934 thus create an envelope structure that frames the king’s will in the bounds of his Christian legitimacy.

When we consider the beneficiary of S 934, then the bond between the king and the Church expressed by the superscript and subscript helps to justify the chosen recipient. A royal gift to a churchman following the king’s restoration from exile may have been viewed negatively by the land-hungry members of the aristocracy, and required language that expounded upon the king’s piety and divine office. The decision to grant land to Bishop Beorhtwald also expresses the king’s favoring of the Church over his nobles: this charter indirectly responds to fractured aristocratic loyalties, but also promotes Æthelred’s piety by offering this gift to God. The language of Æthelred’s superscript and subscript would also have informed those attending the charter’s issue that the king held not only Christian legitimacy to rule, but was also supported by the English churchmen. Such a demonstration may have been calculated to encourage renewed loyalties to Æthelred after his return from exile.

This idea that S 934 was constructed in part to endorse the king’s religious concerns is not farfetched. Æthelred’s own religious devotion was expressed earlier in his reign by his resolution to correct wrongs of the 980s by restoring monastic properties and allying with monastic reformers.[[806]](#footnote-806) Later in 1009, the king’s legislation (VII Atr) called for national penance in response to Viking incursions; indeed, homiletic and penitential rhetoric came to be incorporated in Æthelred’s charters and laws generally by this time.[[807]](#footnote-807) Much of the penitential tone of Ӕthelred’s reign may be attributed to the style and language of kingship generally,[[808]](#footnote-808) but there also appears to have been a real sense that the disastrous events which plagued England during this time were the result of both individual and national immorality.[[809]](#footnote-809) We might expect, then, for similar language and religious content to suffuse those charters and documents which followed Swein’s complete takeover of England and Æthelred’s enforced exile to Normandy in 1013.

A penitential mindset is also expressed in the writings of leading churchmen Abbot Ӕlfric (d. 1010) and Archbishop Wulfstan (d. 1023).[[810]](#footnote-810) Ӕlfric’s opinion of Ӕthelred is subject for speculation,[[811]](#footnote-811) but his discussions on Christian kingship generally may be determined by his accounts of Kings Abdon, Sennes, Oswald and Edmund, all three of whom chose death over submission to pagan forces.[[812]](#footnote-812) Ӕlfric also translated a version of Sedulius’ *De octo vitiis et duodecim abusiuis saeculi* which included unjust kingship as its ninth abuse and attributed a nation’s hardships to such a king.[[813]](#footnote-813) These as well as a number of Ӕlfric’s homilies reflect the attitude of a prominent English Church authority that Christian kings should be pious, just, protective of the weak, and prepared to die for their faith.[[814]](#footnote-814)

Ælfric’s thoughts on Christian kingship reflect broader religious concerns about Æthelred’s rule. Wulfstan also discusses the responsibilities of a Christian king in his *Institutes of Polity*, wherein he describes kingship as a spiritual office with the spiritual welfare of the nation as a primary duty.

**II.4-II.7** Cristenum cyninge gebyreð on cristenre þeode, þæt he sy, ealswa hit riht is, folces frofer and rihtwis hyrde ofer cristene heorde. And him gebyreþ, þæt he eallum mægne cristendom rære and Godes cyrican æghwær georne fyrðrie and friðie and eall cristen folc sibbie and sehte mid rihtre lage, swa he geornost mæge and ðurh ælc þing rihtwisnesse lufie for Gode and for worulde. Forðam þurh þæt he sceall sylf fyrmest geþeon and his þeodscipe eac swa, þe he riht lufie for Gode and for worulde.

It behoves the Christian king in a Christian nation to be, as is right, the people’s comfort and a righteous shepherd over the Christian flock. And it behoves him to raise up the Christian faith with all his power and zealously advance and protect God’s Church everywhere, and with just law to bring peace and reconciliation to all Christian people, as diligently as he can, and in everything cherish righteousness in the sight of God and the world. For if he cherish justice in the sight of God and the world, through that he himself foremost shall prosper and his subjects similarly.[[815]](#footnote-815)

Wulfstan’s *Polity* also lists the eight virtues of Christian kings which had already been expressed by both Ӕlfric and Abbo of Fleury.[[816]](#footnote-816) The opinions of these churchmen on Christian kingship were established and shared throughout Ӕthelred’s exile, and with a significant message: the fate of a nation was inextricably linked to the just nature and spiritual guidance of the king who governed it.[[817]](#footnote-817)

Elsewhere, in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, Wulfstan states forcefully how the troubles of the English had been brought on by the immorality of its people.[[818]](#footnote-818) Catherine Cubitt notes that this places the responsibility for Viking incursions in England on the nation as a whole, broadening accountability for the nation’s woes and perhaps drawing attention away from the king’s own hand in affairs.[[819]](#footnote-819) Yet the king’s role in ensuring the spiritual welfare of the nation, as expressed in *Polity*, suggests that Wulfstan’s accusations against the English people are also indictments against the king’s failure to secure peace and promote spiritual wellbeing. Wulfstan’s decision not to this criticism frankly shows the archbishop’s regard for loyalty to one’s lawful king. Wulfstan comments on those who would kill or expel their rulers:

***Sermo Lupi*** And ealra mæst hlafordswica se bið on worulde þæt man his hlafordes sawle beswice; (and) ful micel hlafordswica eac bið on worulde þæt man his hlaford on life beswice oððon of lande lifigende drife, (and) ægðer is geworden on þyssan earde: Eadweard man forrædde (and) syððhan acwealde (and) æfter þam forbærnde; (and) Ӕðelred man dræfde ut of his earde.

And the greatest betrayal in the world of one’s lord is that a man betray his lord’s soul; and it is also a very great betrayal of one’s lord in the world, that a man should plot against his lord’s life or, living, drive him from the land; and both have happened in this country. They plotted against Edward and then killed, and afterwards burnt him; [and they drove Ӕthelred out of his country.][[820]](#footnote-820)

The bracketed comment on Ӕthelred is found only in two of the five extant manuscripts of *Sermo* (CCCC 419 and Bodl. 343), but all versions present the same statement concerning treason against secular kings. With or without this inclusion regarding Æthelred’s exile, which may have been added after events, Wulfstan’s comments strongly suggest that he suspected certain members of the English to be guilty of treason. The equivalence of regicide and expulsion is striking, and underscores the severity of acting against one’s rightful king as an offense against God. Wulfstan implies that such offenses contributed to England’s earthly woes, vis-à-vis Danish incursions and conquest.[[821]](#footnote-821)

If the reward system between the king and the nobility had indeed waned, leaving English nobles with only oaths and religious devotion to compel their loyalty to Ӕthelred, then Wulfstan’s influence may have encouraged many to consider heavenly rewards as well as their own culpability for drawing God’s wrath toward England. This mentality may help to explain the use of charters such as S 934 to extol the king’s piety and promote his Christian legitimacy.

Returning to the participants of S 934, Æthelred’s subscription is followed by the attestations of Archbishops Wulfstan and Lyfing. After the names of the archbishops come two of the king’s sons, Edmund and Edward, who are followed in turn by Bishops Ӕlfhun of London, Ӕlfsige of Winchester, Beorhtwald of Ramsey (again, the beneficiary of this charter) and Eadnoth of Crediton. As with S 933, we again find verbs of action in the attestations, but unlike S 933 these give voice to all witnesses and are not restricted to the king and churchmen. Instead, this charter allocates verbs of action to the ealdormen and the usually silent *ministri*. The attestations of the archbishops, æthelings, and bishops are lengthier, but the inclusion of even brief statements for the ealdormen and thegns may be significant. Verbs ascribed to ealdormen include *subscribere, confirmare,* and *corroborare* (‘underwrite’, ‘confirm’, and ‘corroborate’).[[822]](#footnote-822)

The attestation of Eadric stands apart from the rest through its inclusion of an accusative noun as well as a verb (*consensum prebui*). We should recall that Eadric was among the king’s most trusted men, and so would have held an important place at court.[[823]](#footnote-823) That Eadric ‘offers his consent’ implies an elevated tone attributed to the increasingly powerful Eadric, who neither ‘agrees to’ nor ‘acknowledges’ the document as do the other witnesses, but rather ‘gives permission’ to those involved. The stylistic choice of the scribe denotes Eadric’s position over the other ealdormen and thegns.

If this charter of 1015 was issued at the assembly at Oxford, at which Eadric killed the northern thegns Morcar and Sigeferth,[[824]](#footnote-824) then we may read the subtly distinctive attestation of Eadric as indicative of his function as Æthelred’s executioner. This might assume too much concerning the king’s role in the assassinations, but the Chronicler relates that Ӕthelred seized the murdered thegns’ lands and Sigeferth’s wife;[[825]](#footnote-825) this suggests that the king supported Eadric’s actions, even if the king did not coordinate or order the assassination himself. Eadric’s placement in the attestations of S 933 and S 934, and the distinct language given to his attestation of S 934, support arguments for his continued and growing importance following Æthelred’s restoration from exile.

Among the thegns who attested S 934 we find the first and only attestion by Ceolric; Ceolric may have been newly elevated following the king’s return from Normandy. Odda, as mentioned above, was also recently elevated to the status of *minister*, though his participation at assemblies predates Ӕthelred’s exile.[[826]](#footnote-826) Ӕthelweard is the first minister listed, likely due to his long-time position in the royal court. Leofwine (the thegn, not to be confused with the previously discussed ealdorman) is problematic due to the frequency of this name, making it difficult to identify with certainty which Leofwine witnessed S 934.[[827]](#footnote-827) It is possible that the Leofwine in question was made a thegn of Ӕthelred as early as 980, and was a remarkably active court figure having attested thirty-four charters during the course of his career.[[828]](#footnote-828) If this is the case, then it may seem unusual to find him at the bottom of a list of ministers which includes two recently appointed thegns. However, in all four charters witnessed by Leofwine from 1008 through 1015 (S 918, 927, 931 and 934), Leofwine’s placement in the lists is consistently among the lowest three rankss, though he is only named last in S 934.[[829]](#footnote-829) He is also assigned the honorific *miles* in the unusual charter S 931 which refers to the thegns as either *ministri* or *milites*, with the list of *milites* following after the list of *ministri*.[[830]](#footnote-830) What this distinction among thegns would have meant is unclear, but placement of the *milites* at the end of the list suggests a lower level of importance. We may speculate based on the continued stagnancy of Leofwine’s standing in diplomatic attestations that any changes which followed Æthelred’s return from exile were individualistic rather than broadsweeping. Whereas Eadric seems to have increased his already substantial status at court and new arrivals such as Odda and Ceolric were placed at the top of the list of thegns in S 934, the low placement Leofwine’s attestation indicates some continuity after the king’s exile.

This apparent stability agrees with that evinced by the attestations of thegns in S 933, but there are signs of continued unrest and division at court. Notably absent from the attestations of S 934 are the aforementioned thegns Sigeferth and Morcar. Morcar subscribed to eight of Ӕthelred’s charters (S 898, S 906, S 911, S 922, S 924, S 926, S 928, S 931) in three of which Morcar is the beneficiary (S 922, S 924 and S 928) indicating that a strong relationship was being forged between king and thegn prior to Swein’s invasion.[[831]](#footnote-831) Sigeferth, Morcar’s brother, attests five of Ӕthelred’s charters (S 911, S 922, S 926, S 931, and S933), which suggests that Sigeferth was also active at court before and after the king’s exile. S 934 was issued in 1015, the same year in which, according to the Chronicler, Eadric betrayed the thegns Sigeferth and Morcar, murdering them at the great assembly at Oxford.[[832]](#footnote-832) It is possible that the absence of Sigeferth and Morcar in S 934 is because they had been killed previously at the assembly at Oxford. It is even possible that S 934 was issued at that same assembly.

The Chronicler does not record any penalty being assigned to Eadric by the king. Instead Æthelred is said to have seized the lands of the victims and ordered Sigeferth’s wife to be sent to Malmesbury.[[833]](#footnote-833) The details of these actions suggest that the Chronicler felt the king to have been complicit in the killings. Although the king is not said to have ordered their deaths, his apparent leniency with Eadric and his immediate acquisition of the victims’ lands give the impression that the king supported Eadric.[[834]](#footnote-834) Why would the king have sought or welcomed the deaths of Sigeferth and Morcar? Though Sigeferth witnesses S 933 in 1014, indicating continued loyalty and participation at court after Ӕthelred’s exile, neither he nor Morcar appear in S 934 a year later.

We should note that both of the northern thegns had surrendered to Swein in 1013, and the Five Boroughs under their control had initially recognized Cnut as king following Swein’s death in 1014. If Æthelred was suspicious of duplicity among his nobles, as implied by his conditions for returning to England, then these two brothers would be likely subjects for distrust; the king may have viewed their submission to Swein as having significant bearing on the course of events which led to his exile in 1013.[[835]](#footnote-835) We should also consider the possibility that Morcar and Sigeferth did not witness S 934 because they had fallen from royal favour and were thus excluded from participating at court.[[836]](#footnote-836) For whatever reasons, the omissions of Sigeferth and Morcar in S 934 indicate that England’s leadership retained some of the factional divisions that had led to Æthelred’s exile in 1013.

Æthelred may have had good reason to be nervous. After ordering Sigeferth’s widow to be taken to Malmesbury, the king’s eldest son Edmund openly defied his father:

***ASC* 1015:** Þa æfter lytlum fæce ferde Eadmund æþelinc to 7 genam þæt wif ofer ðæs cynges gewil 7 hæfde him to wife. Đa toforan Natiuitas Sancte Marie ferde se æþeling þanon westan norð into Fifburgum 7 gerad sona ealle Sigeferðes are 7 Morcores, 7 þæt folc eal him tobeah.

Then after a short interval, the Atheling Edmund went and took the woman against the king’s will and married her. Then before the Nativity of St. Mary the atheling went from the west, north to the Five Boroughs, and at once took possession of all Sigeferth’s estates and Morcar’s, and the people all submitted to him.[[837]](#footnote-837)

We are told by the Chronicler that Edmund absconded with the widow and gained the submission of the Five Boroughs.[[838]](#footnote-838) The actions of the ætheling reveal defiance toward the king’s authority and power and express Edmund’s displeasure with the murders of the two brothers; loyalty to the king, according to the Chronicler, was fractured within the king’s own family. However, Edmund is among the witnesses of S 934, suggesting that he was still included in affairs of the royal court when the charter was drafted.

There is clearly much room for speculation here, and care should be taken. By examining the witness lists of S 933 and S 934 and considering these alongside evidence from the *ASC*, we see that some long-time counsellors remained in their pre-1014 positions in charter attestations and presumably continued to have influence at court. Some level of continuity bridged Æthelred’s pre- and post-exile rule. The king’s promise, given at his return from exile, to forgive those who had acted against him previously, appears to have been met in the continued participation at court of thegns and ealdormen who submitted to Swein in 1013.

However, we can also sense some instability which the king’s removal from power would have instilled. The elevation of previously unknown or inactive thegns and the absence of Sigeferth and Morcar support the Chronicler’s implications that fear and conspiracy followed Æthelred’s restoration. The fragility of the king’s power may have elicited a number of adjustments to England’s leading men, and the king’s suspicions may have promoted further factionalism. In response to this tenuous situation, changes in the language accompanying individual attestations presented stronger connections between the king and the Church. These changes, along with the language of the king’s extended superscripts and subscripts, reveal attempts by the charter authors to promote Æthelred as the holder of a form of religious office: to bolster and regain the support of the aristocracy, these charters remind all parties that Christian kingship was divinely determined. This would be particularly important in a faltering system of loyalty that had become reliant upon the transfer of land and gifts to the aristocracy. The royal court’s response to conditions of fragile loyalties and disunity may be seen in other sections of the royal charters issued after Æthelred’s restoration. I will now consider how reaction to exile and post-exile conditions is evident in the proems, superscripts and anathema of these charters.

**4.3.2 The King’s Voice after Exile: Superscripts, Subscripts, Proems and Anathemas**

Æthelred had lost his kingdom by the prompt submission of his leading men. He was only able to return after Swein’s death in 1014, and then only under the conditions set forth by the *witan*.[[839]](#footnote-839) Some reassertion of royal authority was necessary, and we have seen evidence for this resumption of power after his return from exile. Analysis of the proems, superscripts and anathemas of the post-exile charters (S 932, 933, and 934) will show that assertions of legitimacy are also voiced in the content of the texts, and that these assertions are amplified by the formation of links between proems and superscripts and by the formation of envelope structures comprised of the proems and anathemas. I will also argue that the king’s legitimacy is promoted by the language of discursive sections which detail the history of specific parcels of land; these justify the king’s right to dispense with the lands while also demonstrating his supreme power in matters of property and justice. Further to the development of a theme of royal legitimacy within these royal charters, I will also show that a secondary theme concerning the nature of the secular world was also constructed. These formulae provide a window into the post-exile court mentality in England and give voice to the king’s concerns upon restoration from exile.

There are some source limitations of authenticity and text survival that need to be considered. Charters S 1602c, 932, and 933 have been dated to 1014. I have noted that the fragmentary S 1602c lacks a list of attestations, but the extant fragment of this charter is also missing any proem or anathema: only the dispositive section and dating clause remain. S 932 survives with proem, dispositive section and anathema intact. S 933 is the only extant charter dated to 1014 which is wholly complete in its present form, and thus may, along with the largely complete S 932, provide clues as to immediate changes resulting from the king’s restoration from exile in 1014. Only one charter, S 934, has been dated to 1015. This charter also survives in its entirety and is considered authentic. I will therefore examine the body of this charter along with those of S 932 and 933.[[840]](#footnote-840)

The content of S 932 (1014) gives evidence for a post-exile promotion of royal legitimacy.[[841]](#footnote-841) The charter opens with a proem (a brief, usually homiletic statement preceding the king’s superscript) that succinctly acknowledges the existence of the Holy Trinity and the requirements for attaining eternal life in Heaven, good works among them.

**S 932** Eterne lucis auctor omnipotens Deus manens trinus in personis et unus in substantia viam mandatorum suorum quibus regnum aditur celeste dignatus est pietate sua nobis declarare ut in ea salutiferis operum gressibus incedentes et feliciter spaciantes despecto istius caduci seculi regno letabundi celestia perveniamus ad habitacula.

The creator of eternal light, almighty God, three persons abiding in one substance, has been graciously pleased to make known to us the way of his commandments, that path which leads to the heavenly kingdom, so that we may travel on it by the life-giving stages of good works, and setting no store by the kingdom of this perishable world, may advance happily and come rejoicing to the heavenly mansions.[[842]](#footnote-842)

We may surmise from this proem that the king, wishing to emulate those who do good works, sees his gift of land to Leofwine as being in this same spirit. This would mean that the king’s bequest is for the benefit of his own soul, a sentiment which is made in other of his charters.[[843]](#footnote-843) Such a view would make sense if the recipient was a churchman or a monastic house, but S 932 names the ealdorman Leofwine as beneficiary.[[844]](#footnote-844) That this was a comment on the Christian nature of Leofwine is possible but unlikely. No mention of Leofwine’s good works or any other justification for the gift is made later in the dispositive section (wherein recipients and lands are named and described):

**S 932**...in perpetue hereditatis donacione ut ipse dum vitali spiramine corporis rexerit artus sine ullius ranccore securus possideat et feliciter perfruatur. Labentibus autem suorum temporum lustris habeat hoc ille nostra licencia et omnium assensu in proprie potestatis dicione cuicunque illud donare decreverit.

I grant it to him for a perpetual inheritance, to the end that while the breath of life animates his bodily members he may safely possess and happily enjoy it, with none to gainsay him, and when his earthly days are numbered he may have it in his power, with our leave and the consent of all men, to leave it to an heir of his own choice.[[845]](#footnote-845)

Though it is possible that Leofwine intended to give the land to a religious house, there is no hint in the charter that this was anticipated, and the dispositive section confirms that the land was intended to be for Leofwine’s personal benefit. The beneficiary and dispositive section of S 932 indicate that the proem was a general Christian exposition, typical of proems from Æthelred’s reign and having little to do with the charter recipient.

Yet the proem of S 932 functions in a more direct manner by reaffirming Æthelred’s Christian legitimacy before all attending members of the aristocracy. The proem makes clear that the king’s actions are based on a tradition of divine guidance which directs his hand. This is confirmed by the language of the superscript directly following the proem:

**S 932** Ipsius itaque summi Dei prestante amminiculo ego Æthelred anglorum basileus gratuita largitate concedo…

With the support, then, of the Most High God, I, Ethelred, king of the English, in free bounty grant…[[846]](#footnote-846)

The proem of S 932 reminds readers and listeners that it is through God’s directives that paradise may be reached. This is immediately followed by a superscript that states God’s support for Æthelred’s rule. The author of S 932 through his construction of the proem and superscript promotes loyalty through ideology: to obey God, and so enter Heaven, one must obey the king. Similar claims of divine support are standard in the language of Anglo-Saxon diplomatics, and are evident in other charters predating Æthelred’s exile. However, such forceful statements of the king’s Christian legitimacy are especially notable in S 932: we should recall that the charter concludes with Æthelred’s unique subscript defiantly averring the king’s right to rule as his predecessors had done before.[[847]](#footnote-847)

A similar connection between proem and superscript is seen in S 933 and S 934. The proem for S 933, discussing the stages of Christ’s birth, works and death, is followed by the king’s superscript:

**S 933** Pro cuius inenerrabilis gloriae recordatione, ego Æðelredus, gratia dei sullimatus rex et monarchus totius Albionis…

Abiding by the recollection of these indescribable glories, I Æthelred, elevated king and monarch of all Albion by the grace of God…[[848]](#footnote-848)

Thus the charter’s author uses this opportunity to re-state the divinely sanctioned status of Æthelred’s rule through a careful transition between the proem and the superscript: the king acts in adherence to the example of Christ’s life and death. Similarly the proem for S 934, which concludes with a description of Heaven and those who dwell there eternally, is linked to the king’s superscript:

**S 934** Huius inexaustae foelicitatis dulcedine delectatus ego Æðelred, archipotentis dei pietate regali fretus dignitate…

Delighting in the eternal, sweet joys of these things, I Æthelred, regal standing relying upon a sense of duty to almighty God…[[849]](#footnote-849)

Like S 933, the superscript of S 934 refers back to the proem: the king now acts with eternal rewards in mind, and so follows God’s will. All three of our post-exile charters present this connection between the will of God and the actions of the king and portray Æthelred as Christ’s earthly deputy.

These statements of Christian legitimacy may reflect a royal response to the king’s status as a reinstated exile. Similar superscripts are not unknown in Æthelred’s charters, but in the eight charters issued in 1012 and 1013,[[850]](#footnote-850) just prior to Æthelred’s departure for Normandy, only two of the king’s superscripts include such a declaration: S 927 (1012) and S 931b (1013). The superscript for S 927 uses the phrase *omnipotentis dei nutu regente* to suggest the king’s rightful place as king,[[851]](#footnote-851) while S 931b uses a similar phrase: *per omnipotentis dexteram totius Brittannie regni solio sublimatus*.[[852]](#footnote-852) These statements are crafted to promote the king’s divine legitimacy and, when compared with post-exile charters and others, indicate that some stylistic patterning runs through Æthelred’s diplomas. However, the superscripts of S 927 and S 931b do not refer back to or otherwise connect themselves with homiletic proems as do the post-exile S 933 and S 934, and so fail to emphasize the king’s Christian legitimacy in the same way as the post-exile charters.

The distinction is produced by authorial choices of inclusion and composition. In the case of S 931b, the charter begins with a dating clause, which is very unusual, but does not include a proem. The superscript of S 931b holds the only statement of divine legitimacy in the entire charter. In S 927, a proem is included, but strays from traditionally religious material in order to comment on England’s diminished morality, lawsuit evasion, and property ownership. There is no mention of God, Christ, or the Holy Trinity, focusing instead on more worldly affairs. This proem concludes with a brief statement on exchanging worldly things for eternal rewards,[[853]](#footnote-853) but it does not create the same connection with the superscript as is found in the post-exile charters which present textual depictions of God, Christ and Heaven in the proems and then claim the support of God in the superscripts. The post-exile charters thus amplify the perception that Æthelred rules by divine authority, while also holding the potential threat of damnation for those who would oppose the will of God and king alike. These links between proem and superscript and their resulting effect reflect a heightened need to promote the legitimacy of the king’s rule after his restoration from exile.

The proem contents of the post-exile charters reveal other unique responses to change and restoration following Æthelred’s return by the development of envelope structures. The proems of S 932, S 933 and S 934 serve to form thematic envelope structures in conjunction with their respective anathemae. The anathema of a charter is a type of curse that calls on God’s wrath to damn any who would oppose the king’s gift of lands and privileges detailed in the charter. While the proem initiates most charters, the anathema concludes the main body of text, generally following the dispositive but before the dating clause and attestations. Envelope structures, sometimes called ‘inclusio’ or ‘framing method’, use similar features, wording or topics in the beginning and end of a text, thus envelope and augment the main body of the text while offering a sense of cyclical completeness or closure.[[854]](#footnote-854)

In S 932, the anathema states that those subverting the charter’s intent will not enjoy the pleasures of Heaven as will those who obey God’s commandments:

**S 932** Si quis igitur alto stomacatus felle molitus fuerit obstinato animo hanc mee liberalitatis munificenciam subvertere iniqua sit ei sors vel societas in collegio supernorum civium…

If any man, fretted by excess of gall, shall perversely strive to undo this bountiful deed of my liberality, not for him be a happy lot in the company of blessed spirits…[[855]](#footnote-855)

Undoing the king’s charter is portrayed as an affront to God, who offers a pathway to Heaven and supports Æthelred’s actions as king. We should recall that the proem for S 932 pertains to the path God offers for those seeking eternal rewards. The ‘blessed spirits’ referred to in the anathema have presumably followed this path; those opposing the king’s gift stray from this path and will be denied entrance to Heaven. The envelope encloses the details of the king’s gift (including the beneficiary, land, and privileges granted) between the promise of paradise and the threat of damnation. Once more we see how the drafter of this post-exile charter chose to emphasize the Christian legitimacy of Æthelred’s reign, and so further justified the *witan*’s restoration of the king.

We find a similar envelope structure constructed by the composer of S 933. The proem concludes with a brief statement on Christ’s harrowing of Hell:

**S 933** tandem quadrati pro nobis perferens supplicia ligni, iugum hereditariae mortis absumens, diu longeque interdictae reserauit limina portae

At last he squared up, suffering for us the torments of the cross over the course of a day, exhausting the yoke of inherent death, and after a long time opened the thresholds of the forbidding gate.

Overcoming death and opening *interdictae portae* so strikingly resonates with Christ’s actions in the Harrowing of Hell that the gate in question is surely the entrance to Hell rather than Heaven. Echoes of Hell are found in the anathema, which condemns any violators of the charter’s intent:

**S 933** Si quis uero contra hoc decretum machinari uel infringere aliquid temptauerit…poenalis eum deglutiat tartarorum interitus.

If someone shall have attempted to plot or infringe against this decree in any way…may he perish and be swallowed up in the torments of infernal regions.[[856]](#footnote-856)

The audience of S 933 is thus reminded of the proem’s statement on Christ opening the gates of Hell by the threat of being damned to that same place. Once more, an envelope is seen wherein the proem promises paradise while the anathema calls for damnation. The envelope is augmented by the composer’s language choices as well: the *tartari* (‘infernal regions’) of the anathema offsets the *affatus angelicus* (angelic speech) of the proem: angels at one end of the king’s decree, demons at the other. The effect is an envelope structure that again encloses the king’s will between the otherworldly conditions of pleasure and suffering. Æthelred’s actions as king are once more defined by the threats and promises of Christianity, and so the charter’s composer presents readers and listeners with the gravity of Æthelred’s Christian legitimacy.

The proem and anathema of S 934 act likewise,[[857]](#footnote-857) forming an envelope around the king’s decree between the joys of Heaven and the torments of Hell. The proem of S 934 begins with a reminder of how man’s actions may lead him to eternal reward in Heaven or suffering in Hell and then goes on to detail the nature of the Holy Trinity, the joys of Heaven, and those who dwell eternally at God’s side.[[858]](#footnote-858) We are told that the ‘venerable, just and pious’ (*sancte et iuste pieque*) will dwell in the highest neighbourhoods of Heaven, while the ‘rebellious ones’ (*inobedientes*) will be ‘closed up with the infernal ministers of Hell’ (*cum tartareis ministris infernali claudantur*).[[859]](#footnote-859) The proem’s comments on Hell are echoed later in the anathema:

**S 934** Si quisquam autem temporum progressibus fomite zeli uel auaritie estibus accensus mee regalis donationem potestatis aut inminuere uel quoquomodo inmutare studuerit, infernalium participetur parasitis tenebrarum perpetuis cum diabulo eiusque complicibus arsurus incendiis

If anyone in the advances of time aroused by either the stirring passions of jealousy or greed, either impairs the rule of my royal gift or should desire to change it in some way, let him partake of the parasites of infernal darkness, forever with the devil and his accomplices in burning fire…[[860]](#footnote-860)

Again, the envelope is clearly constructed by the promises of Heaven in the proem and the threat of damnation, here in both the proem and the anathema. All three of the post-exile charters examined here show remarkable similarity in their constructions, incorporating envelope structures to encapsulate the king’s will within terms of his legitimacy as God’s agent on earth. Those disobeying the decree of the king, as with those disobeying God, will spend eternity in Hell. We should note that the threat of divine punishment for opposing a divinely appointed monarch is accompanied by the inference that supporting Æthelred may garner heavenly rewards. There is a message in the literary structures of these charters: support Æthelred loyally and your rewards will be eternal, but damnation is the penalty for treason. This is a bold statement for a king only recently restored to power from exile.

These envelope structures represent a royal response to the king’s position as a restored exile. If envelopes promoting the king’s royal Christian legtimacy were common in other of Ӕthelred’s charters, then my argument that these literary constructions respond to the king’s recent removal and conditional return might be dismissed as observations of a stylistic pattern that continued through the end of Æthelred’s reign. I have noted already that only two of the eight charters issued in 1012 and 1013 form envelopes with their proems and anathemae. However, these envelopes are markedly different in their content and intention. In S 925 (1012), which grants land to Æthelred’s wife Ælfgifu, the proem discusses the taking of property by violence and asserts that those wishing to uphold justice must ensure the safety of property owners.

**S 925** Contra creatoris aeterni iusticiam dum omnibus ferme in nationibus tyrannizantium uis crudescit raptorum, qui ita aliena tollere sicut lupi cruorem agnorum sitiunt bibere, profecto iustitiae amatores sunt qui possessores quietos, inque propriis contentos priuilegiorum autenticorum cyrographorumue auxiliis sustentatoriis muniunt, prae oculis cordis illud Salomonis ponentes theologicum, ‘Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram.’

While in nearly every nation the strength of tyrannizing robbers increases, who thirst to take other people’s things even as wolves thirst to drink the blood of lambs, against the justice of the Eternal Creator, lovers of justice indeed are they who strengthen peaceful and contented possessors in their property with the supporting allies of authentic privileges or writings, putting before the mind’s eye that biblical saying of Solomon: ‘Love justice, you judges of the earth.’[[861]](#footnote-861)

The justice in mind here is voiced as *creatoris eternii iustitia*, which indicates that the violation of property rights may lead to divine displeasure. Justice is the primary theme of this proem; the exaction of justice threatened in the anathema is startling:

**S 925** ex obsoleto corpore diaboli extrahatur arpagine et in lebete Sathane decoquatur sitque infernalium offa carnificum in secula

…let him be drawn out of his worn body by a devil’s grappling-hook and be boiled in Satan’s cauldron and let him be a morsel for the infernal tormenters for all time…[[862]](#footnote-862)

This extreme depiction of violence in the anathema is well suited to a charter granting lands to the king’s wife.[[863]](#footnote-863) The envelope structure here is formed by the topos of violence and justice, threatened in the proem and enacted in the anathema. However, the use of this device in S 925 does not carry the same meaning as in the envelope structures of S 932, S 933 and S 934 which all promote loyalty to a legitimate Christian king.

S 925 is more greatly concerned with the crime of infringing upon the charter, with justice and punishment in the foreground. The comments on worldly events and governance in the proem of S 925 encourage compliance, but do not offer reflections on the king’s own divine legitimacy.[[864]](#footnote-864) Despite the proem’s brief mention of divine justice and the penalty of hellish torture presented in the anathema, there is no suggestion that God acts specifically in response to violations of the king’s will, but instead judges those who wrongly take property from others.

The other pre-exile charter with an envelope structure is S 931a (1013).[[865]](#footnote-865) The envelope structure of S 931a similarly differs from those in the charters following Æthelred’s return to England. Statements in the proem concerning changes in property over time and the wrongful sale of church land correspond to a reminder in the anathema on the fate of Ananius and Saffira,[[866]](#footnote-866) a married couple who withheld the proceeds from the sale of their property from the early Christian church. While an envelope structure is present, again we find that it has less to do with the king’s Christian legitimacy than it does with landholding and God’s judgement of wrongdoers generally.

If the links between proems and superscripts, and the formation of envelopes present a theme in the post-exile charters of Æthelred, it is that the king rules by divine right and the loyalty of his subjects will be rewarded in Heaven. This overarching theme is an appropriate background for the subtheme which runs through these charters: the inferiority of the material world to eternal life in Heaven. In the proem of S 932 we are told that eternal happiness can be reached in part by ‘setting no store by the kingdom of this perishable world’ (*despecto istius caduci seculi regno*).[[867]](#footnote-867) This is an intriguing statement in a charter issued from a royal court whose king had only recently regained his position as a worldly ruler. Here the phrase presents a worldview conducive to salvation, while also suggesting that possession and control of lands is insignificant in the cosmic scheme of things. The implication in S 932 is that the king’s gift to Leofwine was a negligible matter.

It may be that the denunciation of worldly kingdoms was intended to diminish the king’s debt to those who had, albeit conditionally, made his return from exile possible; Leofwine was likely among these individuals. It should be noted that the king’s ability to grant land allowed Æthelred to display his royal worldly authority, while securing the loyalties of his leading men. For Æthelred to regain his kingdom only to suggest that material property is trifling in comparison to heavenly rewards comes off as a somewhat ungracious gesture. Is it possible that this was intended by the author as a snub to Æthelred’s chief secular counsellors? Perhaps, though a disregard for worldly comforts and secular concerns has strong religious overtones and is as likely to have been a comment reflecting the worldview of the charter’s author. That said, it may still have been intended to further distance the king from his ealdormen and thegns, as I have proposed was the intention of the author of S 933 who gave personal voice to the attestations of the king and all churchmen but failed to do likewise for the king’s ealdormen and thegns.[[868]](#footnote-868) This could imply that the king, while certainly needing the support of his secular officials, had come to view his relationship with the church as one of greater importance following his return.

S 932 is not the only instance of this ascetic worldview in the post-exile charters. The subtheme continues in S 933 and S 934. Just as the proem of S 932 briefly discusses the nature of the Holy Trinity and the performance of good works in order to reach Heaven, the proem for S 933 presents God’s decision to nullify the sins of man by sending Jesus Christ to suffer on the cross and open the gates of Hell. Christ’s virgin birth, teachings and miracles are also mentioned here, with a brief comment on the material world in the context of Christ’s experience as a man: *terrenae condolens fragilitati* (suffering from earthly fragility).[[869]](#footnote-869) However, this expression on ‘earthly fragility’ does not seem to have been intended to denigrate worldly matters as may be interpreted from the proem of S 932. It seems more likely to be used here as a means of expressing the course of God’s life as a man enduring hardships in the same way as any other being ‘of earthly fragility’. The sharing in worldly suffering may instead present a means of identifying the plight of the English and their king as a Christian people; the constant need for military defense of the island through the course of Æthelred’s reign, the murder of Ælfheah, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1012, and the successful invasion by Swein and the expulsion of Æthelred in 1013 provide a historical context for the worldly sufferings of the English.

What had seemed to be an attitude of reproach may instead reflect a dismal outlook appropriate to a reign which had seen so much strife and disaster. There is a definite tone established by such comments which may reflect the attitude of the king, and perhaps of some members of the royal court. Like S 933, the proem of S 934 contrasts the stability of heavenly rewards with the changing nature of worldly powers and property:

**S 934** Idcirco totis satagendum est uiribus ut qui opibus habundant mundanis, cum terrenis Olympica, ac cum caducis mansura, cumque transitoriis et momentaneis rebus perpetua mercantur habitacula…

So let it be hurriedly brought about that all men who abound in secular power, with earthly Olympica, and with tottering estates, and with passing and momentary things, are exchanged for everlasting habitations…[[870]](#footnote-870)

Here worldly powers and properties are temporary, shifting things, whereas true matters of concern are the souls of men and women and their place in the afterlife. This statement contributes to a connection between the post-exile charters: all three comment on the inferiority of earthly power and property to eternal life in Heaven.

What should be made of these comments on the material world? They are not unique in Æthelred’s charters. Two charters from 1012 have similar comments in their proems: S 926 and S 929. S 926 quotes Romans 13:1, which states that all power comes from God, and comments on the divinely ordained conditions within human society.[[871]](#footnote-871) The proem concludes with the assertion that earthly states of existence will eventually be traded in for heavenly gains. The proem of S 929 bears a similar message, noting that time on earth hastens to an end, followed by the superscript of Æthelred which holds that the king has been pondering how best to deal with his transitory and unimportant property in a manner that will lead to his ascension to Heaven.[[872]](#footnote-872) These are not surprising comments to find in works which were likely authored by clerics and may simply reflect the religious mindset of the day.

However, only two such comments are made in the eight charters issued in 1012 and 1013; this is insufficient to establish a tone of world-weariness for that charter group. In individual charters comments on the fleeting nature of worldly existence might be viewed as stylistic inclusions with inherently monastic worldview. However, all three of the largely intact and authentic post-exile charters incorporate a sub-theme about the instability and temporality of the material world. Though not written by the king himself, it should be stressed that these charters were attested to by Æthelred who presumably instructed the draftsmen who composed the charters, read or listened to their contents, and then had his name affixed as benefactor and witness.

Comments in the post-exile charters about the inferiority of the mundane may indicate some public change in the king’s own worldview following usurpation and exile, but the piously melancholic tone of the charters is likely the author’s own construction. Regardless, these inclusions give voice to Ӕthelred, whose mindset is portrayed in such a way as to emphasize his piety and theological attitude toward power and existence. The post-exile charters comment on the transience of worldly affairs, using the king’s voice to do so. Æthelred’s royal status is thus further distinguished from his secular advisors and leading men; just as the attestations of the king, bishops and abbots in S 933 are set apart from other lay attestations, Æthelred is presented as sharing similarly ascetic worldviews to these churchmen in a way that helps to confirm the sanctity of his office.

This post-exile response from the royal court could be interpreted in a number of ways. It is possible, for instance, that the king’s experience in exile was transformative, and as with our previously discussed Kings Edwin and Alfred, resulted in a contemplative reevaluation of worldly events: attempts may have been made to paint the restored Æthelred in a heroic light. Alternatively, the growing distinctions between the king and his lay figures may also represent an attempt by the king or authors of the post-exile charters to portray Æthelred as a supporter of the Church’s aims, perhaps at the loss of material gains for lay members of the *witan*. Might this have served to explain the decreased grants of power and land to the aristocracy already noted in the present work? This is possible, but in a related line of thinking we may also view these statements against worldly gain as consoling; it does not matter that the king has not increased the wealth of a group or individual because everyone inevitably gains greater rewards through obeisance and loyalty to their Christian king. In the post-exile environment of Æthelred’s court, where loyalties had been and continued to be fragile and material rewards were in short supply, statements such as these may have been carefully crafted to offset anger and reduce the likelihood of betrayal.

This argument agrees with what we know about the real and imagined betrayals that followed Æthelred’s exile and return. Before concluding this discussion on the post-exile charters, I would first point to one final charter section worth evaluating which supports the idea that Æthelred’s charters respond to a court rife with betrayal and conspiracy. The discursive section of S 934 clarifies the property’s legal history and justifies the king’s legal right to dispense with the land.[[873]](#footnote-873) In the case of S 934, the property once belonged to one of the king’s thegns, Wulfgeat, but the land was seized by the king as a legal forfeiture for Wulfgeat’s crimes.

**S 934** Nam quidam minister Uulfget uulgari relatu nomine prefatam terram aliquando possederat, sed quia munitis regis se in insidiis socium applicauit et in facinore inficiendi etiam legis satisfactione defecit, ideo hereditatis suberam penitus amisit, et ex ea prenominatus episcopus prescriptam uillulam me concedente suscepit.

For a certain minister known by all named Wulfgeat held the aforenamed land in his possession for a length of time, but because he neglected the fortifications of the king he made himself an accomplice in treacheries and also in the crime of corruption even of the law, therefore he parted wholly of the possession below, and from this the aforenamed bishop [Brihtwold] took up the estate listed above by my granting.[[874]](#footnote-874)

This discursive section regarding Wulfgeat makes a clear statement concerning the king’s position and the subservient status of his thegns and ealdormen: the king is not simply an elevated member of the aristocracy. He is also an enforcer of justice and a supporter of the bishops. While anathemae, in this charter and elsewhere, threaten damnation for those opposing the king’s will, the author of this charter includes an example of the very real, secular penalties for disloyalty. This account of the land granted in S 934 reminds the hearer of the hierarchical structure of the king’s government, but the references to treachery may have resonated particularly with those among the king’s leading men who had surrendered to Swein in 1013, recognized him as king, and subsequently brought about Æthelred’s flight to Normandy.

We should also note that by presenting a recent instance of treachery, this discursive section justifies the royal responses evident throughout the post-exile charters. The attestations have revealed that while there was some stability in the *witan*, some lay members experienced elevation after Æthelred’s return, specifically Eadric Streona and the thegns Odda and Ceolric, while others are notably absent within two years. The choice of language in the attestations reveals the author’s desire to establish the king as aligned with and integral to the religious community of the English Church: his position is not one of an elevated aristocrat, but of a divinely appointed and supported king. This Christian legitimacy is seen too in the attempts made to link the king’s will with God’s plan, not only by the association of the king’s superscriptions with homiletic proems, but also by the implementation of envelope structures which enfold the king’s desires within the bounds of divine punishment and reward.

When examined through the lens of the king’s exile and restoration, and in the context of events detailed by the Chronicler, there is a continuing sense of instability throughout the post-exile charters.[[875]](#footnote-875) The persistent cries for legitimacy and defense of the king’s right to act reveal an ideological programme designed to dissuade treachery and encourage loyalty. In a system of patronage wherein loyalty was traditionally obtained through lands and power, these charters reveal an attempt to promote heavenly rewards instead. The king’s worldly powerlessness is offset by the ideological strength of being God’s appointed king.

By examining the use of language, content, and literary technique in the post-exile charters of Æthelred, I have shown how royal exile can affect the constructed view of the king by authors of narrative annals and royal charters. In the next section, I will examine the final law codes of Æthelred to identify further portrayals of Christian legitimacy following the king’s restoration. As will be seen, language and literary devices contribute to the contents of these laws in shaping a royal response to restoration from exile.

**4.4 Legislation of Æthelred**

**4.4.1 The law code VIII Æthelred**

I will here examine the legislative efforts of Æthelred’s court, including V-VIII Atr, with particularly close scrutiny given to the post-exile lawcode VIII Atr. V and VI Atr are both dated to 1008 and are believed to be the products of the council at King’s Enham which took place in that year.[[876]](#footnote-876) V Atr survives fully in two Old English texts (London B.L. Cotton Nero A.i and C.C.C.C. 201), and VI survives fully in an Old English text (London B.L. Cotton Claudius A.iii) as well as a Latin paraphrase (London B.L. Cotton Claudius D.ii). VII Atr survives in multiple copies of the *Quadripartitus* (a twelfth-century Latin translation of pre- and post-conquest legislation) and in one Old English manuscript (C.C.C.C. 201). This code does not include a date of promulgation, but the content suggests a year of Danish invasion wherein Michaelmas fell between Thursday and Sunday. Robertson notes that from this and the absence of any mention of the approaching millenium year, possible dates include 1004-1006, 1009-1011 and 1015.[[877]](#footnote-877) Based on other content concerning the three-day fast stipulated in the code, Keynes and Wormald strongly argue for a date generally agreed now to be 1009.[[878]](#footnote-878) Finally, VIII Atr survives in Old English both fully (C.C.C.C. 201) and as a recension (London B.L. Cotton Nero A.i). This is the only code of Æthelred’s reign which dates itself with unambiguous internal evidence giving the year 1014 for its promulgation.

V-VIII Atr are notably ecclesiastical in their legislative focus and thus stand apart from Ӕthelred’s earlier law codes which are marked by their blunt presentation of laws concerned wholly with the penalties and procedures of secular affairs.[[879]](#footnote-879) The bulk of the legislation which may once have been found in IX and X Atr is lost, leaving only c.1 in IX Atr and c.1 and c.2 in X Atr.[[880]](#footnote-880) Apart from their statements on the locations of the respective assemblies which drew them up (Woodstock for IX Atr and Enham for X Atr), there is little to aid us in establishing the dates of these codes; while these may be referred to briefly below, they do not offer much toward our discussion on Æthelred’s legislation following his exile in 1013. Instead, I will be focussing on the pre-1014 codes V-VII Atr as well as the legislation in VIII Atr issued after the king’s return from Normandy.

Wormald notes that royal initiative in constructing early Western law codes is clearly evident in the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, with most codes outwardly professing to have been the work of individual kings.[[881]](#footnote-881) How great a part the royal hand directly played is of course debatable, but the portrayal of royal participation is partly formed by the person and number used within these codes; here I am particularly concerned with how these portrayals differ before and after Æthelred’s exile. In recognizing the heterogeneous nature of Anglo-Saxon codes, Wormald notes that the codes of Æthelstan present the king in the first person in three of the codes, the third person in two, and the second person in one.[[882]](#footnote-882) That the king may be presented as speaking, spoken of, or spoken to alters the tone of legislative authority conveyed by these codes. Arguably, a first person voice for the king would give greater weight toward the authority of the written code, more strongly suggesting a direct role by the king in its promulgation and also giving some notion of the autocratic nature of government at the time. Use of the third person can significantly alter the authoritative tone, removing the sense of a direct decree from the king and instead relating indirectly what the king is supposed to have said.[[883]](#footnote-883)

While voice may be important in terms of perceived tone, it would be dangerous to consider voice as conclusive evidence of authorship; to ascribe the creation of individual law codes solely to their respective kings is surely faulty. The law codes referred to as V-X Atr have long been held to have been written, if not wholly conceived, by Archbishop Wulfstan of York (1002-1023). Much of the legislation from the later reign of Æthelred II can be found in their full extant forms in collections related to Wulfstan.[[884]](#footnote-884) Dorothy Whitelock discusses key attributes of Wulfstan’s style of writing, noting that the presence of style and vocabulary also used in Wulfstan’s other writings, when found in a work likely composed by one of high standing such as the king’s legislation, are a strong indication of Wulfstan’s authorship.[[885]](#footnote-885) Neil Ker’s identification of Wulfstan’s hand in a number of legal texts has supported the argument for Wulfstan’s authorship of royal legislation, while Patrick Wormald has gone on to argue that Wulfstan’s participation in creating law codes for Ӕthelred and Cnut was indistinct from his role as a religious leader and advisor.[[886]](#footnote-886)

The participation of others in the formation of law codes was not unusual in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Indeed, a quick glance at the preambles for the law codes of two of Æthelred’s predecessors, Edmund and Edgar, strongly suggests that the royal hand of the tenth century, if present at all, was surely guided by others in creating written legislation.

**I Em** Eadmund cyncg gesamnode **micelne sinoð** to Lundenbirig on ða halgan easterlican tid **ægðer ge godcundra hada ge worldcundra**.

King Edmund has convened at London, during the holy season of Easter, a great assembly **both of the ecclesiastical and secular estates**.[[887]](#footnote-887)

**II Em** Eadmund cyning cyð eallum folce, ge yldrum ge gingrum…ðæt **ic** smeade **mid minra witena geðeahte**, **ge god[cund]ra hada ge læwedra**, ærest, hu ic mæhte Cristendomes mest aræran.

I, King Edmund, inform all people, both high and low…that I have been considering, **with the advice of my councillors both ecclesiastical and lay**, first of all how I could best promote Christianity.[[888]](#footnote-888)

**III Em** Haec est institutio quam Eadmundus rex et **episcopi sui** **cum sapientibus suis instituerunt** apud Culintonam de pace et juramento faciendo.

These are the provisions for the preservation of public peace and the swearing of allegiance which have been instituted at Colyton by King Edmund **and his bishops, together with his councillors**.[[889]](#footnote-889)

**II Eg** Đis is seo gerædnes þe Eadgar cyngc **mid his witena geþeahte** gerædde.

This is the ordinance which King Eadgar has enacted, **with the advice of his councillors**…[[890]](#footnote-890)

**IV Eg** Her is geswutelod on þisum gewrite, hu Eadgar cyncg wæs smeagende, hwæt to bote mihte æt þam færcwealme þe his leodscype swyðe drehte 7 wanode, wide gynd his anweald….Đæt is þonne ærest **þæt him þuhte 7 his witum**…

Notification is hereby given in this order, that King Eadgar has been considering what remedy could be found for the plague which has greatly afflicted and reduced his people throughout the length and breadth of his dominion…In the first place, **he and his councillors are of the opinion**…[[891]](#footnote-891)

It should be noted that in each of these codes the king’s counsellors or *witan* are mentioned as helping in the respective codes’ constructions.[[892]](#footnote-892) Mention is specifically made to the dichotomous nature of the king’s counsel in that both lay and ecclesiastical participation was involved in creating the laws of Edmund. Edgar’s laws do not comment on the make-up of the gatherings at which they were issued, though the voice of IV Edgar 4.1 changes to the first person and makes specific mention of the agreement of his archbishop.[[893]](#footnote-893) The point to be made here is that tenth-century rulers of England were accustomed to using and acknowledging the advice of councillors before Æthelred’s reign, and so we should not be surprised to find similar mention of the *witan* in his law codes:

**I Atr** Đis is seo gerædnys **þe Æþelred cining 7 his witan** geræddon, eallon folce to friðes bote, æt Wudestoce on Myrcena lande, æfter Engla lage.

This is the ordinance which **King Æthelred and his councillors** have enacted, at Woodstock in Mercia, for the promotion of public security, wherever English law prevails.[[894]](#footnote-894)

**II Atr** Đis synd ða friðmal 7 ða forword **ðe Æthelred cyng 7 ealle his witan** wið ðone here gedon habbað, ðe Anlaf 7 Iustin 7 Guðmund Stegitan sunu mid wæron.

These are the terms of the truce and the agreement which **King Æthelred and all his councillors** have made with the [Viking] fleet led by Olaf and Justin and Guðmund, the son of Stegita.[[895]](#footnote-895)

**III Atr** Đis syndon þa lága **þe Æthelred cyng 7 his witan** gerædd habbað æt Wánetingc to friðes bóte.

These are the constitutions which **King Æthelred and his councillors** have enacted at Wantage for the promotion of public security.[[896]](#footnote-896)

**V Atr** Đis is seo gerædnes, **þe Engla cyningc [7] ægðer [ge] gehadode ge læwede witan** gecuron 7 geræddon.

This is the ordinance which has been determined upon and enacted **by the king of England and his councillors, both ecclesiastic and lay**.[[897]](#footnote-897)

**VI Atr** Þis syndan þa gerædnessa **þe Engla rædgifan** gecuran 7 gecwædan 7 geornlice lærdan þæt man scolde healdan.

These are the ordinances **which the councillors of England** have decided and agreed upon, earnestly enjoining that they should be observed.[[898]](#footnote-898)

**VII Atr** Hoc instituerunt **Æþelredus rex et sapientes eius** apud Badam.

This is the edict which was drawn up **by King Æthelred and his councillors** at Bath.[[899]](#footnote-899)

The drafter of IV Atr did not mention the origins of the code’s making, but seems to have gone straight into the legislation itself. This code is specific to the city of London, presumably issued sometime between 991 and 1002,[[900]](#footnote-900) and so may or may not have been compiled in the same manner as Æthelred’s other codes. Still, though the creators of the code are not mentioned outright, there are some puzzling clues within the body of the code itself. For instance, c.4 begins with the phrase *et diximus*, implying that some group is working together in drawing up legislation for London. While this might imply a royal ‘we’, there is evidence in the same clause that this code was devised for the king’s consideration rather than by the king himself.[[901]](#footnote-901) Consider the following entry concerning the penalty for breaking the king’s peace:

**IV Atr, 4.2** Si curet amicitiam ipsius porti, **reddat nobis** triginta sol. Emendationis, **si rex hoc concedat nobis**.

If he values the good-will of the town itself, he shall pay us 30 shillings as compensation, if the king will grant us this concession.[[902]](#footnote-902)

Again, the use of the first person plural may indicate that a group of men cooperated in constructing this code independently from the king; the ending of the clause suggests that they then awaited the king’s agreement, or that the laws were individually considered by the king on a case-by-case basis. The next chapter, which deals with various crimes related to making false coins, shifts from the first person to third person voice but still implies that some group of men was responsible for the content of the code, beginning with *Etiam dixerunt…*(Further, they have decided…).[[903]](#footnote-903) In the first clause of this chapter the legislating body in question is again mentioned.

**IV Atr, 5.2** Unde visum est sapientibus omnibus, quod isti tres homines unius rectitudinis essent digni.

It has therefore been determined by the whole council that these three [classes of] men shall incur the same punishment.[[904]](#footnote-904)

Up to this point in IV Atr, one could assume that the code was promulgated by a governing body other than the king, though its decisions were contingent upon the king’s approval as made clear in c. 4.2 above. However, the reader of this code may be justifiably confused by the inclusion of the first person singular voice of the king in cc. 6, 9.2 and 9.3, third person references to the king in 7.1, 7.3 and 8, and the troublesome first person plural ‘we’ in 7, 7.1, 9.1, and 9.3 which may imply the voice of the king, the council, or both.[[905]](#footnote-905) Who, then, composed IV Atr and what level of governmental authority was involved in its creation? It would appear that the code was recognized as lacking validity unless approved by the king, but with the introduction of the king’s voice into the code should we presume that said approval was ultimately granted, or that it was merely anticipated by a ‘first draft’? In all of Æthelred’s codes, there is no better model for exhibiting the perils of identifying authorship through voice, or for demonstrating the impact voice may have on a law code’s authoritative tone, ascription of legislative authority and, through these, validity as a genuine ‘official’ legislative decree. It may also demonstrate the shape of constitutional government in place by 1002, wherein the *witan* had the authority to draft legislation but that this legislation could only be made into fact by the authority of the king.[[906]](#footnote-906)

Clearly IV Atr demands much investigation, but this extends beyond the bounds of the present study’s scope and purpose. All of the law codes attributed to Æthelred’s reign, with the exception of VIII Atr, are understood to have been issued prior to the king’s flight from England in 1013 and so an in-depth examination of these may prove to be overly tangential. However, some brief mention of precedents among Æthelred’s law codes in terms of voice may be helpful in the discussion on VIII Atr which follows. In terms of voice, I-III Atr use the third person solely in referring to the king or his councillors. IV Atr, as discussed above, utilizes multiple forms of voice, changing throughout. V-VII Atr primarily use the third person in mention of the king or the council, but occasionaly use the first person plural in referring to the councillors (e.g. ***we*** *biddað 7 lærað*)[[907]](#footnote-907) or the English nation or army (e.g. *ut Deus omnipotens misericordiam* ***nobis*** *faciat*, and *wið ðam þe* ***us*** *God ælmihtig gemiltsige 7* ***us*** *geunne*)[[908]](#footnote-908). Whereas V and VII Atr use person and number to signify a cooperative effort between king and councillors in drafting legislation, the instances of first and third person plural of VI Atr are used to establish the councillors as solely responsible for its promulgation. This may be significant in our understanding of England’s governance during this period of Ӕthelred’s reign. The king, whose position was defined partly by his right to issue law, is not presented as having had any hand in producing this piece of legislation. The assumption of regnal duties by the *witan* may mark an increase in aristocratic power and independence.

Having looked at the use of person and number in Æthelred’s pre-1014 codes, I will now turn to the voice of VIII Atr. This code is the only one of Æthelred’s codes which includes a date in its preamble, in this case 1014. Thus it would have been issued following his return from Normandy.[[909]](#footnote-909) Nearly all of VIII Atr is written in the third person, beginning with the preamble itself.

**VIII Atr, Preamble**  Þis is an ðara gerædnessa þe Engla cyningc gedihte mid his witena geþeahte.

This is one of the ordinances which the English king drew up with the advice of his councillors.[[910]](#footnote-910)

Here the third person singular is used in recognizing the origins of the code’s making; the use of the third person carries on through the first thirty chapters of the code. Not until c.31 do we find the first use of the first person plural.

**VIII Atr, c.31** Ac we lærað georne 7 luflice biddað, þæt ælces hades men þam life libban þe heom to gebirige.

But we earnestly enjoin and, with all good-will, beg men of every estate to live such a life as befits them.[[911]](#footnote-911)

The use of *we* is echoed in c.31.1, wherein abbots and monks are expressly desired to live as their rule dictates. The first person plural is used again in cc.43 and 44.

**VIII Atr, c.43** Ac uton don swa us þea[r]f is: uton niman us to bisnan þæt ærran worldwitan to ræde geræddon…

But let us do what is our duty, let us take as our example what the secular authorities of old wisely decreed…[[912]](#footnote-912)

**VIII Atr, c.43**.1: 7 utan God lufian innewerdre heortan 7 Godes laga gíman, swa wel swa we betst magon.

And let us love God from our innermost heart and observe his laws to the best of our ability.[[913]](#footnote-913)

**VIII Atr, c.44**: And uton rihtne Cristendom geornlice wurðian…

And let us zealously honour the true Christian religion…[[914]](#footnote-914)

**VIII Atr, 44.1**: And uton ænne cynehlaford holdlice healdan…

And let us loyally support one royal lord…[[915]](#footnote-915)

In the clauses of cc.43 and 44, it seems clear that the subjunctive mood indicates ‘the people’ generally. Presumably this might have been intended to unify the listeners or readers with their legislators, reading much like a sermon delivered to a congregation.[[916]](#footnote-916) Indeed, Bethurum has pointed out that Wulfstan’s homilies conclude fairly consistently with the the phrase *uton don swa us micel þearf is.*[[917]](#footnote-917) The notable similarity between this phrase and the beginning of VIII Atr c.43 suggests that these are, indeed, instances of the ‘homiletic’ or ‘Wulfstanian’ *uton*. It may therefore have seemed an appropriate means of concluding a code which deals primarily with ecclesiastical concerns, even as it suggests the political and social backing of the makers of law and, specifically, the king.

But what should be made of the use of the first person in c.31 and c.31.1? Here it could be argued that the ‘*we’* in question refers to the king along with his councillors, but there is also good reason to suggest that the ‘royal we’ is being used here. Returning again to the preamble, we find that acknowledgment for the creation of VIII Atr differs, however slightly, from all of the previously issued codes of Æthelred’s reign. The preamble for VIII Atr states that it was constructed by *þe Engla cyningc mid his witena geþeahte* (the English king with the advice of his councillors). In each of the preambles which ascribes authorship prior to VIII Atr (i.e., I-III and V-VII Atr, quoted above), we see *witan* given in its nominative plural number and case. This represents both the king and his councillors as the subjects in a cooperative effort to devise legislation. However, the preamble of VIII Atr effectively removes the *witan* from legislative responsibility; while the king remains the subject of the sentence who is drafting the legislation, the *witan* are no longer shown to have a direct hand despite the recognition of their advice. This approach in VIII Atr may be due to Wulfstan’s own stylistic choices and desire to express the royal authority underlying the legislation; his placement of Æthelred as the sole creator of the law places the king more solidly in his re-acquired position as law-maker and promotes Æthelred’s Christian legitimacy by giving him full legislative authority.[[918]](#footnote-918)

There are two third person references to the king which suggest that the code, or chapters of it, are of the king’s making. The first is in chapter 1, wherein the rights of protection for churches are supported by the king.

**VIII Atr, c.1** Þæt is ærest, **þæt he wile** þæt ealle Godes circan beon fulles griðes wurðe.

In the first place, it is his will that all the churches of God be entitled to exercise their right of protection to the full.[[919]](#footnote-919)

It is the king’s will being voiced here, not that of the councillors. There is one other instance in VIII Atr which attributes authorship to the king alone, found in chapter 32.

**VIII Atr, c.32** And **se cyngc beodeð** eallum his gerefan on æghwilcere stowe, þæt ge þam abbodan æt eallum worldneodum beorgan swa ge betst magon, 7 be þam þe **ge willan Godes oððe minne freondscipe habban**, filstan heora wícneran æghwar to rihte, þæt heo sylfe magan þe oftor on mynstrum fæste gewunian 7 regollice libban.

And the king enjoins upon all his reeves in every locality: you shall support the abbots in all their temporal needs as you best can, and if you desire **to have God’s favour and mine**, help their stewards everywhere to obtain their rights, so that they themselves may constantly remain secure in their monasteries and live according to their rule.[[920]](#footnote-920)

Again, the king’s concern is voiced and attributed solely to him without mention of his councillors. The language of this chapter is considerably tempered: nothing is ‘decided’, ‘decreed’, or expressed as the king’s ‘will’. Instead, the king requests the cooperation of his reeves, with no punitive measures for failing to do so. There is, however, a reward for compliance in being a friend to both God and Æthelred, and this may express the Christian legitimacy of the king’s legislative authority in the chapter by pairing the king’s wishes with God’s. In a code so focussed upon ecclesiastical concerns, such a pairing makes quite a bit of sense and reminds readers or listeners that the king is a guardian and enforcer of church rights and responsibilities.

There is still one more reference to the king’s decision-making in VIII Atr, though this acknowledgement of regnal authority is shared with his advisors in a chapter prescribing the uses of tithes to the church.

**VIII Atr, c.6** And be teoðunge **se cyng 7 his witan** habbað gecoren 7 gecweden…

And with regard to tithes, the king and his councillors have decided and agreed…[[921]](#footnote-921)

This is the only reference after the preamble which mentions the king’s councillors, and the only suggestion that they had some definite part to play in the code’s creation. Under the circumstances of Æthelred’s conditional return,[[922]](#footnote-922) and in considering the code’s precedents, it should not be surprising to find some credit given to the king’s council; it is likely that they were more directly involved than is espoused by the written code. What is surprising is that this recognition of the council’s legislative work is found only once in VIII Atr. Looking at previous law codes, the king and his councillors share responsibility for legislating in five separate instances of V Atr,[[923]](#footnote-923) with one reference to the *witan* making decisions independently,[[924]](#footnote-924) but not a single suggestion that the king acted alone. VI Atr fails to mention the king’s hand in legislation, but has five references made specifically to the *witena gerædnes* (decree of the councillors);[[925]](#footnote-925) any sense of cooperative legislative authority, shared by king and council, is omitted. Furthermore, VI Atr c.51 refers to previous monetary penalties enacted by the *wise woroldwitan* (wise secular authorities) for religious offences, and that the money gathered from this should by used ‘in accordance with the direction of the bishops’ (*be biscopa dihte*).[[926]](#footnote-926) Thus the *witan* given so much credit for enacting laws in VI Atr is again recognized in the division of its secular and ecclesiastical parts. Every mention of legislative authority in both the Latin and Old English version of VII Atr is as a cooperative partnership between the king and his councillors. In the Latin version this is expressed seven times in the preamble and individual chapters[[927]](#footnote-927), while the Old English version only alludes to legislative authority once and then in a first person *we* which could refer to either the king, the council, or both.[[928]](#footnote-928) Clear evidence of the king represented as acting of his own accord is absent from all of these documents. Though the king is shown in VIII Atr as sharing his legislative authority with the *witan* in one instance, it is notable that this code is the only piece of legislation from Æthelred’s reign that clearly presents the king as acting alone (apart from IV Atr which, as discussed above, is problematic).

Sole ascription of legislative authority to the king in VIII Atr would seem to set the code of 1014 apart from the remaining corpus of Æthelred’s laws. Is this sufficient cause to consider VIII Atr as a ‘king-centric’ text meant to reinforce the king’s legitimate authority? A look at references to the king within the text may be enlightening. Excluding instances in which legislative authority is being voiced, the word *cyningc* appears fifteen times in VIII Atr,[[929]](#footnote-929) usually in describing the king’s rights and responsibilities, while *cynehlaford* appears once at the conclusion.[[930]](#footnote-930) The word *cyningc* appears only four times in V Atr,[[931]](#footnote-931) and seven times in VI Atr.[[932]](#footnote-932) In the Latin version of VII Atr *rex* appears four times,[[933]](#footnote-933) while no mention of the king is made at all in the Old English VII Atr, V Atr uses *hlaford* twice,[[934]](#footnote-934) and *cynehlaford* once,[[935]](#footnote-935) while VI Atr also uses *cynehlaford* once.[[936]](#footnote-936)

How might we explain these differences in legislative references to the king? To be sure, the lesser number of instances where the king is referred to may be due to differences in content or in length, particularly in the case of VII Atr which only has seven chapters in its extant version. Yet V Atr has thirty-five chapters and VI Atr has fifty-three, and so both are of a size comparable to that of VIII Atr with its forty-four chapters. They also contain similar subject matter; V-VIII Atr are all recognized for focusing on ecclesiastical affairs. With little difference in size and content, it is truly striking how many references to the king are made in VIII Atr in comparison to its predecessors; the effect is a continual reminder of the king’s authority and presence as well as a clear statement on the king’s relationship to the Church.

Further supporting the argument that VIII Atr is unusually emphatic concerning Ӕthelred’s role as king, the code also makes comments on kingship generally. In VIII Atr c.1.1, which deals with acts of homicide in churches, violators are to be pursued and denied atonement by monetary compensation. However, if the murderer should reach a place of inviolable sanctuary (*swa deope friðsocne*), the king himself may spare him by returning the murderer’s right to atone through compensation.[[937]](#footnote-937) This clause is followed by a chapter outlining how the murderer should make amends by paying his own wergeld to the king and to the Church.

**VIII Atr, c.2.1**  Forðam Cristen cyning is Cristes gespelia on Cristenre þeode, and he sceal Cristes abilgðe wrecan swiðe georne.

For a Christian king is Christ’s deputy among Christian people, and he must avenge with the utmost diligence offences against Christ.[[938]](#footnote-938)

This is the first time at which a direct comment on kingship is made in the legislation of Æthelred’s reign. The connection between the king and Christ, and therefore the Church as the earthly body of Christ, is clearly stated, with the king acting as the worldly agent for Christ’s will. While this also burdens the king with added responsibility and, therefore, culpability should he fail to protect the interests of the Church, this statement on the role of Christian kings does much for expressing Æthelred’s Christian legitimacy and his alliance with and support for and from the Church. This clause also justifies royal retribution for treason by the implication that betraying the king equates to betraying Christ, a sentiment that agrees well with statements found in Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi*.[[939]](#footnote-939)

This statement on Christian kings is placed fairly early in the code, being an immediate response to the clause of the first chapter. Forty-two chapters later, the code concludes with the other statement on kings, enjoining the audience to ‘loyally support one royal lord’ (*ænne cynehlaford holdlice healdan*).[[940]](#footnote-940) This sentiment is also expressed in the last chapter of V Atr, and the first chapters of both VI Atr and the Latin VII Atr.[[941]](#footnote-941) As this clause seems to be an injunction repeatedly utilized in Æthelred’s laws, I would not hazard to suggest the formation of a king-based envelope structure as I have in my discussion on Æthelred’s charters, though it may be tempting to do so; placing the lawcode within a framework of kingship would have certainly helped contribute to the sense that king and law were one and the same, and inextricably connected in a mutual partnership of creation and legitimacy. Here I think the common conclusion in these law codes concerning loyalty to the king makes a conscious literary construction meant to emphasize the Christian legitimacy of the king unlikely or coincidental.

There is still one further point concerning VIII Atr which makes it unique among the king’s law codes while also contributing to a theme of royal legitimacy. In three different instances there are references made to Æthelred’s law-making predecessors:

**VIII Atr, c.7** And wite Cristenra manna gehwilc, þæt he his Drihtene his teoþunge, a swa seo sulh þone teoðan æcer gegá, rihtlice gelæste be Godes miltse 7 be þam fullan wite þe Eadgar cyningc gelagode.

And every Christian man, in order to obtain the mercy of God, shall see to it that he duly renders his tithes to his Lord, namely, in every case, the produce of every tenth acre traversed by the plough, or else he shall incur the full penalty which King Edgar instituted by law.[[942]](#footnote-942)

**VIII Atr, c.37** Ac on þam gemotan, þeah rædlice wurðan on namcuðan stowan, æfter Eadgares lifdagum, Cristes lage wanodan 7 cyninges laga litledon.

But in the assemblies since the days of Edgar, though advisedly they have been held in places of note, the laws of Christ have been neglected and the laws of the king disregarded.[[943]](#footnote-943)

**VIII Atr, c.43**  Ac uton don swa us þea[r]f is: uton niman us to bisnan þæt ærran worldwitan to ræde geræddon, Æðelstan 7 Eadmund 7 Eadgar þe nihst wæs, hu hi God weorðodon 7 Godes lage heoldon 7 Godes gafel læstan, þa hwile þe hi leofodon.

But let us do what is our duty, let us take as our example what the secular authorities of old wisely decreed - Æthelstan and Edmund and Edgar, who came last - how they honoured God and kept his law and rendered tribute to him, as long as they lived.[[944]](#footnote-944)

Edgar, whose legislation served as a model for much of Æthelred’s legislation, appears once as an establisher of legal precedent, then as a means of delineating time, and finally grouped with Æthelstan and Edmund in a series of past kings. With the exception of Æthelred’s murdered half-brother Edward the Martyr, who is assigned a feast day in VI Atr,[[945]](#footnote-945) VIII Atr is the only code of Æthelred’s reign which names past kings. Mention of Edgar in c.7 is fairly straightforward; the penalty for insufficient tithing has already been established and will continue to be recognized. Archbishop Wulfstan could just as easily have written down what this penalty entailed, either copying or paraphrasing from whatever documentation he was working from.

However, he chose to refer to Edgar by name. Wulfstan may have been following precedents of invoking Edgar’s name in order to allude back to a ‘golden age’ in England prior to Ӕthelred’s reign.[[946]](#footnote-946) This may also be an instance wherein the reader or listener is being reminded of Æthelred’s genealogy, communicated in order to bolster the king’s right to rule. The second reference to Edgar in c.37 serves as a dividing marker in time, but it does so in terms of good and bad; English government was better during Edgar’s reign but has since ceased to function in accordance with the will of God. But for the inclusion of the king’s laws (*cyninges laga*) being disregarded alongside those of Christ, this chapter would cast a shadow over Æthelred himself; unless the king disregarded his own laws (which is, admittedly, a real possibility), this chapter’s criticism seems to be directed toward the king’s councillors. In c.36 secular councillors (*worldwitan*) are described as having once been wise in their governance, but are rebuked in c.37 for ceasing to do so.[[947]](#footnote-947) The final mention of Æthelred’s ancestry seems to be an entreaty for all to uphold the ecclesiastical legislation presented in VIII Atr; this request may also be directed toward the king. However, based on the language of cc.36 and 37, this would seem to be intended for the benefit of the king’s councillors rather than the king himself. In addition to this potential criticism of the king’s secular officers, it should be noted that while Edgar alone is mentioned in chs. 7 and 37, the inclusion of Æthelstan and Edmund at the end of VIII Atr indicates some desire by the author to again remind the audience of the king’s ancestry. An argument for a theme of royal legitimacy finds support in the inclusion of this abbreviated regnal list.

**4.4.2 The Law Code II Cnut**

Having discussed VIII Atr and its themes of kingship and Christian legitimacy, I would now like to consider one further legislative source pertinent to Æthelred’s return from exile: the ‘lost’ secular code of 1014. In the prologue to VIII Atr, we find the following statement:

Þis is an ðara gerædnessa þe Engla cyningc gedihte mid his witena geþeahte. (This is one of the ordinances which the English king drew up with the advice of his councillors.)[[948]](#footnote-948)

In this extract, *an ðara gerædnessa* implies that VIII Atr is only one of the codes promulgated in 1014.[[949]](#footnote-949) In the case of VIII Atr, the surviving code of 1014 is purely ecclesiastical, and so it may have been accompanied by a second code dealing with secular matters. Dorothy Whitelock noted that the emphasis on ecclesiastical matters in VIII Atr may signify that any missing legislation would have been primarily concerned with secular issues, just as I Cn was the ecclesiastical counterpart to the largely secular II Cn.[[950]](#footnote-950) Patrick Wormald agrees, arguing that the grievances which Æthelred was required to correct upon his return from Normandy, as mentioned in the *ASC* for 1014, would not likely have been confined to ecclesiastical issues.[[951]](#footnote-951) However, no independent secular code of Æthelred dateable to 1014 is now extant.

We may be able to glean some impression of the putative lost secular code of 1014 from the lawcode II Cn, which may have been drafted with the lost code as source material by Archbishop of York Wulfstan.[[952]](#footnote-952) The laws of Cnut are a codification of pre-existing Anglo-Saxon legislation in a comprehensive body of law under the new king. Whitelock has identified III Edgar, II Athelstan, I and IV Atr, the laws of Alfred and Wihtred, and numerous insertions from Wulfstan’s homilies as sources for II Cn[[953]](#footnote-953); indeed, the use and modification of previous works, including his own, are among Whitelock’s reasons for concluding that Wulfstan authored Cnut’s laws.[[954]](#footnote-954) Wormald sees the wide range of material utilized in the laws of Cnut as a refined collection of Wulfstan’s accumulated insights, and the culmination of the archbishop’s programme to reshape the English into a more suitable Christian nation.[[955]](#footnote-955)

Wulfstan’s reliance upon previous work is not always evident in II Cn. In her examination of the sources used in Cnut’s law codes, Dorothy Whitelock noted that legal sources become less clear as II Cn progresses and may be original to Cnut’s code.[[956]](#footnote-956) This argument for originality is based on surviving manuscripts, yet it is possible that these anomalies in II Cn were taken from an earlier source no longer extant such as the theoretical secular counterpart to VIII Atr. Wormald hypothesizes that the lost secular code of 1014 might lie ‘buried without a trace’ in Cnut’s legislation and is perhaps reflected in the appearance of bootless crimes (i.e., those so serious that they can not be answered for with a fine) such as that found in II Cn c.64.[[957]](#footnote-957) Wormald bases this supposition on an earlier argument of Jost regarding Wulfstan’s *HomN* LI and the likelihood that this homily was directed at a legislating assembly.[[958]](#footnote-958) This homily refers to bootless crimes which, prior to II Cn, are not evident in Anglo-Saxon law. If the homily was issued at a legislating assembly, and if it could be dated to 1014, then the argument that bootless crimes were included in a secular code of the same year would bear some strength. They may even have been included in the body of IX Atr, as Wormald also suggests, but this code, badly damaged by fire, survives only as a preamble with two clauses which repeat the first chapters of both V and VI Atr.[[959]](#footnote-959) With so little of IX Atr remaining, and no reliable dating of either *HomN* LI or IX Atr, Wormald concedes that his hypothesis is problematic; any bootless crimes which may have been codfied by law at the same assembly as the homily could have been issued at any date or assembly, resulting in legislation that has not survived in any manuscript. While it is possible that the bootless crimes of II Cn reflect lost secular legislation issued previously, these are so enmeshed in the body of II Cn that this notion is difficult to pursue further without mounting additional speculation upon speculation, a point Wormald acknowledges.[[960]](#footnote-960) The bootless crimes of Wulfstan’s homily may just as easily have been included in his construction of Cnut’s codes for the first time as codified laws.

There is still another possible connection between the lost secular code of 1014 and the laws of Cnut. It has been noted that a certain body of chapters within II Cn (cc.69-83), which I will refer to as the ‘mitigation chapters’ from here forward,[[961]](#footnote-961) may reflect the lost secular code issued by Æthelred in 1014. Wormald makes a series of observations regarding these chapters which he feels indicate strongly some lost text was used as a source: he notes the outsized initials at c.69 of most extant copies, the unique division of the whole section into clauses in MS B, the use of the first person singular usually reserved for an introductory statement, and the introductory tone of the phrase *ðæt is ðonne ærost* (‘that, then, is first’) in c.69.1.[[962]](#footnote-962) Wormald also points out that a third of the entire code’s unattributable clauses are found in the mitigation chapters, and that the tone of these chapters is significantly different in espousing what authorities should do for subjects, rather than what subjects should do for authority.[[963]](#footnote-963) Furthermore, c.69 reads much like a terse prologue, beginning *ðis ðonne se lihtincg* (now this is the mitigation…)[[964]](#footnote-964), also indicative of some form of introduction; II Cn itself starts with a similar phrase.[[965]](#footnote-965) The language of this oddly-placed prologue also suggests that the clauses which follow are intended to make reparations for previous wrongs, which may allude to the abuses which Æthelred was required to correct upon his return from Normandy.

Pauline Stafford has discussed the possibility that the mitigation chapters were the equivalent of a coronation charter of Cnut, perhaps issued previously as a separate document; the importance of such a document would justify its inclusion in Cnut’s massive law code[[966]](#footnote-966), and could explain the nature of the opening language to the chapters. However, Stafford recognizes that this speculation would be dependent upon clear dates for both the coronation of Cnut and the promulgation of his law codes. She also hypothesizes that the mitigation chapters were drawn from a lost secular code of 1014, noting their preoccupation with abuses of lordship and royal power as might be expected in a secular body of Æthelred’s post-exile legislation.[[967]](#footnote-967)

Though the existence of a secular code for 1014 within the body of II Cn is hypothetical, the arguments supporting this are compelling and I would suggest that there is good reason to give II Cn c.69-83 closer examination. If these laws reflect or were drawn from the lost secular code of Æthelred, then they may give evidence as to the abuses which the previously-exiled king was required to address, as well as his concerns as king and lawmaker upon his return from Normandy. In looking at the mitigation chapters, I will first examine them as I did VIII Atr previously, with particular attention to voice as an expression of legislative authority and language as a means of emphasizing a theme of kingship. I will then look at the content of these laws and the legislative themes they present. In doing so, the king’s attention to amending previous abuses and correcting other facets of his government may be considered in respect to his exile and return.

It is possible that the scribe who inserted the mitigation chapters would have adjusted these in order that they might agree with the rest of the code. In terms of voice, for instance, we might expect to find that the voice used for the mitigation chapters would conform to that of the chapters which preceed and follow. We should first consider, then, how the use of personal voice in the mitigation chapters compares with the rest of II Cn as well as VIII Atr. There are five instances of the first person singular being used to assert legislative authority in the mitigation chapters, as follows:

**II Cn, c.69:** Đis ðonne se lihtincg ðe ic wylle eallon folce gebeorgan, ðe hig ær ðyson mid gedrehte wæron ealles to swyðe.

Now this is the mitigation by means of which I desire to protect the general public in cases where, until now, they have been far too greatly oppressed.[[968]](#footnote-968)

**II Cn, c.69.1:** Đæt is ðonne ærost, þæt ic bebeode eallum minan gerefan þæt hig on minon agenan rihtlice tilian 7 me mid ðam feormian, 7 þæt him nan man ne ðearf to feormfultume nan ðincg syllan, butan he sylf wille.

The first provision is: I command all my reeves to provide for me in accordance with the law from my own property and support me thereby, and [declare] that no man need give them anything as purveyance, unless he himself is willing to do so.[[969]](#footnote-969)

**II Cn, c.75:** And ic læte riht, ðeah hwá his agen spere sette to oðres mannes huses duru 7 he ðiderin ærende hæbbe, oððon gyf mon oðer wépn gedreohlice lecge ðær [hi] stille mihton beon, gyf hi moston, 7 hwilc man ðonne þæt wepn gelæcce 7 he hwylcne hearm ðærmid gewyrce, ðonne is þæt riht, þæt se ðe ðonne hearm geworhte, þæt se ðone hearm each gebete.

And I hold it right that if anyone sets his spear at the door of another man’s house, he himself having an errand inside, or if anyone carefully lays any other weapons in a place where they might remain quietly, if they were allowed to, and if anyone then seizes the weapon and works mischief with it, the law shall be, that he who wrought the mischief shall likewise pay compensation for it.[[970]](#footnote-970)

**II Cn, c.76.3:** Ac ic hit forbeode heonon forð eornostlice 7 eac swyðe manega ðincg ðe Gode syndon swyðe laðe.

But I strictly forbid such a thing henceforth, and likewise very many things which are hateful to God.[[971]](#footnote-971)

**II Cn, c.80:** And ic wylle þæt ælc man sy his huntnoðes wyrðe on wuda 7 on felda on his agenan.

And it is my will that every man shall be entitled to hunt in the woods and fields on his own property.[[972]](#footnote-972)

**II Cn, c.82:** And ic wille þæt ælc man beo griðes wyrðe to gemote 7 fram gemote, buton he æbere ðeof beo.

And it is my will that every man shall be entitled to protection in going to and from assemblies, unless he be a notorious thief.[[973]](#footnote-973)

These are the only expressions of legislative authority in the mitigation chapters, with each instance using the first person singular. The rest of the mitigation chapters employ the imperative mood, though it could be presumed that the king’s voice, given in the quotes above, is implied. Regardless, in using the king’s voice in their construction the mitigation chapters, taken as an independent body of laws, ascribe legislative authority to the king alone.

How does the voice of the mitigation chapters fit in with the context of II Cn itself? Is there any evidence that the person of the mitigation chapters was crafted to agree stylistically with the rest of II Cn? There are three instances of the first person singular in II Cn other than those in the mitigation chapters. The first two instances quoted below are from the preamble and first chapter, respectively, of II Cn. The third instance quoted is from the final chapter of II Cn, immediately following the mitigation chapters, which begins the homiletic conclusion to the entire code.

**II Cn, Prologue:** Đis is ðonne seo woruldcunde gerædnysse ðe ic wille, mid minan witenan ræde, þæt man healde ofer eall Englaland.

This is further the secular ordinance which, by the advice of my councillors, I desire should be observed over all England.[[974]](#footnote-974)

**II Cn, c.1:** Þæt is ðonne æryst, þæt ic wylle þæt man rihte lage up arære 7 æghwylce unlage georne afylle, þæt man awéodige 7 awyrtwalie æghwylce unriht, swa man geornost mæge, of ðissum earde 7 arære up Godes riht.

The first provision is, that I desire that justice be promoted and every injustice zealously suppressed, that every illegality be rooted up and eradicated from this land with the utmost diligence, and the law of God promoted.[[975]](#footnote-975)

**II Cn, c.84:** Nu bidde ic georne 7 on Godes naman beode manna gehwylcne, þæt he inweardre heortan gebuga to his Drihtene, 7 oft 7 gelome smeage hwæt him sy to donne 7 hwæt to forganne.

Now I earnestly entreat all men and command them, in the name of God, to submit in their inmost hearts to their lord, and often and frequently consider what they ought to do and what they ought to forgo.[[976]](#footnote-976)

With only three instances of the first person singular outside of the mitigation chapters, it seems, at first glance, unlikely that the legislative authority expressed within the mitigation chapters would have been created or altered for stylistic agreement. However, there are eight occurences of the first person plural outside of the mitigation chapters which may reflect the voice of the king and his advisors. The initial uses of the first person singular in the preamble and c.1 are followed shortly after by instances of the first person plural: *we lærað þæt* (we enjoin)[[977]](#footnote-977), *we forbeodað* (we forbid)[[978]](#footnote-978), and *we beodað* (we enjoin)[[979]](#footnote-979). Following c.4, the use of first person does not appear again until c.20 and c.21 (*we wyllað þæt*)[[980]](#footnote-980), and then again in c.24 (*And us ne ðincð na riht þæt…*)[[981]](#footnote-981). While the first person plural may refer to the king and his councillors, it could also be meant to imply the royal ‘we’.[[982]](#footnote-982) This would strengthen an argument that the first person voice of the mitigation chapters was intended as a means of maintaining stylistic continuity in the code as a whole or that this agreement of voice was already present in the mitigation chapters. The goals of II Cn may have been the same as those of VIII Atr: to establish the royal legitimacy of a king who has taken or reclaimed the English throne under unstable circumstances. Cnut’s position as a conquering king attempting to gain support from his new subjects is not terribly different from Æthelred’s position as an ousted king trying to regain support from former subjects. The legislative authority of the king expressed by the first person may therefore have been native both to the codes of Cnut and the lost secular code of Æthelred, as we find in II Cn and the mitigation chapters.

Between c.24 and c.68, the king is only referred to in the third person, with many of the code’s chapters phrased as simple statements of law without mention of the king or his counsellors. The use of the first person plural appears again, three times, in c.68: *And uton don, swa us ðearf…*(And let us do, as our duty is…); *forðamðe we magon witan fulgeorne…*(Because we may know full well…); *7 þi we sculon medemian…*(And therefore we must make due allowance…).[[983]](#footnote-983) Even if these uses of voice are intended as a ‘homiletic we’ or as a royal ‘we’, there is an important difference between the use of the first person plural in the clauses of c.68 and the previous uses of the first person in II Cn. C.68, rather than using person and number to express legislative authority, attempts to justify the legislation and offers counsel to the legislating body on how best to craft their laws while protecting the weak and ensuring standards of justice. The advisory tone of c.68 gives a far different purpose to its use of the first person than those instances previously mentioned which use the first person to assert legislative authority: instead of expressing authority in promulgating law, the legislators are subservient to their duties as law makers.

Rather than discussing the peculiarities of c.68 further, I would like to simply affirm that II Cn uses voice to assert legislative authority but only does so in seven instances prior to the mitigation chapters: the preamble, c.2-5 and c.20-21. Only the third person or simple imperatives are found in the fifteen chapters separating c.5 and c.20, and forty-eight chapters between c.21 and c.69. The reemergence of the first person singular in c.69, c.75, c.76.3, c.80, and c.82, so long after the previous use of the first person in c.21, sets the mitigation chapters apart from the bulk of II Cn and may support the hypothesis that the mitigation chapters were inserted from another source without adjustment to voice. The retention of the first person singular would then indicate that little may have been done to change or emend these chapters when inserting them in Cnut’s code. Whether these chapters came from an earlier lost code of Æthelred is uncertain, yet the presence of five uses of the first person voice to assert legislative authority in only fifteen chapters may suggest a theme of royal legitimacy similar to that found in VIII Atr, as discussed above.

Looking at the mitigation chapters outside of the context of II Cn, what can be said for their potential relationship with the law codes of Æthelred in terms of person and legislative authority? If the mitigation chapters of II Cn were drawn from a lost secular code of Æthelred, and if these retained an original first person singular voice, then they should be viewed as a unique contribution to Æthelred’s legislative corpus. The only other uses of the first person singular in the legal codes of Æthelred are found in the prologue of the surviving fragment of X Atr,[[984]](#footnote-984) the status and distribution of which is uncertain.[[985]](#footnote-985) It is possible that a missing code of Æthelred dealing with secular concerns may have used the first person singular in order to more strongly assert the authority of the document and of the newly returned exile king; such an approach would be unlikely in the context of ecclesiastical matters, particularly under the authorship of Wulfstan, but could be more freely exercised in a secular code. However, without another secular code from the late period of Æthelred’s reign for comparison, this question of personal voice remains hypothetical. If one purpose of issuing a secular code post-exile was to address the various abuses mentioned by the Chronicler,[[986]](#footnote-986) then using the first person would reflect that personal consideration was made by the king for the entreaties of the country’s leading men. This would have suggested, semi-publicly, that the king took their concerns seriously and sincerely. Furthermore, if the secular code was also intended to deal with the very real military threats to England, then the first person singular might add emphasis to the importance of a body of legislation containing laws dealing with military concerns, such as those which regulate heriots (II Cn cc.70-71 and 78) or participation in the nation’s army (II Cn cc.77 and 79).[[987]](#footnote-987)

The use of the first person pronouns and verbs to express royal legitimacy through legislation therefore links the mitigation chapters with the theme of royal legitimacy in VIII Atr. There may also be a shared theme of kingship as well. There are eight instances of *cyningc* in the text of the mitigation chapters, primarily in regard to fines due to the king.[[988]](#footnote-988) There are thirty-one third person references to the king in the preceding sixty-eight chapters;[[989]](#footnote-989) again, these are mostly in regard to fines due to the king for various offenses. While VIII Atr showed a marked increase in the use of *cynincg* in comparison to Æthelred’s other codes, there seems to be no significant difference in the number of instances in which *cynincg* is used between the mitigation chapters and the remainder of II Cn. The number of references to the king in VIII Atr is notable for being found in an ecclesiastical code of laws, but perhaps such references would not have been so uncommon in secular codes like II Cn or Æthelred’s lost secular code. The repeated use of *cyningc* seen in II Cn, VIII Atr, and the mitigation chapters would indicate that Wulfstan was persistent in reminding his audience of the king’s presence and authority in each of these bodies of law. Just as the use of the first person expresses royal legislative authority in both of these codes, so, too, is the theme of kingship shared by VIII Atr and II Cn as expressed in their choices of vocabulary.

In addition, there are few other thematic links between the ‘lost secular code’ found in II Cn and the legislation of 1014. There are no strong ties made in the mitigation chapters between the king and God or Christ as seen in VIII Atr. Indeed, God is mentioned only twice in the mitigation chapters. In c.75.1, dealing with an unattended spear being used in a crime, the king states that the spear’s owner may clear himself ‘according to the law of God’ (*þæt Godes riht*). [[990]](#footnote-990) Chapter 76.3forbids accusations of children and infants ‘and likewise very many things which are hateful to God’ (*7 eac swyðe manega ðincg ðe Gode syndon swyðe laðe*).[[991]](#footnote-991) Despite these inclusions of God’s interest in human affairs, these clauses do not express Christian legitimacy of the king as seen in VIII Atr. Finally, unlike VIII Atr, there is no mention in the mitigation chapters of the king’s predecessors, either as ancestors or as previous legislators. If any reference to Edgar or other of Ӕthelred’s predecessors had existed in the mitigation chapters previously, they were removed before being included in II Cn. Although they make use of the first person, it would be difficult to argue for an overarching theme of royal legitimacy in the mitigation chapters; they do not contain an unusual number of references to the king in relation to the rest of the code and they lack references to both Christian and dynastic legitimacy. Apart from the use of voice and some links to a theme of kingship through language, the mitigation chapters seem to be as strongly linked to underlying themes of II Cn as they are to VIII Atr.

I would now like to discuss more fully the content of these laws. Following under the hypothesis that these could reflect the lost secular code of Æthelred, we may find some evidence of the abuses mentioned in the chronicle for 1014 which the king was required by the *witan* to correct. The first to be found is in the two clauses of c.69, which state that the king’s reeves should not draw upon foodstuffs for the support of the king’s household beyond what is already the king’s property and that any reeve doing so will forfeit their wergeld to the king.[[992]](#footnote-992) It would seem that the requisitioning of food by the king’s reeves had been a problem beforehand, and may have been seen as an abuse of royal authority.

Other potential abuses may have included the unjust acquisition of property and funds from widows and other surviving family members of deceased persons. C.72 confronts this fairly clearly, ensuring that no one may accuse a dead man of a crime in the hopes of confiscating or claiming property or funds from the accused’s surviving family. This law is found earlier in III Atr c.14,[[993]](#footnote-993) though the entry in II Cn goes a step further by stating that the family is answerable should the accused have been charged prior to dying. Chapter 73 prohibits widows from marrying within a year of their husband’s death but states that they may do as they like afterward. However, clauses to this chapter detail what happens to the widow’s ‘morning-gift’ and property gained through her first husband should they marry sooner than the twelve months allowed; in such a case, said property is given to the first husband’s family and the new husband must pay his own wergeld to the king. The widow loses everything, even if forced into the marriage, unless she willingly leaves the new husband and returns home. A further clause states that a widow should not be ‘hastily consecrated as a nun’, again protecting the property of widows from greedy family members or others. The last clause of c.73 gives a grace period of twelve months for widows to pay the required heriots for their property before they are charged with a fine. In this case, the widow is protected from the king’s reeves who would have collected heriots and fines otherwise. Finally, c.74 states directly that no woman should be forced to marry or be exchanged for money unless funds are willingly given by the suitor. This block of three chapters dealing with widows and surviving family are strikingly Wulfstanian and may represent abuses which Wulfstan was specifically interested in seeing dealt with by Ӕthelred. Earlier legislation authored by Wulfstan (e.g. V Atr c.21 and VI Atr c.26) was similarly concerned with the welfare of widows, and the forcing of widows into marriage is explicity listed among the evils of the English nation in Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*.[[994]](#footnote-994)

The ‘protection of widows’ in these instances would seem to be as much to ensure the rightful ownership of property and to prohibit unscrupulous abuse of a widow’s position in order to acquire her inheritance. A more general prohibition against obstructing or disturbing the transfer of property ownership may be seen in c.81:

**II Cn, c.81:** 7 dryncelean 7 hlafordes rihtgyfu stande æfre unawended.

And there shall never be any interference with bargains successfully concluded or with the legal gifts made by a lord.[[995]](#footnote-995)

It may be that the king or some other lords had interfered with exchanges of goods and property previously, or perhaps even with legal inheritance of heirs, though this is not specifically mentioned. However, the prominance of inheritance and property ownership issues in other of the mitigation chapters supports the notion that c.81 is referring to similar problems.[[996]](#footnote-996) The specific mention of *hlafordes rihtgyfu* implies that someone other than a lord or thegn may be particularly in mind; it is possible that abuse of royal power prior to Ӕthelred’s exile included meddling with exchange of property and inheritance.

There are some inclusions in the mitigation chapters which do not seem to address any expected abuses which may have concerned Ӕthelred’s counsellors. For instance, c.80 permits hunting on one’s property but prohibits hunting on the king’s land.[[997]](#footnote-997) This does not seem like an abuse to be resolved through legislation, but may simply codify a practice already customary for landholders as a symbolic gesture from the king to his landholders. If one wanted to suggest an abuse had been in place here, it would probably have been along the lines of preventing landholders from hunting on their own land so as to make game available to the king and his army. It could also be speculated that the king’s thegns and ealdorman had encroached upon the rights of smaller landholders in this respect, but if this were the case then it seems unlikely to have been an abuse which the *witan* would have felt needed mitigation.

Further, in a remarkable echo of specific-case lawmaking not found in other of Ӕthelred’s law codes and generally not seen since before the reign of Ӕthelstan, c.75 deals with the assignment of guilt in an instance wherein a spear left unattended is used in a crime.[[998]](#footnote-998) While this law is so specific that it is difficult to discern its place among the mitigation chapters, it still rings with the theme of ensuring proper justice to protect the innocent. This theme is continued in the chapter immediately following which deals with transporting stolen goods to one’s home. Rather than specifying the penalty for theft, other than the return of the stolen property to its rightful owner, c.76 emphasizes the protection of those innocents who may dwell within the house.[[999]](#footnote-999) In the first clause, the guilt of the wife is discussed; she is clear of charges unless the stolen goods are placed in her keeping. Interestingly, this clause acknowledges that a wife is unable to prevent her husband from placing stolen property in the home, but fails to give any final statement on her ultimate culpability. Perhaps this point is made in order that an arbiter might appreciate an accused wife’s position and determine her guilt or sentence accordingly. The second and third clause deal with the children of criminals. The second clause states that greedy individuals had treated children, even as young as infants, as being accountable for their parents’ crimes: this is forbidden in the third clause. This may mean that children of criminals were punished or deprived of property or inheritence for the personal gain of those who would receive their forfeited property. Is it possible that this was a practice of Ӕthelred himself prior to his exile, perhaps as a means of further bolstering the royal coffers, or was this law included in the code because the king had permitted the deprivation of family members of criminals by others? In either case, it seems clear that the protection of a criminal’s family, if they are free of guilt, is the primary motivation for c.76 and its clauses: again, Wulfstan’s complaints against the English nation are reflected, in particular his indictment against the accusation of children.[[1000]](#footnote-1000)

Some of the mitigation chapters are clearly not concerned with the correction of previous abuses. There are a number of chapters which are more greatly concerned with the nation’s military. For instance, chapters 70 and 71 offer the first legislative regulations in Anglo-Saxon law on heriots.[[1001]](#footnote-1001) Here lords are permitted to reclaim only the heriot of a man, should he die, leaving the remaining property of the deceased to his surviving family; this is repeated again in c.78 should a man die in battle.[[1002]](#footnote-1002) Further, details specifying the amounts of heriots are given for different positions in society, including earls, king’s thegns, ordinary thegns, thegns among Danes, and those of lower social orders. Nicholas Brooks has argued that this definition of heriots may have been intended to strengthen the military and improve provisions made to English soldiers.[[1003]](#footnote-1003) Chapters 77 and 79 also deal with military concerns, with c.77 threatening forfeiture of property for desertion of the army and c.79 rewarding those who served in the military with continued ownership of their land and the right to name heirs as they so choose.[[1004]](#footnote-1004) These chapters dealing with heriots and participation in the military seem remarkably pragmatic and may reflect a restated if not changing attitude toward England’s military force. Ӕthelred’s exile was directly caused by military failures and disorganization during the latter part of his reign; it would seem fitting for him to approach these problems upon his return from Normandy in 1014.

One final law in the mitigation chapters deserves of mention. Chapter 82 offers peace of mind to ealdormen, thegns and counsellors attending the royal court.

**II Cn, c.82:** And ic wille þæt ælc man beo griðes wyrðe to gemote 7 fram gemote, buton he æbere ðeof beo.

And it is my will that every man shall be entitled to protection in going to and from assemblies, unless he be a notorious thief.[[1005]](#footnote-1005)

This does not seem to have been a problem before Ӕthelred’s exile, though it is certainly possible that such events occurred and either went unrecorded or failed to survive in the extant documentation. However, this clause bears significant relevance in view of the killing of Morcar and Sigeferth, the two brothers murdered by Eadric Streona at the great assembly at Oxford in 1015.[[1006]](#footnote-1006) These murders took place one year after VIII Atr was promulgated; it is possible, then, that the hypothetical secular clause of 1014 was promulgated after the ecclesiastical code of VIII Atr.[[1007]](#footnote-1007) It is also possible that this clause was included in Cnut’s code as a means of casting aspersions upon the previous ruler by reminding those present of the deaths of Morcar and Sigeferth. However, the exclusion of well-known thieves from the king’s protection may have been included here to justify the part played by the king and his chief men; the king’s acquisition of the property of Morcar and Sigeferth afterwards would also have made such a justification convenient at the time.[[1008]](#footnote-1008) This clause does not support a dating of 1014 in any case, at least when considered as among a listing of royal abuses. Unless there were attacks made upon assembly-goers which have gone unrecorded in the extant documents, I would hazard to guess that either the lost secular code of Ӕthelred was not drafted until 1015 or later, or that this particular clause is completely original to II Cn, inspired by Wulfstan’s memory of the murders of Morcar and Sigeferth.

The mitigation chapters end with c.83, which defines the penalty for opposing the king’s law.

**II Cn, c.83:** Se ðe ðas lage wyrde ðe se kyningc hæfð nu ða eallum mannum forgyfen, seo he Denisc sy he Englisc, beo he his weres scyldig wið ðone kyningc. And gyf he hit eft wyrde, gylde twywa his were. And gyf he ðonne swa dyrstig sy þæt he hi ðridde siðe abrece, ðolige ealles ðæs ðe he age.

He who violates the law which the king has now granted to all men, whether he be a Dane or an Englishman, shall forfeit his wergeld to the king. And if he violates it again, he shall pay his wergeld twice over. And if he is so presumptuous as to break it a third time, he shall lose all that he possesses.[[1009]](#footnote-1009)

It is not altogether clear how this chapter of II Cn should be received. Is this a general warning against violators of the code as a whole, or is it specifically intended for those who might attack assembly goers as prohibited in the immediately preceding c.82? Æthelred’s other extant codes do not include clauses decreeing general penalties for defying the king’s law, and most crimes requiring punishment are accompanied by their respective penalties in clauses and sub-clauses. This leads me to suggest that c.83 is more likely to have been intended as a clause of c.82 rather than a sweeping threat concluding the code as a whole, and so does not offer additional content for consideration. The only additional point to be made concerning this chapter is that it is unusual in Æthelred’s legislation to specify rising penalties for repeat offenders. Only c.1 and c.2 of I Atr do this in regard to thieves, as freemen or slaves, respectively; in both instances, the second conviction for theft carries a death sentence.[[1010]](#footnote-1010) If II Cn c.83 is meant to apply to the prohibited attacks upon assembly goers of c.82, then it is interesting to note that repeat offenses for attacking a member of the king’s assembly were foreseen as a potential problem requiring detailed legislation. Is it possible that occurences of this nature were fairly common? If so, then this might cast a different light on Wulfstan’s inclusion of c.82; a lack of safety for attendees of the royal court may well have been a problem needing correction.

Examination of the mitigation chapters from II Cn has been a speculative exercise, based largely on theory and hypothesis. The mitigation chapters may be native to Cnut’s law code, with previous situations and conditions taken into account by its author, Archbishop Wulfstan, when these laws were drafted. They may also stem from another source of legislation other than the probable, if hypothetical, secular code of 1014. Pauline Stafford’s suggestion that the mitigation chapters may represent Cnut’s coronation oath, or at least part of it, is similarly viable. In short, while scholars including Patrick Wormald and Pauline Stafford have noted the unique characteristics of the mitigation chapters for their legislative tone, originality, manuscript format, and the introductory language of c.69, the relationship between the mitigation chapters and a lost secular code of Æthelred can not be confirmed or denied with any certainty. That the prologue to VIII Atr implies a second and probably secular law code was issued upon the king’s return from exile gives us something to look for, yet there is danger in such a search, particularly when making assumptions on what this secular code may have contained or sounded like.

What may be determined are some shared or unique thematic characteristics between the mitigation chapters, the remainder of II Cn, and VIII Atr. In terms of voice and authority, the mitigation chapters use the first person singular to suggest the power of the king as legislator. Though this is done elsewhere in II Cn, in both the singular and plural forms, it is a rare enough occurrence to make an argument for the alteration of voice in the mitigation chapters unlikely; to that extent, the mitigation chapters as they appear in II Cn are probably nearly identical to their appearance in the source from which they were drawn. With five instances of the first person voice in the mitigation chapters, it seems clear that some theme of royal legislative authority may have been intended by Wulfstan while drafting them into law. There is, then, a thematic similarity between the mitigation chapters and VIII Atr in terms of royal authority and legitimacy.

This is a theme which may also be shared with Cnut’s legislation; as a foreign king, Cnut would have had as much need to assert his legitimacy and royal authority as Æthelred would have had as a returned exile.[[1011]](#footnote-1011) If the mitigation chapters were drawn from the lost secular code of Æthelred, and if these chapters reflect the various abuses which the king was meant to rectify upon his return to England, then the first person voice may also have been intended to express the king’s personal comittment to meeting the requirements of those who allowed him to come home. I find this to be more likely than an inclusion by Wulfstan of Æthelred’s previous misdeeds as a means of casting aspersions on Æthelred and his dynasty for the benefit of Cnut, though Stafford has also rightly suggested this as a possibility.[[1012]](#footnote-1012)

This shared theme of kingship may also be seen in Wulfstan’s vocabulary, with thirty-one third person references to the king in the first sixty-eight chapters of II Cn, eight instances within the mitigation chapters, and fifteen times in VIII Atr. This would indicate that Wulfstan was persistent in reminding his audience of the king’s duties, responsibilities and legislative authority in VIII Atr, II Cn and the hypothetical lost secular code from which the mitigation chapters were drawn. The mitigation chapters may lack the elements of Christian and dynastic legitimacy found in VIII Atr, but the theme of kingship seems clearly instilled by the use of the first person and repeated mention of the king in Wulfstan’s vocabulary.

The content of the mitigation chapters reveals three other themes of interest. With thirteen of the fifteen chapters dealing in some respect with property and property rights, the theme of property ownership is clear in this block of legislation. There are also subthemes within this theme of property, including one on the protection of innocents and another on the kingdom’s defenses. In the theme of protecting innocents, Wulfstan’s own feelings on the responsibilities of kings and Christian rule are reflected; innocent family members of convicted criminals are spared the penalties of the guilty, and widows are given some defense against those wishing to obtain their inherited properties.[[1013]](#footnote-1013) The pragmatic theme of national defense can be found in the chapters on heriots, soldiering, and desertion.[[1014]](#footnote-1014)

Identifying these themes may be crucial to understanding the nature of Æthelred’s return from Normandy. If the mitigation chapters reflect not only a lost secular code of Æthelred, but also some of the abuses he had been requested to correct upon his return from exile, then we may consider property issues, oppression and injustice, and a faulty military as primary components of the complaints made against the king. The condition of Æthelred’s pre-1014 reign would seem to have been fraught with weakness and injustice. Pauline Stafford points out that this view of the mitigation chapters makes Æthelred out to be an exploiter of rights of lordship, marrying widows to gain allies and lands, taking lands and inheritances, claiming the property of wives and children in cases of forfeiture, and abusing situations of intestacy.[[1015]](#footnote-1015) Yet Stafford also recognizes that ‘the constant desires of kings to fill their coffers, punish their enemies and reward their friends lie behind all such ‘abuses’’.[[1016]](#footnote-1016) Considering the pressures and expenses of warfare Æthelred experienced during his reign and the seemingly continuous presence of both grasping friends and traitorous enemies within his court, perhaps such abuses of royal authority should not be surprising. In this respect, the probability that a lost secular code of 1014 meant to correct such abuses was the source for the mitigation chapters of II Cn seems all the more likely; its themes of property, justice and military preparation would have been pertinent subjects for consideration after Ӕthelred’s exile. The presence of these themes may also explain the need for Wulfstan’s inclusion of a theme of kingship within the king’s legislation, using person and vocabulary to lend authority to a returned exile king with much to atone for.

**4.5 Æthelred Conclusion**

In this chapter I have examined three bodies of source material concerning the exile and restoration of Ӕthelred II: the *ASC*, the royal charters issued between 1012 and the end of Æthelred’s reign, and the post-exile law codes VIII Atr and II Cn. The *ASC* offers a near-contemporary narrative account of events, while the law codes and charters provide evidence concerning royal responses to the king’s deposition and restoration. By exploring these sources as both historical and literary documents, the underlying circumstances of Ӕthelred’s return from exile are more clearly seen, and the nature of the English kingdom as a united yet fragile polity is revealed, with a constitutional body of government supporting both the royal dynasty and the new nobility of the tenth century.

Examination of the *ASC*  has revealed a fragmented kingdom within a nominally unified nation. The Chronicler’s portrayal of the swift and seemingly non-violent invasion by Swein and the Danish army holds strong, repeated suggestions that loyalties to the English king were weakened by 1013, particularly in the regions of the former Danelaw. That weakened loyalties and subsequent submission to Danish forces were on a regional rather than individual scale is highlighted by expressions concerning the *folc*, *here*, and *ealle Norðhymbre*. Further, the Chronicler’s failure to mention military conflict in both northern and southern localities, excepting London, suggests that failing loyalties to Ӕthelred were a widespread condition, with submission to Swein and betrayal of Ӕthelred being a nationwide phenomenon leading to Ӕthelred’s exile to Normandy in 1013.

The same level of broad agreement by the aristocracy is expressed in the *ASC* entry for 1013 when the *witan* invites Ӕthelred back to England, effectively displaying the nobility’s potential to grant or deny power to the king. The conditions set forth by the *witan* in restoring Ӕthelred indicate that the relationship between king and nobility required a balance of rewards and support which had faltered in the years preceding Swein’s invasion. Ӕthelred’s acceptance of these conditions is accompanied by his own show of authority, granting forgiveness for what he clearly considered to be a betrayal to the throne while requiring a unanimous promise of future loyalty secured by oaths, essentially re-establishing his government based upon the power of words and traditional practice.

The tenuous position of the king is further portrayed by the Chronicler’s account of the continued fragmentation and betrayal which followed his return from exile in 1014. This resulted in the development of greater cries for royal legitimacy in Ӕthelred’s, evident in the crafting of his post-exile charters. The links between proems and superscripts in S932, 933 and 934 are used to voice the Christian legitimacy of the king, expressing Ӕthelred’s rule as being ordained by God in a way not seen in the charters of 1012 and 1013. The proems of the post-exile charters also form an envelope construction with the anathemas, with heavenly rewards and hellish torments framing the king’s will in terms of his position as God’s deputy; this means of emphasizing the king’s legitimacy is also absent in the pre-1014 charters examined. Also found in all three of our post-exile charters is a sub-theme of worldly insignificance, emphasizing the inferiority of material things to heavenly rewards. While also encouraging support for the king as God’s deputy on earth, this subtheme may also have been intended to mollify those among the nobility who had not received sufficient material rewards for their loyalty. Such comments on worldly inferiority may also have been meant to diminish the king’s debt to those who affected his restoration, distance the king from the nobility, and emphasize the king’s piety and relationship with the Church, or some combination of these motives. Inferiority of the material world is alluded to only twice in the charters of 1012 and 1013, and then without the force found in the post-exile charters. Finally, S934 contains a discursive section which justifies the king’s right to reappropriate the lands concerned while also reminding the audience of the king’s position as an exactor of justice and the dangers of defying the king.

The defensive posture of the king is also seen in the witness lists of the post-exile charters. The king’s attestation in S 932 re-establishes the dynastic and Christian legitimacy of his rule, while the use of first person in the witness list of S933 sets the king and ecclesiastics apart from the lay counsellors, emphasizing the king’s relationship with the Church and diminishing the standing of the witnessing ealdormen and thegns. Though these elements of the charter witness lists are new following the king’s exile, there are elements of continuity to be considered as well. Attestations of S933 and 934 suggest that there was no purge of counsellors from royal assemblies after Ӕthelred’s restoration, indicating that England’s body of leading men was relatively unchanged following Swein’s invasion; this may have been due to their continuous loyalty through the crisis or because Ӕthelred had forgiven their betrayals as stated by the Chronicler. Furthermore, the number of names seen in the post-exile witness lists indicates a continued need for aristocratic support in legitimizing the king’s distribution of land and land rights.

The cognizance of the king and his court regarding the fragility of Ӕthelred’s position is further evinced by the themes and literary devices used in his subsequent law codes. This is demonstrated by VIII Atr which ascribes legislative authority to the king throughout, recognizing the advice of the *witan* in the prologue but otherwise giving no recognition to the legislative authority of the king’s councillors as is seen in all previous law codes of the reign. Literary pairing of the king with Christ emphasizes the king’s will as being one with God’s, reinforcing the king’s position as Christ’s deputy on earth and giving Christian legitimacy to his rule. References to the king’s predecessors, namely Edgar, Ӕthelstan, and Edmund, are made for the first time in Ӕthelred’s body of legislation, implying the king’s dynastic legitimacy. Furthermore, references to *cynincg* and *cynehlaford* are made on more occasions in VIII Atr than in any previous lawcode of the reign; also found here are the first direct statements on kingship in the king’s legislation. The evidence from VIII Atr strongly suggests a running theme of kingship, supporting Ӕthelred’s right to rule in ways not seen beforehand.

II Cn, though lacking elements of the king’s Christian or dynastic legitimacy, shares some of the thematic characteristics of VIII Atr. Use of the first person to connote legislative authority to the king and further references to the king within the mitigation chapters support the theme of legislative authority while expressing the king’s personal comittment to meeting the conditions set forth for his return. By tackling matters of property, justice, and national defense, the mitigation chapters reflect the growing material demands of the nobility, and thus suggest Æthelred’s failure to meet these demands prior to his exile. The implications of earlier royal failures and weaknesses are confronted by Wulfstan’s concurrent theme of kingship in the mitigation chapters.

Ӕthelred’s exile and restoration were determined by the actions and needs of an underwhelmed body of nobles whose loyalty was already waning by 1013. This fractured loyalty, which extended beyond mere regional factionalism, resulted from Ӕthelred’s failure to meet the material and defensive needs of England’s leading families, culminating in the expulsion of the king and nationwide submission to Swein. However, elements of late Anglo-Saxon tradition appear to have led to the king’s restoration in 1014 as decided by the *witan* who chose to give Ӕthelred another opportunity to rule them. Their choice of Ӕthelred over Cnut seems to have been driven by their desire to adhere to a system which recognized a ‘natural’, legitimate king; they may have regretted their swift submission to Swein, as suggested by their promise to outlaw Danish kings from England.

The power of the new nobility to grant or deny office to their king reflects elements of early constitutional government in England, making these individuals the primary audience for post-exile charters and law codes. In these royal documents and decrees, the king’s recognition of the nobility’s importance, and his understanding of their desire to adhere to tradition, are evident in the themes of kingship and legitimacy expressed in their content and literary construction. The post-exile documents of Ӕthelred’s reign show repeated attempts to reassert the king’s authority as legislator and executor of justice, ordained by God to serve as his deputy on earth. The attempts made to reconfirm Ӕthelred’s position show an understanding of the fragile nature of late Anglo-Saxon loyalties and the precarious position of a king who, despite his Christian legitimacy, had been forced from his kingdom, returning only under those conditions established by the leading nobility of England.

I have shown how Bede and Asser refer to the divine forces effecting the exiles and restorations of Edwin and Alfred. The hardships of king and country during Æthelred’s reign also have divine explanations, according to contemporary homilists like Wulfstan and Ælfric: England was paying for its sins. Among those sins was the disloyalty and betrayal of their lawful king. Indeed, the Chronicler reveals some sympathy for Æthelred’s suffering and notes his efforts to retain control. However, the king was as culpable as his rebellious nobles: the Chronicler portrays Æthelred, throughout his reign, as ineffective and poorly advised. The king’s lack of control is communicated by the *witan*’s determination of the conditions for his return, further suggesting that Æthelred was considered an unjust king by his leading men. The context presented by the Chronicler helps to clarify the desperation shown by the heightened promotion of legitimacy expressed by Æthelred’s post-exile charters and law codes. Ultimately, the king failed to command or defend his people. The exile experiences of Edwin and Alfred were used to promote those kings as examples of Christian kingship and supporters of unity. In a very different way, Æthelred’s exile also presents the importance of strong leadership and national unity.

**5. Conclusion**

**Royal Exile Studies Reviewed**

This work has examined the representation and ideas of royal exile and restoration in the portrayals of three different Anglo-Saxon kings. I have explored these with the understanding that exile be studied as a condition of enforced eviction from one nation to another, such as the conditions held in our modern definition of ‘refugee’.[[1017]](#footnote-1017) I have also shown that exile can be expressed by interpretative authorial decisions which cast some absences as exilic. The interplay of exile and power, in reality and representation, has underpinned the discussion of each case study. That complexity, and the narrative manipulation of ‘real’ exile alongside narrative choices to emphasise exilic aspects of circumstances that do not seem to be exile in the strictest sense, provide new perspectives for inquiry into familiar and often studied territory: Edwin, Alfred and Æthelred have been the subjects of numerous papers, articles, and books.[[1018]](#footnote-1018) Furthermore, the sources considered above have long been subject to repeated and intensive scrutiny: indeed, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *Vita Ælfredi*, and *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* must be among the most frequently cited works in Anglo-Saxon scholarship. Yet my study has brought new insights, some unexpected, which have expanded upon a number of conversations: changing concepts and portrayals of Christian kingship, divine order, suffering, home and sense of place, and shared identities. In brief, I have shown that a significant discourse of exile may be found in these sources.

I have already provided conclusion for each of the chapters above, but I will briefly recall these here. In his account of Edwin’s reign, Bede emphasized the importance of Edwin’s exile so as to associate the king’s later accomplishments with this time of substantial hardship. Bede’s literary choices situated the king’s exile in a central position thematically and chronologically. Through his presentation of the king’s exile in an analepsis, Bede depicted the story of an earlier time (the period of Edwin’s exile) after first having introduced the king and the Roman mission to the North led by Paulinus. Bede further accentuates the significance of Edwin’s exile by carefully constructing thematic envelope structures based on Rome and kingship.[[1019]](#footnote-1019) Bede was able to draw upon his monastic worldview and biblical scholarship to present Edwin’s story in a way that invites comparisons to figures from the Hebrew Bible. Parallels between Edwin and David, as king and shepherd, not only present Edwin as a king who adheres to an appropriate form of kingship, but also encourages implicit comparisons between the Northumbrian people, the Israelites, and the early Christian Church. These biblical resonances and Bede’s Rome-centred envelope structure encourage a reception of Edwin’s exile experience as a crucial moment leading to the unification of the Northumbrians under the New Covenant of Christ. Edwin’s enigmatic exile story thus serves as a vessel by which Bede communicates ideas of kingship, unity, and orthodoxy. Edwin suffered a genuine exile experience, but Bede’s central positioning of the exile story and the envelope structures surrounding this present the king’s exile as richly symbolic and ennobling for the king, not just humiliating and perilous: Edwin is sanctified by his hardships.

In the second chapter, I demonstrated how Asser similarly used motifs and reminiscences of exile to shape presentations of Alfred and the English. Here again we can see authorial choice at work, choosing to emphasise a theme more than was necessary rather than simply conveying facts. Asser’s interest in exiles and dislocated peoples is borne out by his numerous accounts of foreigners, pilgrims, refugees, and expelled kings. These references form a thematic backdrop to Alfred’s own hardships living on the run in the wildness of Somerset, and help to illustrate bonds between king and kingdom. Asser mirrors the sufferings of the English by his portrayal of Alfred’s suffering and helplessness as an exile in the wilderness. Even if Alfred is not strictly an exile while holed up in an estate, Asser nonetheless evokes the exilic aspects of the experience, and then, because exile and typology are so multivalent and malleable, he also exploits another aspect of exile-typology to cast Alfred as Moses leading the Israelites to safety. Asser’s narrative is carefully crafted, and his use of exilic resonances is subtle and multivalent, as demonstrated for example by his selective adoption and adaptation of entries from the *ASC*. Like Bede’s portrayal of Edwin, Asser chose to promote a view of Alfred as an exemplary Christian king, divinely empowered to rise from the difficulties of itinerancy to reclaim his lawful position.

Asser also presents biblical reminiscences in his portrayal, encouraging his audience to see similarities between Alfred and the West Saxons with their Old Testament counterparts: David, Solomon, Moses and the Israelites. Through these connections Asser, perhaps more strongly than Bede, develops a portrayal of the English as among God’s elect. Contemporary court ideas of election are further evinced by Alfred’s *domboc* and the inclusion of Mosaic Law therein. Asser’s success in casting Alfred’s experience as exilic, and a crucial turning point in the life of the king and the development of his kingdom, may be reflected in the continuing primacy and development of Alfred’s exile story by later chroniclers and historians.[[1020]](#footnote-1020)

Whereas sources concerning Alfred and Edwin demonstrate elements of both real exile and exilic resonance, Æthelred’s commentators and chroniclers depicted his exile without the use of embellishment or excessive description. Indeed, Æthelred’s time in Normandy receives the briefest comment by the Chronicler, who chose instead to assign greater importance to those events and conditions which drove the king overseas and his promise to reconcile these conditions upon his return. No instances of biblical typological parallels are evident here. In contrast to the good examples of Christian unity presented in the stories of Edwin and Alfred, the Chronicler’s portrayal of events leading up to and following Æthelred’s exile demonstrates the regional and political divisiveness of the English and the faltering loyalties of the nobility. The king’s exile to Normandy was the product of foreign invasion and the ready capitulation of important regions and leaders in England. In the Chronicler’s account, exile is not used to transform this series of events into triumphant turning points, but rather to reflect the depth of hopelessness for Æthelred and for English unity.

Furthermore, while Bede and Asser promoted unity or obscured any evidence of divisiveness in their accounts of Edwin and Alfred, the Chronicler of Æthelred’s reign readily shares the conditions placed upon Æthelred’s return by the *witan*, revealing fragmentations of the English while demonstrating a crucial component in how power was negotiated in early eleventh-century England. Through adherence to the strict order of events, the *ASC* entry about the king’s restoration forms, perhaps inadvertently, an envelope around Æthelred’s exile. I have shown that Bede used an envelope to frame Edwin’s exile as an integral event in the formation of a Christian hero; by contrast, Chronicler’s envelope for Æthelred is composed of English losses and betrayals. Here the already complex nature of exile is whittled down to its most basic function: the lowest state of suffering brought on by conditions of the Realpolitik of negotiating power.

I have shown, too, that the Chronicler and composers of offical documents at the close of Æthelred’s reign developed themes and ideas that responded to and explained the king’s expulsion and restoration. The Chronicler’s portrayal of influential characters in Æthelred’s court darkens the reader’s thoughts about the reign; leading advisors such as Archbishop Wulfstan of York are ignored by the Chronicler, who instead chose to comment on the failures and treacheries of Eadric Streona and his family to better explain the king’s exile and the kingdom’s losses. Bede and Asser had no need to explain the causes of exilic suffering in such depth for their own subjects, but they were telling stories about kings who returned in triumph from loss, and so their biographers could shape exile and exilic experience into sanctifying events promoting legitimacy. The Chronicler, writing with the advantage of hindsight, would have had little reason to promote Æthelred’s exile and restoration in a similar vein.

I have argued that the changing character of official documents which followed Æthelred’s restoration demonstrate suitable responses to the king’s loss of power in 1013, and would have encouraged Æthelred’s post-exile audiences to consider the king’s Christian and dynastic legitimacy and so secure loyalty through common ideologies. The Chronicler gives the king his own voice in its account of the negotiated return of Æthelred in 1014; Æthelred presents his own conditions to the *witan* that their loyalty be complete and unanimous. The discourse of exile can be found in other responses assigned to Æthelred in the language of his charters and law codes. Language and literary devices in the post-exile charters demonstrate constructions and styles that are distinctive from those issued prior to Æthelred’s expulsion. The composers of these charters placed greater emphasis on the king’s Christian and dynastic legitimacy through the artful links made between different sections of the charters. Suggestions that the king was closely aligned with the Church are found in the attestations and the ordering of witnesses, with churchmen predominantly higher in the list than secular advisors.

Some similarities may be found between the post-exilic responses in the legislation promulgated in the courts of Æthelred and Alfred. I have discussed how Alfred’s law-code, with its inclusion of Mosaic Law and adoption of important royal forebears, encouraged audience receptions of the king as a leader with both Christian and dynastic claims, while also promoting unity in Alfred’s kingdom by suggesting a typological link between the English and the Israelites of the Hebrew Bible. Wulfstan similarly enunciated Æthelred’s divinely supported right to rule and royal duty as legislator in VIII Atr. There, commentary on kingship and prominent links between the king and Christ are made by Wulfstan. The same promotion of royal power is found in the mitigation chapters of II Cn. If these chapters represent the surviving portion of Æthelred’s post-exile secular law code, as is arguably the case, then they are a response to the conditions put forth by the *witan* at Æthelred’s restoration, and so give further evidence for the roots of aristocratic disloyalty. We see, then, that exile and restoration may alter practices and language of governance in the cases of both Alfred and Æthelred.

**Reality and Symbolic Resonance in Portrayals of Exile Reconsidered**

As I stated in the introduction to this work, there are both real and figurative elements to consider when interpreting the representations and responses of the three kings examined here. I have tried to acknowledge the distinction between symbolic shading or narrative construction and ‘reality’ in each chapter. This distinction is central to my argument and thus invites recapitulation here. Bede’s account and the episode depicted in the Whitby monk’s *Life of Gregory the Great* are the most significant sources for the king’s life and ordeal. Edwin’s exile occurred while a child or young man, and lasted for a considerable length of time. It is likely that he travelled with a fair-sized entourage, suitable to protect and provide for the young ætheling and help him to pursue his claim to the throne. But representations of Edwin’s experience minimize the retinue. Bede’s picture is largely that of a young man fending for himself, seeking protection where he can from other sympathetic royal houses; Bede only mentions a companion to the king once, but does not give extensive details about this individual. Furthermore, Bede tells us little about Edwin’s exile prior to his stay with Rædwald, particularly among the Welsh and Mercians. Here we may see again that Bede chose to direct his readers elsewhere than to the enemy kingdoms of Northumbria; we should recall Bede’s scathing account of Kings Cædwallon and Penda who were responsible for the deaths of both Edwin and his successor, Oswald. It seems that Bede did not wish to associate kings who he would have perceived as bad exemplars with royal houses that provided comfort to the young hero, Edwin. Even Edwin’s relationship with Cwenburh is not voiced in the *HE*; she is referred to as the mother of Edwin’s sons Osfrith and Eadfrith, but Bede does not present her as a wife to Edwin.

I have already discussed how Bede chose some traditions to emphasise over others in his account of Edwin’s exile, particularly in regard to the details of his spirit messenger and the blessing laid upon the king’s head. We should, therefore, be cautious in receiving Bede’s account of Edwin’s experience as a full and accurate record of Edwin’s exile. Instead, Bede selects, shapes, edits, and enhances information in a manner that shapes Edwin’s exile experience into the story that Bede *wants* to tell. Bede trains his narrative focus, as I have demonstrated above, on the metaphysical and symbolic aspects of Edwin’s exile, and so transforms Edwin’s later conversion and successful rule into a larger miracle story, one in which God’s hand is clearly at work. Bede’s decisions construct a highly selective portrayal that may not be fully ‘accurate’; his shaping and omissions are thus all the more revealing and important to our understanding of how Bede and his audience conceived the potential nature of exile to serve as a tranformative experience, as it had been with the Israelites and their kings. Bede demonstrates a view that this was as true for contemporaries as it had been to the Israelites, and contributes to a Christian tradition of closeness with God through social dislocation.

Yet we may also look to Bede’s choices concerning the portrayal of Edwin’s story as having two sides: if exile could serve as a turning point toward greatness, it was also a condition of despair from which to escape. Edwin’s period of exile led, in Bede’s portrayal, to the salvation of the king and his people. In many ways, restoration to his kingdom was accomplished through Edwin’s contact with southern kingdoms, particularly King Rædwald and Edwin’s wife, the Kentish princess Æthelburh. Bede ascribes the king’s spiritual salvation (i.e., his decision to convert) to the mystical vision he experienced during a time of solitary contemplation, outside of Rædwald’s palace, but we should recall that Edwin’s safety was tenuous and his kingdom still held by the rule of a rival family. His acceptance of Christianity and, ultimately, the authority of Bishop Paulinus brought the reward of restoration and later success. For Bede, who had lived through a period of Northumbrian decline and dynastic chaos, Edwin’s tale may have been intended as both inspiration and warning to King Ceolwulf, the dedicatee of the *HE*. Proper Christian kingship and adherence to Church authority may bear rewards, but these can be lost through deviance and neglect, as they were briefly following Edwin’s death. Edwin’s exile story and restoration makes the power of the divine intervention all the grander.

If Bede’s exile story allows a positive tale of correct kingship to inspire and admonish, Asser’s acts likewise to impart lessons for both rulers and subjects. Whereas Edwin’s exile story is concentrated into two chapters, Asser presents a biography that shapes a record of events covering decades of West Saxon history into a national fable of exile and redemption. Again, to consider the importance of actual and figural evidence, I have already discussed at length the ambiguities in viewing Alfred as an exile king. Asser chose not to use explicit exile terminology when refering to the king’s experience living in the wilds of Somerset, but he is equally careful to portray the king’s circumstances in a manner which is very similar to that of suffering exiles and people. There are many reasons to doubt that Alfred was a true exile in the fullest sense of the word, and yet Asser shows his audience a king that was living in hardship, with restricted access to his kingdom, few resources, and loss of subject loyalty. This exilic resonance makes it a sanctifying trial rather than just abjection.

Such exilic shading may be explained by contemporary perceptions of the crucial link between king and kingdom, and Asser gives a number of other royal exile examples which resulted in hardships for both kings and subjects. In this way, Asser’s work may owe a thematic debt toward the earlier history presented by Bede. Bede wrote Edwin’s story in order to contribute to a larger religious history of an entire people who were lost before salvation, and Asser does the same in a work otherwise devoted to the subject of Alfred’s life and reign. Asser wrote during a time of developing concepts of Christian kingship, in England and on the Continent, which were deeply affected by notions of kingship found in the Hebrew Bible. For Asser, exilic aspects of his story were made to demonstrate the bonds between a legitimate ruler and his subjects: king and people both suffer dislocation and hardship for the sins of the kingdom, but obedience to a just Christian king may bring restoration in the face of seemingly incredible odds.

Asser, as I have stated, was not alone in this view of conditions, and here we see royal action taken post-878 to secure the safety and salvation of his people through developments in military and administrative measures, allocation of taxes, and promotion of intellectual and spiritual institutions. Alfred’s promulgation of a law code marks an appropriate gesture toward promoting the king’s royal legitimacy through legislation, but the inclusion of Mosaic Law marks the king as acting in the same tradition as Moses and Old Testament kings. In this perspective, the Anglo-Saxons themselves are the Israelites being led out of Egypt by their Moses. This would appeal to the Christian nature of Alfred’s subjects, both in their view of the king and of themselves. In short, the English people are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to God’s will and may do so by demonstrating loyalty to Alfred, whose own laws accompany Moses’. Whether we see the Anglo-Saxons as being led out of Egypt by Alfred, or view Alfred himself with exilic resonances, the two contrasting tropes of exile add a crucial dimenson to the story, sanctifying both king and people and revealing the urgency of Alfredian reforms.

Æthelred II presents a more problematic state of affairs for both king and kingdom, and the matter of the role of exilic elements is accordingly more complex. There is no doubt that Æthelred was considered a royal exile by the Chronicler, despite the lack of exile language employed to refer to the king. Instead, the Chronicler gives detailed movements of the king and his family out of England and *ofer sæ* to Normandy to define Æthelred’s expulsion into exile. Thus Æthelred’s exile is a real datum, but there is no corresponding embroidery with biblical typology: the Chronicler forgoes that because he does not seek its sanctifying and ennobling effect. The Chronicler reinforces this by recounting the conditionary restoration of the king by the *witan* who, it seems, may have felt responsible for both the king’s removal and restoration. If the Chronicler tries to turn his annals into a cautionary tale, it is addressed to both king and subjects again: kings should be just and rule well, and the people should obey. The *ASC*’snumerous instances of betrayal and disobedience by Æthelred’s leading men demonstrate that the English nation fell to Danish invasionas the result of larger problems than Æthelred’s own character.

The *ASC* entries concerning Æthelred were written after the death of Æthelred and his son, Edmund Ironside, and so were likely composed during the reign of Cnut; this would have influenced the Chronicler’s portrayal of events. If Bede and Asser provide both inspiration and warning through their tales of exile and restoration, the Chronicler offers little inspiration: in his despairing account of Æthelred’s reign, the Chronicler demonstrates the results of a noncompliant aristocracy coupled with ineffective rule, and so chastises survivors of the reign in much the same was as Archbishop Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi* and *Institutes of Polity*. Just as we have seen in the works of Bede and Asser, the Chronicler offers an exile story that is as much to do with the people as with the individual.

All three instances of restoration from royal exile or dislocation were followed by changes to services and governance. For instance, Bede noted the security offered by Edwin’s rule and tells how the king ordered cups to be provided at springs along Northumbrian roadways.[[1021]](#footnote-1021) Alfred’s post-878 modifications to government and society are famous, including attempts to improvement English justice, defense, and law. Æthelred, as I have discussed, also shows some important changes upon restoration, but these are more ideological than real. For instance, his leading of the military rout of Cnut in 1014 and later changes seen in the language of royal documents, including law codes, seem meant to promote the king as more strongly autonomous and proactive. However, these gestures are diminished by the king’s later inactivity, suspicion, and failure.

Æthelred’s exile in Normandy receives very little mention in the *ASC*. Recalling that Æthelred was hosted by the Duke of Normandy, we may wonder if his exile was a time of particularly great hardship, just as Edwin’s and Alfred’s is portrayed to have been. If some among the Anglo-Saxons held a view of exile as a penitential, transformative, or even otherworldly experience of suffering, then perhaps the little-loved Æthelred’s time surrounded by family and supporters in Normandy was ineffectual in bringing any real change for the king or his people, either real or portrayed. Æthelred’s exile is used by the Chronicler, and others, to demonstrate the depths of the Anglo-Saxon state in 1013, and does not participate in the tradition of extolling exile as a turning point leading to greater glories.

**Closing**

Examining the three case studies requires an acknowledgement of some crucial, contrasting variables affecting each king’s exile and restoration. I have already noted how the form and formation of kingdoms differed for the three kings: Edwin ruled over a newly formed Northumbria in an England with a plurality of kingdoms, while Alfred ruled over an expanded Wessex, and Æthelred ruled over a nominally united England. Edwin was therefore able to find protection at the courts of other British and Anglo-Saxon kings in the seventh century, while Alfred was able to gather regional support outside of Wiltshire while hiding in the ‘woods and fen-fastnesses’ of Somerset. English unity of the early eleventh century meant that Æthelred had nowhere to turn for support within England; though he spent some time with his fleet on the Thames and at the Isle of Wight, he ultimately turned to his wife’s family in Normandy for succour.

These differences and the various options afforded to each king’s experience say much about English unification, identity, conceptions of home and abroad, and the changing nature of how royal power was established and perceived in Anglo-Saxon England. I have noted important differences in how these kings achieved restoration. For both Edwin and Alfred, restoration was brought about by military engagement, while Æthelred’s return was affected by political negotiations and promises of reform. As a result of these different means of restoration, portrayals and responses to exile and restoration for each king bear differences and similarities. Narrative accounts of Edwin and Alfred provide details concerning their exile experiences; for Edwin this experience holds metaphysical elements, while Alfred’s brief dislocation is framed as a crucial episode leading to his later accomplishments as king. Typological comparisons are made for both Edwin and Alfred, elevating them to the level of biblical heroes and kings and shaping perceptions of their lives within a spiritual, divine context. Bede’s portrayal of Edwin suggests that the king himself may have been mimicking Old Testament exemplars. Asser similarly portrays Alfred as guided by the examples of kings from the Hebrew Bible; Alfred’s promulgation of a law code that included Mosaic Law supports Asser’s interest in biblical resonances while revealing contemporary mindsets at Alfred’s court regarding election.

The stories of these royal exiles roughly trace the development of England as a nation state: the absorption and loss of smaller kingdoms, renegotiations of power, and responses to changes which shaped the growing sense of national and cultural identity. They also show a persistent conception of divine will present in events of respective reigns, whether favourable or otherwise. By harking back to figures of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, the shared experience of exile helped to bind Anglo-Saxon kings and their subjects to the broader, long-standing traditions of God’s Chosen. Just as Van Gennep and Joseph Campbell have argued broadly, exile may serve as a sanctifying ritual to be overcome, and so stories of royal power regained after powerless came to contribute to a growing discourse of exile in Anglo-Saxon England.

Using an interdisciplinary approach concerned with mentalities and responses to change can broaden our understanding of crucial concepts including exile, home, power, loss, divine order, and kingship, by allowing us to ask new questions of old materials. Such polarities of being provide abundant areas for exploration, and I have found exiled kings to be particularly fruitful studies in this regard. Further, the textual and hermeneutic strategies of our sources can serve as rich subjects for investigation in themselves. I would hope that I have contributed to these discussions, and to the body of scholarship surrounding exile in its diverse manifestations and portrayals. The weight afforded to ideas of loss and hardship in the elegiac poetry of Anglo-Saxon England are similarly reflected and expanded upon in my own study. Examining the exiles and exilic resonances of Edwin, Alfred and Æthelred invites further work into non-royal subjects, particularly exilic representations in hagiographical matter and in describing the movements of people generally.

**Abbreviations**

*ASC* ‘A’ Bately, Janet, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 3: MS A*. Cambridge, 1986.

*ASC* ‘C’ O’Brien O’Keeffe, Katherine, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 5: MS C*. Cambridge, 2001.

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*ASC* ‘E’ Irvine, Susan, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 7: MS E*. Cambridge, 2004.

*ASE Anglo-Saxon England*

*ASN* Dumville, David and Lapidge, Michael, eds. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 17: The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*. Woodbridge, 1984. Pp. 1-108.

Attenborough, *Laws* Attenborough, Frederick. *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*. Reprint of 1922 edition. New York, 1963.

BAR British Archaeological Reports

*BEASE* Lapidge, Michael, et. al. *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford, 2001.

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CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina

*DMLBS* Latham, Ronald and Howlett, David, eds. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*. London, 1975- .

*EDOB* Freedman, David, ed. *Eerdman’s Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, 2000.

EETS Early English Text Society

*EHR English Historical Review*

*EME Early Medieval Europe*

Finberg, *ECWM* Finberg, Herbert. *The Early Charters of the West Midlands*. Second edition. Leicester, 1972.

*GRA* William of Malmesbury. *Gesta Regum Anglorum: the History of the English Kings*. Eds. Roger Mynors, Rodney Thomson, and Michael Winterbottom. Oxford, 1998.

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Hart, *ECNE* Hart, Cyril, ed. *Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*. Leicester, 1975.

*HE* Colgrave, Bertram and Mynors, Roger, eds. *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Reprint of 1969 edition. Oxford, 1972.

*HSC* Johnson South, Ted, ed. *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto: a History of Saint Cuthbert and a Record of his Patrimony*. Anglo-Saxon Texts 3. Woodbridge, 2001.

*IDOB* Buttrick, George and Crim, Keith, eds. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vols. Reprint of 1962 edition. Nashville, 1980.

*JEH* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*

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MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica

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*Sherborne* Charters 5. Oxford, 1988

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*PL* Migne, Jacques P., ed. *Patrologia Latina*. 221 vols. Paris, 1844-1864.

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*Anglo-Saxon Prose*

Swanton, *ASC* Swanton, Michael. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. Revised edition. London, 2000.

*VÆ* Stevenson, William Henry, ed. *Asser’s Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser.* Oxford, 1904.

*VG* Colgrave, Bertram, ed. and trans.. *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*. Reprint of 1968 edition. Cambridge, 1985.

*VSN* Dumville, David and Lapidge, Michael, eds. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 17: The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*. Woodbridge, 1984. Pp. 109-142.

Whitelock, *ASC* Whitelock, Dorothy, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Revised Translation*. London, 1961.

Whitelock, *EHD* Whitelock, Dorothy, ed. *English Historical Documents, c.500-1042*. English Historical Documents 1. London, 1955.

Abbreviations for individual lawcodes are the same as used by Liebermann and refer to his edition, listed above. For the present work, these include: Af, II As, I-IV, I-X Atr, II Cn, II and IV Eg, I-III Em, I and II Ew, and Ine. English translations of lawcodes in this work are cited in Attenborough or Robertson (see abbreviations above).

Biblical citations use the same abbreviation system as found in *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*. Eds. B. Fischer et al.. Fourth edition. Stuttgart, 1994.

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1. These figures consider only kings ruling between 600 and 1066, and do not include sub-kings (e.g. Alhfrith of Deira, c.655-664), rulers of sub-kingdoms absorbed into Mercia (i.e. the Hwicce, Magonsæte, Middle Angles, Lindsey, and Surrey), or kings ruling in Scandinavian controlled regions of England; for an annotated list of known kings and subkings of Anglo-Saxon England, see Keynes, ‘Appendix: Rulers of the English, c.450-1066’, *BEASE*, pp. 500-516. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In previous masters-level work I have considered the adoption of monasticism, hermeticism and pilgrimage to be forms of voluntary exile: W. White, *Aspects and Depictions of Exile in Bede's* Historia Ecclesiastica, University of York MA Dissertation (York, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. King Sigeberht of East Anglia is the only Anglo-Saxon king reputed to have been forced out of voluntary monastic retirement, a tragic if heroic figure for having to fight and die in battle against King Penda of Mercia. (*HE* III.18, pp.266-9). King Ine of Wessex is recalled as a successful military king, expanding the boundaries of Wessex, and is credited with the promulgation of the first known West Saxon law code: *HE* IV.15 and V.7, pp. 380-1 and 472-3; Alf. c.49.9, pp. 46-48; Ine, c. Prol.-c.76, pp. 88-123; B. Yorke, ‘Ine, King of Wessex’, *BEASE*, pp. 251-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *HE* II.12-20, pp. 174-207; Holdsworth, ‘Edwin, King of Northumbria’, *BEASE*, pp. 163-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Æthelstan and his brother Ælfweard were kings of Mercia and Wessex, respectively, but Æthelstan was consecrated king of both after Ælfweard’s death. Keynes, Appendix, *BEASE*, p. 514. See also M. Wood, ‘The Making of King Æthelstan’s Empire: an English Charlemagne?’, in ed. P. Wormald *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 250-272; D. Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 141-171. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. S.Miller, ‘Eric Bloodaxe’, *BEASE*, p. 174; P. Sawyer, ‘The Last Scandinavian Kings of York’, *Northern History* 31 (1995): 39-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A. Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: the Ill-Counselled King* (London, 2004); S. Miller, ‘Æthelred the Unready’, *BEASE*, pp. 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights: Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o\_c\_ref.htm, accessed 26 February 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For recent work in refugee studies, see Gil Loescher, *Protracted Refugee Situations: Political, Human Rights and Security Implications* (Tokyo, 2008); Paul Weis, *The Refugee Convention, 1951: the Travaux Préparatoires Analysed, With a Commentary* (Cambridge, 1995); Jill Rutter, *Refugee Children in the UK* (Maidenhead, 2006); Sandra Lavenex, *The Europeanisation of Refugee Policies: Between Human Rights and Internal Security* (Aldershot, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *HE*, I.12 and I.16, pp. 40-45 and 52-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *VÆ*, c.52, p. 40; Keynes and Lapidge, *Life of Alfred*, p. 83; Whitelock, *ASC* 878, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *HE*, II.12 and III.1, pp. 180-1 and 212-5; P.Holdsworth, ‘Oswald, King of Northumbria’, *BEASE*, pp. 347-8; R. Cramp, ‘The Making of Oswald’s Northumbria’, in eds. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stamford, 1995), pp. 17-32; C. Stancliffe, ‘Oswald Most Holy and Most Victorious King’, in eds. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stamford, 1995), pp. 33-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Felix, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci Auctore Felice*, in ed. B. Colgrave *Felix’s Life of Saint Guthlac*, reprint of 1956 edn (Cambridge, 1985), cc. 40, 49 and 52, pp. 124-7, 148-9 and 164-7; S. Keynes, ‘Æthelbald’, *BEASE*, pp. 11-13; *HE*, V.23, pp. 558-9; P. Wormald, ‘The Age of Bede and Æthelbald’, in ed. J. Campbell *The Anglo-Saxons* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 70-11; B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1997), pp. 111-117. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Life of Saint Guthlac*, c.52, pp. 164-167; *HE*, II.12, pp. 175-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Like Bede, Felix often quotes scripture, especially Psalms, in composing his work. At first prophecy of Æthelbald’s future restoration: Nm 10:35, Ps 27:7, Ps 26:9, Ps 20:12, Ps 89:9, I Io 5:19, Ps 143:4, Ps 72:28. During Æthelbald’s vision of the deceased saint: Ps 80:8, Ps 30:15, Gn 15:1, Dt 31:7, Ps 77:35, and Nm 21:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. E. Van Houts, ‘The Vocabulary of Exile and Outlawry in the North Sea Area around the First Millenium’, in eds. L. Napran and E. Van Houts *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 21-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. T.P. Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law in their Joint Influence*,second printing (Clark, New Jersey, 2003), pp. 152-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Oxford English Dictionary, ‘outlaw’, http://dictionary.oed.com/, accessed 01 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Julius Zupitza, ed., *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar: Text und Varianten* (Berlin, 1966), c. 62, p. 70. See also Van Houts, ‘Vocabulary of Exile’. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Van Houts, ‘Vocabulary of Exile’, pp. 13-17. *DMLBS*, ‘exul’ and ‘exulare’, fasc. III, p. 881; Bosworth-Toller, ‘adrifan’, ‘drifan’, ‘flieme’, ‘flyma’, and ‘utlah’, pp. 7, 213, 293, 295, and 1146. Further Old English vocabulary concerning exile can be found in J. Roberts, C. Kay and L. Grundy, eds., *A Thesaurus of Old English*, vol. 1 of 2 (London, 1995), pp. 572-573; this includes ‘elþeodignes’, ‘nydfara’, ‘nydgenga’, and ‘wræcmon’ among the vocabulary of outlaws and banishment (Bosworth-Toller, pp. 248, 335, 718, 1269-1270). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *ASC* ‘D’, 1014, p. 59. And similarly with Earl Tostig of Northumbria who is *geutlagedan* by the Yorkshire and Northumberland thegns: *ASC* ‘D’, 1065, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. S 1436; it is interesting that the removal of the Archbishop of Canterbury escaped mention in any version of the *ASC*. Stenton, *ASE*, p. 229-30; S.E. Kelly, ‘Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury’, *BEASE*, pp. 491-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *HE*, IV.19 and V.19, pp. 390-395 and 322-327; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 135-138; A. Thacker, ‘Wilfrid, St’, *BEASE*, p. 475. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *HE*, III.7, pp. 234-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Whitelock, *ASC*, 660, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *HE*, III.7, pp. 234-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The Weald is in SE corner of England in the far east portion of Hampshire and into Kent. Privett is in east-central Hampshire. It is interesting that Cynewulf would have allowed Sigeberht to lurk around Hampshire? Areas of wilderness, even within one’s home kingdom, could serve as refuge for exiles. Perhaps Sigeberht’s appearance and death in Privett was a failed return to claim his throne? That said, being stabbed by a swineherd reveals the perils of exile life while also diminishing the circumstances of the failed king’s death; this would have been a good story for the victors to promote. See B. York, ‘The Representation of Early West Saxon History in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, in ed. A. Jorgensen *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages (Turnhout, 2010); on a similar, later treatment of Earl Hákon of Norway, see A. Hamer, “Death in a Pig-Sty’: Snorri’s Version of the Death of Hákon jarl Sigurðarson’, in eds. R. North and T. Hofstra *Latin Culture and Medieval Germanic Europe*, Germania Latina I (Groningen, 1992), pp. 55-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Whitelock, *ASC* 755, p. 30; *ASC* ‘A’, 755, p. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. For instance, for Frankish examples see M. de Jong, ‘Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out? Political Coercion and Honour in the Frankish Kingdoms’ in eds. M de Jong, F. Theuws and C. van Rhijn *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 291-328. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. This story is immediately followed by Cynewulf’s attempt to ‘drive out an atheling who was called Cyneheard’ (*he wolde* ***adræfan*** *anne eþeling se was Cyneheard haten*); Cyneheard was Sigeberht’s brother, and so the *ASC* may be giving evidence of a *witan*-sanctioned dynastic usurpation. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Yorke, ‘The Representation of West Saxon History’, pp. 141-159, esp. pp. 142-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid, pp. 145-146. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Whitelock, *ASC*, 757, p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For discussions on the voluntary nature of royal monasticism, see C. Stancliffe, ‘Kings who Opted Out’, in P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins eds. *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society,* (London, 1983), p. 158; de Jong, ‘Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out?’, pp. 292-4. In agreement with Stancliffe, Barbara Yorke has pointed to the connection between the voluntary abdication of kings and the examples of Sts Patrick and Paul, and the practice of exile as penance in Irish tradition. See B. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain, 600-800* *: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 600-800,* (Harlow, 2006), p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Joanna Story discusses King Eardwulf of Northumbria at some length in her study of exiles who travelled to Charlemagne’s kingdom and spent time with the emperor there. Story argues that there was some form of alliance between Northumbria and Frankia, or at least between Charlemagne and Eardwulf, and that Frankish support enabled Eardwulf’s return to Northumbria in 808. J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Franci, c.750-870* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 145-167. See also D. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Medieval Kingdom* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 196 and 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. For *peregrinatio*, see *DMLBS*, fasc. 10, p. 2201. Here three meanings are identified, including a journey from one’s home environment or exile, reference to life on earth as exile from heaven, and pilgrimage or journey abroad for penance. We also see *peregrinator* as indicative of a ‘traveler’, and *peregrinus* as a descriptive meaning for ‘foreign’, ‘outside one’s native environment’, and ‘strange’. See A.J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, 1983), pp. 16 and 55; also A. Angenendt, ‘Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800’, *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter* (1982): 52-79; C. Stancliffe, ‘Red, white and blue martyrdom’, in eds. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. Dumville *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 21-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain*, p. 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law*, pp. 49-50; J.T. McNeill and H.M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: a translation of the principal libri poenitentiales and selections from related documents* (New York, 1965), Pp 91, 103, 107, 158, 165-6, 252, and 193-4; Frantzen, *BEASE*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. McNeill and Gamer. *Medieval Handbooks of Penance,* p. 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks*, p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. McNeill and Gamer. *Medieval Handbooks,* p. 34; Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law*, pp. 49-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. L. Napran, ‘Marriage and Excommunication: the Comital House of Flanders’, in eds. L. Napran and E. van Houts *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002*, International Medieval Research, 13 (Turnhout, 2004), p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. C. Stancliffe, ‘Red, white and blue martyrdom’, in eds. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. Dumville *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 22-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid, pp 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Van Houts, ‘Vocabulary of Exile’, pp. 13-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See above p. 14; *HE*, III.7, pp. 234-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Chapter Three below, pp. 137-140. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. J-M. Claasen, *Displaced Persons: the Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (London, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Claasen, *Displaced Persons*. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, ed. D.R.S. Bailey (Cambridge, Mass., 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Claasen, *Displaced Persons,* p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Claasen, *Displaced Persons,* pp. 33, 41-2, and 45; Ovid, *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*, ed. A.L. Wheeler, reprint of 1924 edition (Cambridge, Mass, 1939), pp. 82-3, 94-97, 379-380, and 395-396. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Claasen, *Displaced Persons,* pp. 37-38; Virgil, *The Aeneid*, ed. H.R. Fairclough, revised edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Claasen, *Displaced Persons,* p. 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The influence of classical sources on Anglo-Saxon works has been noted in numerous studies, but I would point here to M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006); M. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’ in ed. T. Reuter *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh Centenary Conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 27-48; P. Meyvaert, ‘Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus’, *Speculum*, vol. 71 (1996): 827-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. from 1909 edn. by M.B. Vizedom and G.L. Caffee (London, 1960), pp. 10 and 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage,* p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid*,* p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage,* pp. 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid*,* p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series 17, 3rd edn. (Novato, 2008), p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid*,* pp. 30 and 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid*,* pp. 274 and 276. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid*,* p. 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. This idea is seen in letters by Anglo-Saxon missionaries concerning the process of conversion. See N. Howe, *Migration and Myth Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven, 1989), p. 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. D. Whitelock, ‘The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*’, in eds. C. Fox and B. Dickins *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 261-272, quote at p. 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. M. Brito-Martins, ‘The Concept of *peregrinatio* in Saint Augustine and its Influences’ in eds. L. Napran and E. van Houts *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002*, International Medieval Research 13 (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 83-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Brito-Martins, ‘The Concept of *peregrinatio*’, pp. 84-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. For instance, Bede viewed and promoted religious social exclusion as a means to better prepare men for the priesthood and pastoral outreach; for instance, on Gregory the Great see *HE* II.1 , pp. 124-5; A. Thacker, ‘Bede’s ideal of reform’ in eds. P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society,* (London, 1983), pp. 132-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. D. Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700-1500* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 67-124. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid, pp. 27-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Ibid, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Ibid, pp. 70-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. White, *Aspects and Depictions of Exile*, Appendix, pp. 70-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *The Kings Depart: The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon Royal Exile in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*, Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Gaelic History 8 (Cambridge, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ibid, pp. 6-15; *HE* III.27, p. 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. P. Conner, ‘The Old English Elegy: a Historicization’, in eds. D. Johnson and E. Treharne *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 30-31; A. Klinck, ‘Elegies’, *BEASE*, pp. 164-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. I.M. Hollowell, ‘On the Identity of the Wanderer’, in ed. M. Green *The Old English Elegies: New Essays in Criticism and Research* (Rutherford, 1983), pp. 82-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. R.F. Leslie, ‘The Meaning and Structure of *The Seafarer*’, in ed. M. Green *The Old English Elegies: New Essays in Criticism and Research* (Rutherford, 1983), pp. 96-122. See also S. Greenfield, ‘*Min*, *Sylf*, and Dramatic Voice in *The Wanderer*and *The Seafarer*’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 68, 2 (1969): 212-220; D. Whitelock, ‘The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*’, in ed. C. Fox and B. Dickins *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe: H.M. Chadwick Memorial Studies* (London, 1950), pp. 261-272; J. Pope, ‘Second Thoughts on the Interpretaion of *The Seafarer*’, *ASE* 3 (1974): 75-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Conner, ‘The Old English Elegy’, pp. 30-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Conner, ‘The Old English Elegy’, quote at p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. S. Greenfield, ‘The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of ‘Exile’ in Anglo-Saxon Poetry’, in ed. G.H. Brown *Hero and Exile: The Art of Old English Poetry*, reprint of 1955 article (London, 1989), pp. 125-132; F. Magoun, Jr., ‘The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry’, *Speculum* 28 (1953): 446-467. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Greenfield, ‘The Formulaic Expression’, p. 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. For instance, Greenfield notes that status tends to be expressed in phrases such as *winelēas wrecca* and *earm ān-haga*. He also points out that ‘deprivation’ is often expressed by including the past participle of a word for deprivation with a form of property in the instrumental or dative case, as with *eðle bescierede* or *golde bereafod.* Greenfield, ‘The Formulaic Expression’, pp. 126-7. See also A. Klinck, *The Old English Elegies: a Critical Edition and Genre Study* (Montreal, 1992);M.J. Mora, ‘The Invention of the Old English Elegy’, *English Studies* 76, no. 2 (1995): 129-139; P. Conner, ‘The Old English Elegy: a Historicization’, in eds. D. Johnson and E. Treharne *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 30-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. S. Greenfield, ‘The Theme of Spiritual Exile in *Christ I*’ in Anglo-Saxon Poetry’, in ed. G.H. Brown *Hero*

    *and Exile: The Art of Old English Poetry*, reprint of 1953 article (London, 1989), pp. 197-204. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Ibid, p. 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid, p. 198. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ibid, p. 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Howe, *Migration and Myth Making*, pp. 72-107. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ibid, pp. 75-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Howe, *Migration and Myth Making*, p. 74; see also R. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York, 1966), pp. 31 and 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. For more on Anglo-Saxon interpretations of similar historical patterns to Old Testament peoples, see A. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ann Arbor, 2004), esp. pp. 111-191; G. Tugene, ‘L’histoire “ecclésiastique” du peuple anglais: Réflexions su le particularisme et l’universalisme chez Bѐde’, *Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. 17 (1982): 129-172. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. P. Wormald, ‘*Engla Lond*: the Making of an Allegiance’, in his *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West*, reprinted from 1994 article (London, 1999), pp. 359-382, quote at p. 364; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 33-36 and 204-212. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. H.E.J. Cowdrey, ‘Bede and the ‘English People’’, *The Journal of Religious History* 11, no. 4 (1981): pp. 501-523; S. Foot, ‘The making of *Angelcynn*: English identity before the Norman conquest’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 6 (1996): pp. 25–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. J. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), p. 35-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Ibid, pp. 31-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. N. Howe, *An Angle on the Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England*, The Toller Memorial Lecture 1999, reprint from *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82, no. 1 (Manchester, 2000), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Ibid, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. On the perceptions of physical, liminal boundaries during the Anglo-Saxon period, see K.M. Wickham-Crowley, ‘Living on the *Ecg*: the Mutable Boundaries of Land and Water in Anglo-Saxon Contexts’, in eds. C.A. Lees and G.R. Overing *A Place to Believe in: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park, 2006), pp. 85-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971). [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. I.N. Wood, ‘Kings, Kingdoms and Consent’, in eds. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), pp. 6-29; J.Nelson, ‘Inauguration Rituals’, Ibid, pp. 50-71; P. Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta* and *Verbum Regis*:Legislation and Germanic Kingship’, Ibid, pp. 105-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Ibid, pp. 172-177. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. B. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain c.600-800* (Harlow, 2006), pp. 236-244. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid, p. 239. Also about the ties between king and Church, see M. Kempshall, ‘No Bishop, No King: the Ministerial Ideology of Kingship and Asser’s *Res Gestae Aelfredi*, in eds. R. Gameson and H. Leyser *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 106-127; A. Firey, ‘Blushing Before the Judge and Physician: Moral Arbitration in the Carolingian Empire’, in ed. A. Firey *A New History of Penance*, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 14 (Leiden, 2008), pp. 173-200; M. de Jong, ‘The Empire as *Ecclesia*: Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical *Historia* for Rulers’, in eds. Y.Hen and M. Innes *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 191-226. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. P. Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings: Peace, Power, and the Early Medieval Political Imagination* (Oxford, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. A similar discussion of kingship through a ‘lens’ is found in Mayke de Jong’s assessment of the restoration of the deposed Louis the Pious in 833; de Jong uses religious concepts of humility and penance to consider the constructs of power and governance in ninth-century Frankish empire. M. de Jong, ‘Power and Humility in Carolingian Society: the Public Penance of Louis the Pious’, *EME* 1, no.1 (1992): pp. 29-52; more recently M. de Jong, ‘Admonition at the Court of Louis the Pious’, in eds. R. Le Jan, F. Bougard and R. McKitterick *La culture du haut Moyen* Âge*: une question des lites?* (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 315-340. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. *HE* III.1, pp. 212-213. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. M. Lapidge, ‘Oswald’, *BEASE*, p. 348; P. Holdsworth, ‘Oswiu’, *BEASE*, p. 349; S. Keynes, ‘Rulers of the English, c.450-1066’, *BEASE*, p. 503; *HE* II.5, III and IV.5, pp. 148-150, 212-323 and 348-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. The scarcity of source material concerning Northumbria, particularly from the pre-Viking Age, has been elucidated by David Rollason: no charters or law-codes remain from this period, though a relatively rich body of literature survives comprised of works by monastic authors. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100*, pp. 11-17. See also P.H. Blair, *Northumbria in the Days of Bede* (London, 1976), pp. 26-8 and 38-9. For discussion on Italian and ‘Celtic’ origins of Anglo-Saxon diplomatic and the possibility that Northumbrian charters were being issued by the latter half of the seventh century, see P. Wormald, ‘Bede and the Conversion of England: the Charter Evidence’, in ed. S. Baxter *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 135 and 147-153. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. For Edwin, brief references can be found in Stephen’s *Vita Wilfridi*, the *Calendar of Willibrord*, and the *Annales Cambriae*, as well as a chapter on his mystical exile experience in the anonymous *Vita Gregorii* composed at Whitby, but the most extensive interpretation of the king and his reign is found in Bede’s *HE*. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. *HE* II.9-20, pp. 162-207. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. *HE* III.1-13, pp. 212-255. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. After much consideration of the alternatives and for ease of reading, I have decided to use the phrase ‘exile experience’ throughout this work when referring to the life events of exiled groups and individuals. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. The strength of Oswald’s cult by the time of Bede’s writing, and the impact which Oswald’s baptism at Iona would have on his reinvestment of Christianity in Northumbria later, makes Bede’s paucity of remarks about Oswald’s exile remarkable. As well as relevant entries in the *BEASE* and *HE* noted above, see C. Stancliffe, ‘Oswald, ‘Most Holy and Most Victorious King of the Northumbrians’’, in eds. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, reprinted from 1995 (Stamford, 1996), pp. 34-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Dating these events is a contentious subject due to a lack of clarity and continuity between sources. This is largely due to the entry for 588 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: ‘In this year King Ælle died and Æthelric reigned after him for five years’ (*Her Elle cyning forþferde, 7 Eþelric ricsode æfter him .v. gear*). This is the only source from the Anglo-Saxon period which mentions Æthelric, who is notably absent from Bede’s *HE* as well as from the four regnal lists which David Dumville transcribed and edited in 1976. The omission of Æthelric from the regnal lists, if the man existed at all, may be due to the nature of the lists which seem to trace royal lines through parentage rather than succession; if Æthelric was Edwin’s uncle, for instance, then he may not have made the list. Our main source for sixth- and seventh-century Northumbria, Bede’s *HE*, does not clearly state when the Bernician King Æthelfrith assumed control of Deira. David Rollason’s has offered a ‘simplified genealogical chart’ which suggests that Æthelric may have been a brother or some other relative of Ælle and reigned from 599-604; however, Rollason recognizes that dating is problematic for the sixth-century listings. The editors of the *BEASE* adhere to the chronicler’s entry for 588 as the beginning of Æthelric’s reign, and assign a date of death to five years later (593). The question, then, is whether Æthelfrith of Bernicia took control of Deira in 593, forcing Edwin out of Northumbria from that year on, or whether some other ruler (even the mysterious Æthelric) reigned over Deira until as late as 604, the earliest date at which we have evidence from Bede that Æthelfrith held control over all Northumbria (*HE* I.34). This is important in that if Edwin entered exile in 593 (or even 588), then he would have been as young as seven years at the time; this would suggest that his movements from kingdom to kingdom while in exile were a matter of seeking fosterage rather than simple protection. Alternatively, Edwin may have been as old as eighteen years when he was exiled, a grown man rather than a child and so with different concerns. Bede’s account attributes Edwin’s exile to Æthelfrith’s reign, and the only exile story shared concerns Edwin as a grown man in 616. Because the present discussion concerns Bede’s portrayal, I will keep my focus on the text within the *HE*. *ASC* (A), 588, p. 25; Whitelock, *ASC*, 588, p. 14; Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100*, p. 7; D. Dumville, ‘The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists’, *ASE* vol. 5 (1976): 28-37; S. Keynes, ‘Rulers of the English, c.450-1066’, *BEASE*, p. 503; N. Higham, *The Convert Kings* (Manchester, 1997), p. 145. See also S. Crawford, ‘Children’, *BEASE* pp. 103-4; P. Parkes, ‘Celtic Fosterage: Adoptive Kinship and Clientage in Northwest Europe’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 48 (2006): 359-395. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. *HE* II.9-20, pp. 162-207; B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990), p.77; Higham, *The Convert Kings*, pp. 143-151; Holdsworth, ‘Edwin, King of Northumbria’, *BEASE*, pp. 163-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. *HE* II.9, pp. 162-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. *HE* II.10-11, pp. 166-175. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. *HE* II.12, pp. 174-183. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. *HE* II.13-16, pp. 182-193. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. *HE* II.17-19, pp. 194-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. *HE* II.20, pp. 202-207 [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. For instance, see P. Wormald, ‘Bede, *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Sxon Aristocracy’, in ed. Stephen Baxter *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 60-62; N.J. Higham, *Re-Reading Bede: the Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London, 2006), pp. 62 and 65; W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon*, new edn. (Notre Dame, 2005), pp. 239 and 253; R.A. Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography,* Jarrow Lecture 1975 (Jarrow, 1976); J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People: a Historical Commentary*, reprint of 1988 edn. (Oxford, 1993), p. 50 and 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans.J. E. Lewin (Oxford, 1980), p. 40; J.A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th edn. (Oxford, 1998), p. 321; D. Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (West Sussex, 2009), p. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. C. Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford, 1990), p. 87; G. Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (London, 2003), p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. See n. 6, p. XX above; also Blair, *Northumbria in the Days of Bede*, pp. 38-9; P. Holdsworth, ‘Deira’, *BEASE*, p. 139; *HE* I.34, pp. 116-7 and II.12, pp. 176-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. *HE* II.9, pp. 162-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. *HE* II.9, pp. 166-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. *HE* II.9,pp. 166-7. Bold face added by myself in this and all other extracts which follow. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Albert Blaise has identified that the use of the word *spiritus* in different forms of public Christian worship can include meanings of ‘breath’, ‘word’, ‘wind’, ‘essence’, or ‘ghost’ (as in Holy Ghost/*spiritus sancti*). A. Blaise, *Le Vocabulaire Latin des Principaux Thèmes Liturgiques* (Turnhout, 1966), §18, §217, §220, and §273, pp. 133-4, 358-9, 363-4, and 418-9. Bede does not suggest that Paulinus was ‘told’ by someone familiar with the king’s past experiences. Instead, Bede shapes Paulinus’ learning by the addition of *in spiritus* and so implies that Paulinus learned of Edwin’s exile story through the word of God, or through prayer to the Holy Ghost. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. *HE* II.12, pp. 176-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Bede, *Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis usque ad nativitatem Isaac et eiectionem Ismahelis adnotationum*, ed. C.W. Jones, *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II: Opera Exegetica*, CCSL vol. 118 A (Turnhout, 1967). [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. There has been a fair amount of discussion on the different scriptural sources Bede used while composing his own work. This discussion has primarily concerned Bede’s adherence to the Latin Vulgate found in the *Codex Amiatinus*, which was produced at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow along with two sister pandects during the abbacy of Ceolfrith (689-716).It is clear that Bede did not restrict himself to one source of scripture, or favour Jerome’s Vulgate over Old Latin versions preserved in the works of other Church fathers, such as Augustine and Ambrose. This can make a study of Bede’s scriptural borrowings complicated; Marsden has suggested that a complete analysis of Bede’s scriptural sources is yet to be completed. Fortunately, the biblical extracts and analysis in the present work are unaffected by Bede’s occasional use of Old Latin sources. For simplicity, all scriptural quotations are thus drawn from *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, eds. B. Fischer et al., 4th edn (Stuttgart, 1994). English translations are from *Douay-Rheims Bible*, trans. R. Challoner, reprint of 1749-52 revisions (London, 2005). See also R. Marsden, ‘*Manus Bedae*: Bede’s Contribution to Ceolfrith’s Bibles’, *ASE* 27 (1998): 65-85, esp. 66-72; R. Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 15 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 98-106; P. Meyvaert, ‘Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus’, *Speculum*, vol. 71 (1996): 827-883. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. St. Columbanus, *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* B.1, in ed. L. Bieler *The Irish Penitentials*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, vol. 5 (Dublin, 1963), pp. 98-9. Originally composed at Bobbio, extant copies from the ninth or tenth century are now held at Turin (Biblioteca Nazionale, G.VII.16 and G.V.38), apparently derived from the same exemplar. Some additions to the penitential seem to have been made *c*. 608, but B.1 is not one of these and may have been penned by the original author; ibid, pp. 5 and 16-17. See also T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘The Penitential of Columbanus’, in eds. M. Lapidge *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, Studies in Celtic History 17 (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 217-239. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. D.C. Benjamin, ‘Cain and Abel’, *EDOB*, pp. 208-9.Bede’s exegetical commentary on Genesis suggests a view of Cain as part of a larger origin story and his exile as a state of removal from God’s presence rather than from a location. For Bede’s account of the episode of Cain and Abel: Bede, *Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis*, IV.1-17, pp. 73-94; Bede, *On Genesis*, ed. and trans. C.B. Kendall, Translated Texts for Historians 48 (Liverpool, 2008), pp. 140-155, esp. 147-154. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Bede’s own authorship of penitential handbooks is discussed in some detail in A. Frantzen, ‘The Penitentials Attributed to Bede’, *Speculum*, vol. 58, no. 3 (1983): 573-597. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate dei: Libri XI-XXII*, eds. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 48 (Turnhout, 1955), pp. 453-454. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Augustine, *City of God*,ed. and trans. P. Levine, vol. 4 of 7, (London, 1966), XV.i, p. 414. An excellent discussion on the Augustinian roots of early medieval pilgrimage may be found in the unpublished MA thesis of Ruth Powell,  *The Expression of the Yearning for Home in the Context of Exile and Pilgrimage in Augustinian Thought, Irish Sources, and Latin and Old English Poetry*, University of York Centre for Medieval Studies (2001-2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. David, although anointed by Samuel while still a child, did not become king until Saul’s death. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Bede includes four books on Genesis and another four books on the First Book of Samuel in his list of completed writings at the end of the *HE*. *HE* V.24, pp. 566-9; : Bede, *Libri Quattuor in Principium Genesis* (cited above); Bede, *In Primam Partem Samuelis Libri IIII,* ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119 (Turnhout, 1962), pp. 5–272. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. *HE* II.12, pp. 176-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. *HE* II.12, pp. 176-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. On heroic ideals and conceptions of death, honour, and *comitatus* in Anglo-Saxon poetics, see S. Greenfield and D. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (London, 1986), pp. 134-205, esp. 134-137 and 159-160. Also see G.N. Garmonsway, ‘Anglo-Saxon Heroic Attitudes’, in eds. J.B. Bessinger and R.P. Creed *Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honour of Francis Peabody Magoun* (London, 1965), pp. 139-146; J. Earl, *Thinking About ‘Beowulf’* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 30-40. See also relevant chapters on kingship and loyalties in P. Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 12 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 3-67 and 409-437. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. The blessing by the right hand is echoed later by Alcuin, who may have used Bede’s narrative about Edwin while composing his own verse history of York. Alcuin, *Versus De Patribus Regibus Et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, ed. P. Godman (Oxford, 1982), pp. 10-25, esp. p. 12; [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. R.D. Miller, ‘Ephraim’, *EDOB*, p. 416; K.L. Younger, Jr., ‘Joshua’, *EDOB*,pp. 737-8; E.M. Good, ‘Joshua son of Nun’, *IDOB*, vol. 2, pp. 995-6; J. Finegan, ‘Ephraim’, *IDOB*, vol. 2, pp. 117-118. On primogeniture in Hebrew law, as well as Joshua’s ascension to the leadership of a united Israel, see J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, reprint of 1972 2nd edn. (London, 1974), pp. 79 and 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Joshua aided Moses in leading Israel out of Egypt, and following Moses’ death led Isreal out of the wilderness on a conquest of the land beyond the Jordan; the military conquests of Joshua and the unification of the Israelites in the thirteenth century B.C.E. are detailed, with differing interpretations, by the books of Judges, Joshua and Numbers. On biblical and archaeological evidence, see Bright, *A History of Israel*, pp. 126-139; W.O.E. Oesterley and T. Robinson, *A History of Israel*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1932), pp. 114-169. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Anon., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave, reprint of 1968 edn. (Cambridge, 1985); P. Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great*, Jarrow Lecture 1964 (Newcastle, 1976); see also comments in R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 2 and 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *VG* c.16, pp. 98-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. On Bede’s reliance on oral tradition with comments on variance from the *VG* see D.P. Kirby, ‘Bede’s Native Sources for the *Historia Ecclesiastica*’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 48 (1965-1966): 342-347. On the *Vita Gregorii* see A. Thacker, ‘Memorialising Gregory the Great: the Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries’, *EME* 7 (1998): 59-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. *VG* c.16, pp. 100-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. *HE* II.1, n.1, pp. 122-3; Kirby, ‘Bede’s Native Sources’, pp. 342-347; Thacker, ‘Memorialising Gregory the Great, pp. 59-84; also Colgrave’s introduction to *VG*, pp. 56-59. On Gregory the Great, the fundamental work is R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Colgrave and Mynors suggest that Bede was able to unify three traditions on Edwin by emphasizing the king’s prolonged decision-making: the assassination attempt in II.9, the agreement to convert by the king’s councillors in II.13, and the exile vision of II.12 being discussed here: *HE* II.12 n.1, pp. 182-3. On other examples of Bede’s selectivity, see Wormald, ‘Bede, *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy’, pp. 60-2; Higham, *Re-Reading Bede*, p. 65; A. Thacker, ‘Bede and History’, in ed. S. De Gregorio *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 188-9; G.H. Brown,  *A Companion to Bede* (Woodbridge, 2009), p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. It is tempting to consider the spirit messenger’s laying of hands upon Edwin as reflecting a royal anointing ceremony; the act in Bede’s account heralds a change in Edwin’s status from exiled ‘prince’ to king with *imperium*. Whilesome rituals or outward signs of dominance probably existed in England to assert royal authority prior to Bede’s writing, there is no evidence for anointing ceremonies in England before 787 and the inception of Ecgferth’s reign over Mercia. At any rate, it is unlikely that Bede was inferring that Edwin had been ‘anointed’ in the later, Christian sense of the ritual. For a fuller discussion on the developing importance of royal anointing in Anglo-Saxon England as well as Merovingian and Carolingian France, see J. Nelson, ‘Inauguration Rituals’ in her *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), pp. 283-305, esp. 285-291. For further discussion on these rituals, see M. Enright, *Iona, Tara, and Soissons:the Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin, 1985).On Bede’s use of biblical analogy, see G. Dahan, *L'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible en Occident mediéval, XIIe-XIVe siècles* (Paris, 1999), pp. 305-6 and 441-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. *HE* II.12, pp. 180-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Barbara Yorke points out that exiled princes would often seek refuge in other provinces or kingdoms, and that the help of the exile’s host could later extend respective areas of influence. B. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain:Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, c.600-800* (Harlow, 2006), p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain*, p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. *DMLBS*, fasc. VIII, p. 2042. On the meaning of *oraculum*,Lewis and Short, *A New Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1894), p. 1274: ‘a divine announcement, an oracle’; ‘a prophetic declaration’; ‘the mercy-seat’, ‘the place in the tabernacle in which the presence of God was manifest’ (Exod. 25:18 and 40:18). Modern translations and scholarship have simplified the meaning to ‘vision’ for Edwin’s story, but the importance Bede places on the divine nature of Edwin’s vision may explain his choice of *oraculum* over *visio*, *imago*, or other ‘vision’ terminology. See Wallace-Hadrill, *Historical Commentary*, p. 71: ‘The political overtones of the story of Edwin’s victory and conversion do not concern Bede whose mind is fixed on an ‘oraculum caeleste’, God’s use of a vision as an aid in the conversion of a king whose earthly power was won as a pagan; or rather, whose pagan victory was as much God’s doing as was his subsequent conversion’. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. *HE* II.12, pp. 180-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. *HE* II.12, pp. 180-1. In the anonymous *Vita Gregori*, the mysterious stranger is said to have been Paulinus himself, but Bede is clear in stating that ‘it was not a man but a spirit who had appeared to him’ (*non hominem esse qui sibi apparuisset sed spiritum*); *VG*, c.16, pp. 100-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. B. Ward, ‘Miracles and History: A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede’, in ed. G. Bonner *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), pp. 72-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, p. 70; Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, pp. 263-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. There is a danger that we might infer from Bede’s use of *imperium* some connection to the Old English term *bretwalda*, and so a brief word should be made here. I avoid the use of the term *bretwalda* throughout the present work. While the term surely meant something to those who used it, we cannot assert for our own purposes the nature of the title. We may assume that a *bretwalda* was viewed as a remarkably powerful king or war leader, but there is no evidence that the title was uniformly recognized by all to whom the term applied or by any subservient bodies or kingdoms. The word *bretwalda* is first found in the brief obituary for King Egbert of Wessex given in the *ASC* annal for 827. The chronicler counts Egbert as the eighth king to be *bretwalda* and then gives Bede’s list of rulers holding *imperium*. This suggests that the chronicler considered *bretwalda* to connote the wielding of military and political authority over other kingdoms in a way similar to Bede’s *imperium*. Barbara Yorke has noted that the term *bretwalda* is commonly used by historians to refer to the type of overlordship wielded by some particularly powerful kings from the late sixth century onward, evident throughout the corpus of modern scholarship concerning Anglo-Saxon kings. To avoid any confusion as to Bede’s own intended meaning, I have adhered to his chosen *imperium* for the present work. Whitelock, *ASC* 827, p. 40; Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, pp. 16 and 157-8; Wallace-Hadrill, *Historical Commentary*, p. 57; H.R. Loyn, *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England, 500-1087*, reprint from 1984 (London, 1991), pp. 24-25; P. Wormald, ‘Bede*,*the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*’, pp. 118–119; S. Fanning, ‘Bede, *Imperium* and the *Bretwaldas*’, *Speculum* 66 (1991): pp. 1-26 .Keynes, ‘Bretwalda’, *BEASE*, p. 74; D. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100*, p. 32.For a discussion on insular use of *imperium* and the later use of *bretwalda*, see Wormald, ‘Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*’, in eds. P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (London, 1983),pp. 106-22, esp. pp. 110-12; J. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, pp. 44-45;also Wallace-Hadrill, *Historical Commentary*, pp. 57-60; and T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Bede, the Irish and the Britons’, *Celtica*, 15 (1983): p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. *HE* II.5, pp. 148-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England,* 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1971), p. 79; see also Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 81. Nicholas Higham has argued that the symbolic importance of sites such as Yeavering, with the implementation of Roman-type features such as an amphitheatre, may reveal that Edwin’s predecessor Æthelfrith was already engaged in a contest for standing with the ‘*imperium*-wielding and Francophile, convert king of Kent’. Higham, *The Convert Kings*, pp. 144-51. Bede credits Æthelfrith with expanding the dominion of the Northumbrian Anglians, and it would seem that Northumbria’s rise to dominance may have begun prior to Edwin’s reign. T. Charles-Edwards, ‘Nations and Kingdoms: a View from Above’, in ed. T. Charles-Edwards *After Rome* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 36-9; Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp. 36-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. *HE* II.9, pp. 162-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. *HE* II.9, pp. 162-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. On Bede’s view of kings ‘assuring temporal Welfare of people’ and success as warriors, see J. McClure, ‘Bede’s Old Testament Kings’, in eds. P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (London, 1983), pp. 91-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. *VG,* pp. 95-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. In his study on the roles and portrayals of early medieval kings as peacekeepers, Paul Kershaw notes the scriptural resonances of Edwin’s own efforts toward extending peace in his kingdom and the significance of his reuniting Northumbria with Christianity and Rome. Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings,* pp. 31-39, esp. pp. 34-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. However, Wallace-Hadrill contends that Bede used kings as literary creations to consider various problems of kingship; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. On *bretwalda* see above, n. 168, p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, pp. 248-250. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. *HE* II.9, pp. 162-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. This is a reflection of Bede’s adherence to Augustine of Hippo’s views on ‘sacred’ history. R.A. Markus submits that Augustine saw all history as affected by providence, ‘But in another sense only ‘sacred history’ tells us what God *really* has done, what meaning events have within the economy of salvation.’ This corresponds well with a history concerning the salvation of Edwin, his Northumbrian subjects, and the English more generally. R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 12-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Higham, *Re-Reading Bede*, pp. 72-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. *HE* II.9, pp. 162-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. *HE* I.29, pp. 104-105; *BEASE,* p. 359. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. *HE* II.9,pp. 164-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. *HE* II.9, pp. 164-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. R. Hill, ‘Bede and the Boors’, in G. Bonner ed. *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. B. Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain*, p. 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. *HE* II.9, pp. 166-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. On kings seeking consent of counsellors, see P.S. Barnwell, ‘Kings, Nobles and Assemblies’, in eds. P.S. Barnwell and M. Mostert *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 19-23; also D.K. Fry, ‘The Art of Bede: Edwin’s Council’, in eds. M.H. King and W.M. Stevens *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*, vol. 1 of 2 (Collegeville, 1979), pp. 191-207. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. *HE* II.13, pp. 182-5; see M. Toswell, ‘Bede’s Sparrow and the Psalter in Anglo-Saxon England’, *American Notes and Queries*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2000): 7-12; Fry, ‘The Art of Bede’, p. 203; Wallace-Hadrill, *Historical Commentary*, pp. 71-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. *HE* II.13, pp. 184-7; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity* *to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn. (London, 1991), p. 26; J. Barrow, ‘How Coifi Pierced Christ’s Side: A Re-Examination of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, II, Chapter 13’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 62, no. 4 (2011): 693-706. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Brown, *A Companion to Bede*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. *HE* II.14, pp. 186-7; Blair, *Northumbria in the Days of Bede*, pp. 107-109 and 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. *HE* II.14, pp. 188-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. On royal support for the Church and the promotion of royal rule based on Gregory the Great’s *Regula Pastoralis*, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 74 and 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. *HE* II.15, pp. 188-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Above, p. 33; *HE* II.12, pp. 180-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. *HE* II.15, pp. 188-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. *HE* II.16, pp. 192-193; Bede substantiates this story by referring to the trustworthy nature of the abbot who related the second-hand account of this event. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. *HE* II.10,pp. 166-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. *HE* II.11,pp. 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. On Bede’s acquisition and transmission of papal letters, see P. Meyvaert, ‘The Registrum of Gregory the Great and Bede’, *Revue Bénédictine*, vol. 80 (1970): 162-166; on preservation and transmission of letters generally, see M. Garrison, “Send More Socks’: on Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters’, in ed. M. Mostert *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 69-99, esp. 73-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. P. Wormald, ‘Bede, *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Aristocrcay’, p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. *HE* V.7 and V.19, pp. 468-73 and 516-17; see also W. Levinson, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (London, 1946), pp. 39-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. R. Ray, ‘Who did Bede Think He Was?’, in ed. S. De Gregorio *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, 2006), pp. 32-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. A. Holder, ‘Christ as Incarnate Wisdom’, in ed. S. De Gregorio *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, 2006), p. 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Kirby, ‘Bede’s Native Sources*’*, p. 352. On textual and palaeographical concerns regarding papal letters in the *HE*, see Meyvaert, ‘The Registrum of Gregory the Great and Bede’, 162-66; and E.A. Lowe, ‘The Script of the Farewell and Date Formulae in Early Papal Documents as Reflected in the Oldest Manuscripts of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*’, *Revue Bénédictine*, 69 (1959): 22-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. *HE* II.10,pp. 168-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. See discussion on *imperium* above, pp. 45-48, and n. 136, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. On continued use of Roman roads, enclosures, systems, and services in seventh-century Northumbria see N. Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1992), pp. 146-149; Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, pp. 35-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. *HE* II.11,pp. 166-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. *HE* II.11, pp. 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. I Cor 7:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. I Corinthians is a letter sent to early Christians in the mid-first century by Paul; Paul’s letter highlights troubles present within the church at Corinth as well as his own difficult position as an apostle: H. Lietzmann, *The Beginnings of the Christian Church*, trans. B. Woolf, reprint of 1953 3rd edn. (London, 1955), pp. 110 and 192-3; on Paul’s letters, also see A.J.M. Wedderburn, *A History of the First Christians* (London, 2004), pp. 8-10 and 142-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. *HE* II.12, pp. 174-177. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. *HE* II.10, pp. 166-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. Lewis and Short, pp. 1132-1133 and 1670-1671. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. *HE* II.16, pp. 192-3: *mulier una cum recens nato paruulo uellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se ledente ualeret*. Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, pp. 31-39. Kershaw points out that this expression of peace is reflective of biblical passages from Ps 71:7-8 and Za 9:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. *HE* II.16, pp. 192-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. A. Crépin, ‘Bede and the Vernacular’, in G. Bonner ed. *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), p. 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. Bede’s comments on the *tufa* of Edwin have led to discussion on the iron ‘standard’ found at the Sutton Hoo ship burial in Suffolk. R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, vol. 2 (London, 1978), pp. 428-9; M. Carver, *Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings?* (London, 1998), pp. 27 and 170; W. Filmer-Sankey, ‘The ‘Roman Emperor’ in the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial’, *Journal of British Archaeology*, vol. 149 (1996), pp. 1-9; M. Henig, *The Art of Roman Britain* (London, 1995), p. 169; M. Enright, *The Sutton Hoo Sceptre and the Roots of Celtic Kingship* (Dublin, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. Æthelburh was the daughter of King Æthelberht and his Frankish wife Bertha; that Æthelburh fled to the Merovingian King Dagobert after Edwin’s death in 633 suggests that she retained personal or familial ties across the English Channel throughout her life. *BEASE*, ‘Æthelberht’, p. 13; *HE* II.20, pp. 204-205; Ó Cróinín, *The Kings Depart*, pp. 2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. See I. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450-751* (London, 1994); C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800* (Oxford, 2005); R. Kaiser, *Das römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich* (Oldenbourg, 2004); W. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. The royal site at Yeavering in Bernicia appears to have included a Roman style amphitheatre, which strengthens the argument that Northumbrian kings were styling themselves upon a Roman inheritence. See B. Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering: an Anglo-British Centre of Early Northumbria* (London, 1977). On the inheritence and transformations of the Roman imperial tradition in early medieval European Christian governance, see P. David King, ‘The Barbarian Kingdoms’, in ed. J.H. Burns *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-1450* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 123-153; of particular interest here is King’s attention to Bede’s comment (II.5) that Æthelberht’s lawcode was composed ‘after the example of the Romans’: ibid, p. 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. *HE* II.17, pp. 194-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. *HE* II.17, 194-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. *HE* II.1, pp. 120-135. Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great*, esp. pp. 2-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. *HE* II.18, pp. 198-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. *HE* II.14, pp. 186-7. On Bede and the elevation of York as a metropolitan see, see also Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 286-9 andHigham, *Re-Reading Bede*, p. 68-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. *HE* II.16, pp. 190-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. *HE* II.17, pp. 194-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. See W. Goffart, ‘Bede’s History in a Harsher Climate’, in ed. S. De Gregorio *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, 2006), pp. 212-3; Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 273-5 and 287-8; D.P. Kirby, *Bede’s* Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: *it’s Contemporary Setting*, Jarrow Lecture 1992 (Jarrow, 1992), pp. 4-5; P. Wormald, ‘Bede and the ‘Church of the English’’, in ed. Stephen Baxter *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Society and its Historian* (Oxford, 2006), p. 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. See *HE* III.25, pp. 294-309. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. *HE* II.19, pp. 198-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. Consider also Bede’s comments in his *Historia Abbatum* concerning the cantor brought from Rome to teach the monks of Wearmouth how to sing *more Romanorum*; C. Plummer, ed., *Baedae Opera Historica I* (1896), pp. 364–387; Ray, ‘Who Did Bede Think He Was?’, p.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. Responses to ten questions of Augustine: *HE* I.27, pp. 78-103; establishment of mission to England: *HE* I.23, pp. 68-73; letters to Augustine, King Æthelberht of Kent, and various bishops: *HE* I.24, 28-31, pp. 70-3 and 102-115; Gregory’s life, II.1, pp. 122-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. This famous story of Gregory walking past the slave markets in Rome presents a number of puns linking ‘Angli’ with ‘angels’, ‘Deiri’ with ‘De ira’, and ‘Ælle’ with ‘Alleluia’; see Wormald, ‘Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the *Gens Anglorum*’, p. 120, and ‘Bede and the ‘Church of the English’, p. 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. Bede is not peculiar in this regard; see A. Thacker, ‘Memorializing Gregory the Great: the Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries’, *EME*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 59-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. *HE* II.17, pp. 194-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. *HE* II.18, pp. 196-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. Wormald, ‘Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the *Gens Anglorum*’, pp. 118-120; Holder, ‘Christ as Incarnate Wisdom’, p. 180; Brown, ‘Bede’s Neglected Commentary’, pp. 123 and 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great*, pp. 16-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. *HE* I.27, pp. 80-83. Bede records this and other responses from Gregory to questions asked by Augustine. Gregorius I, *Libellus responsionum*, in eds. P. Ewald and M. Hartmann *MGH*, *Epistolae* 2, pp. 332-343. See also P. Meyvaert, ‘Bede’s text of the *Libellus Responsionum* of Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury’, in eds. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 15-33 [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. *HE* I.30, pp. 106-109; *Ep*. I.34, *S. Gregorii Magni registrum epistularum*, ed. D. Norberg, CCSL 140 (Turnhout, 1982), p. 48. See also R.A. Markus, ‘Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy’, in ed. G.J. Cumming *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 29-38; F. Spiegel, ‘The *tabernacula* of Gregory the Great’, *ASE*, vol. 36 (2007): pp. 10-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. *HE* II.2, pp. 136-7; II.4, pp. 146-147; II.19, pp. 198-203; III.3, 218-219; III.4, pp. 224-225; III.25, pp. 298-309; IV.2, pp. 332-333; V.15, pp. 504-507; V.18, pp. 514-515; V.21, pp. 532-550; V.22, pp. 554-555; V.23, pp. 560-561; V.24, pp. 566-567. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Medieval History*, p. 103. On Gildas’s link between Old Testament and contemporary rulers, see Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Bede’, pp. 75-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography*, p. 11; *HE* I.15 and I.22, pp. 48-53 and 66-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. A. Thacker, ‘Bede and History’, pp. 173-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. Thacker, ‘Bede and History’, pp. 172-3; also on Bede’s use of Gildas and Eusebius, see A.P. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ann Arbor, 2004), pp. 108-9; and R. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London, 1966), p.70; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica Eusebius Caesariensis secundum translationem quam fecit Rufinus* (e-book publication of ed. T. Mommson *Historia ecclesiastica*, Corpus Berolinense, vol. 9.1 and 9.2, 1903-1908), Brepolis Latin: Library of Latin Texts A (Turnhout, 2010); Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, in eds. W. Arndt and B. Krusch *Gregorii Turonensis Opera*, *MGH, Scriptorum rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. 1, part 1 (Hannover, 1885). [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. Higham, *Re-Reading Bede*, p. 74; McClure, ‘Bede’s Old Testament Kings’, p. 76; also noting Bede’s view of providential events, see Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms,* p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. Brown, *A Companion to Bede* (Woodbridge, 2009), p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. A.C. Charity, *Events and their Afterlife: the Dialectics of Christian Typology in the Bibe and Dante* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 22-23; see also W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, trans. J.A. Baker, (London, 1961), p. 228; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (London, 1962), p. 106; Scheil, *Footsteps of Israel*, pp. 104-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. Thacker, ‘Bede and History’, p. 173; *HE* I.1, pp. 16-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. Bede, *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, vol. 2 of 3, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1896), pp. 392-394; Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Scheil, *Footsteps of Israel*, pp. 105-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. A. Thacker, ‘Bede’s Ideal of Reform’ in eds. P. Wormald et al. *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (London, 1983), p. 143; H.E.J. Cowdrey, ‘Bede and the ‘English People’, *The Journal of Religious History*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1981): 501-523; G. Tugene, *L’image de la nation anglaise dans l’*Histoire Ecclésiastique *de Bѐde le Vénérable* (Strasbourg, 2001), pp. 78-91 and 133-141; G. Tugene, *L’idée de nation chez Bѐde le Vénérable* (Paris, 2001) pp. 75-79, 152-157, 191-197, and 238-247. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. Wormald, ‘Bede and the ‘Church of the English’, pp. 215-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. Brown, *Companion to Bede*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. McClure, ‘Bede’s Old Testament Kings’, p. 94. For discussions on ideas of providence, election, and typology in the modern world, see M. Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne’, in eds. Y. Hen and M. Innes *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 117-122; D. Akenson, *God’s Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (London, 1992); C. O’Brien, *God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988); P. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, 2002);M. Garrison, ‘Divine Election for Nations: a Difficult Rhetoric for Medieval Scholars?’, in Lars Boje Mortensen, ed., *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c.1000-1300)* (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 276-280; Markus, *Saeculum*, pp. 12-16 , 53-56, and 231-232.

     Cowdrey, *Bede and the “English People’*, pp. 507-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. Cowdrey, *Bede and the “English People’*, pp. 507-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. *HE* I.1, pp. 16-17; Cowdrey, *Bede and the ‘English People’*, pp. 509-514, quote on p. 509. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 120-122 and 136-140; see also G. Tugene, ‘L’histoire “ecclésiastique” du peuple anglais: Réflexions su le particularisme et l’universalisme chez Bѐde’, *Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. 17 (1982): 129-172, esp. 142, 147-8 and 151; Tugene, *L’idée d nation chez Bѐde leVénérable*, pp. 75-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. The Britons, notoriously, did not attempt to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons upon their arrival to Britain: *HE* I.22, pp. 68-69; Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 157-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. *diuinitus admoniti prosequebantur*: *HE* II.13, pp. 182-5. See also Highham, *Re-Reading Bede*, p. 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. *inspirante Deo uero*: *HE* II.13, pp. 184-187. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. I Cor 7:14; *HE* II.11, 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. See above, pp. 48-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. Gn 48:13-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. Gn 4:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-181. Dissuading Rædwald from betraying Edwin is part of the agreement made between the spirit messenger and Edwin, although this persuasion is carried out through Rædwald’s queen. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. Gn 4:13-14 and 4:16; also : Bede, *Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis*, II.4.13-14 and II.4.16, pp. 79 and 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. *HE* I.34, pp. 116-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. These two typological connections to Æthelfrith are briefly noted in Higham, *Re-Reading Bede*, p. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. Gn 49:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. I Sm 10:1; Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Bede’, pp. 76-8; Bede’s views on divinely appointed kingship are expressed in his commentary on I Samuel: Bede, *In Primam Partem Samuehelis Libri IIII* , ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 119, part 2 (Turnhold, 1962), pp. 72, 90, 98-9, 102, 226, 244-5, 253, and 270-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. I Sm 16:13; B. Halpern, ‘David’, *EDOB*, pp. 318-322; B.C. Birch, ‘Saul’, *EDOB*,pp. 1170-1171. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. I Sm 16:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. I Sm 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. I Sm 19:9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. McClure, ‘Bede’s Old Testament Kings’, pp. 87 and 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. I Sm 23:12-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. *HE* II.12, pp. 176-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. *HE* II.12, pp. 176-7 and 180-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. I Sm 19:1-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. I Sm 19:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. *HE* II.12, pp. 176-179. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. *HE* II.12, pp. 178-9. This has been quoted already above in the discussion on the analeptic climax, but I have included it again here for convenience. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. II Sm 7:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. II Sm 7:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. We should remember also, in contrast, Bede’s condemnation of the post-Roman Britons who did nothing to evangelize the newly arrived Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the fifth century; *HE* I.22, pp. 66-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. *HE* II.20, pp. 202-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. *HE* III.1, pp. 212-213. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. *HE* II.16, pp. 192-3; Ps 71:7-8; Za 9:10. Also see Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, pp. 34 and 37-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. For concise overviews of Alfred’s reign, see B. Yorke, ‘Alfred’, *BEASE*, pp. 27-28; and P. Wormald, ‘Alfred (848/9-899), King of the West Saxons and of the Anglo-Saxons’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 21/03/2012, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/183?docPos=1. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Bately, Janet, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 3: MS A*. Cambridge, 1986; Stevenson, William Henry, ed. *Asser’s Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser.* Oxford, 1904. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. See Whitelock, *ASC*, pp. xi-xviii; M. Swanton, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, revised edition (London, 2000),xi-xxxv; A. Jorgensen, ‘Introduction: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, in ed. A. Jorgensen *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Brepols, 2010), pp. 1-28; for a discussion on the similarities and differences between the manuscripts and thoughts on lost exemplars of the chronicle see J. Bately, ‘Manuscript Layout and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, reprinted from the *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 70 (1988); S. Keynes, ‘Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, in ed. R. Gameson The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, I: c. 400–1100 (Cambridge: 2011), pp. 537–52. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. R. Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship, and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York, 1998), p. 15; *ASC* ‘A’, pp. lxxiii-lxxiv; C. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, vol. 2 of 2, reprint of 1899 revised edn. (Oxford, 1952), pp. xxxvii-cii, esp. pp. lxxxix and xciv. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xi; *ASC* ‘A’, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xii; *ASC* ‘A’, p. xiii [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, vol.2 of 2, p. lxxxiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. *VÆ*, p. lxxxvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xix; *ASC* ‘A’, pp. lxxxviii-lxxxix. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xix; *ASC* ‘A’, pp. lxxii and lxxxix. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. *ASC* ‘A’, pp. lxxiii-lxxvii. Of particular interest to the discussion below is Bately’s comment on the annal for 878, a year of great importance here as it marks the period of Alfred’s displacement to Somerset. Bately notes that ‘A’ agrees in some ways with ‘B’ and ‘C’ against ‘D’ and ‘E’ for a portion of the entry, and in other ways with ‘D’ and ‘E’ against ‘B’ and ‘C’; in other ways it disagrees with all four other versions but agrees with the *Chronicon* of Ӕthelweard and Asser who also worked from an earlier lost exemplar. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 55; Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 12; *VÆ*, p. xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. There has been some discussion on the dating of Einhard’s work, with a range of dates from c.820 to 835; for a fuller discussion see D. Ganz, ‘Einhard’s Charlemagne: the Characterisation of Greatness’, in ed. J. Story Charlemagne: Empire and Society (Manchester, 2005), pp. 38-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. For this reason, Einhard says that he does not write about Charlemagne’s childhood because it is something he knows little or nothing about: Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c.4, in ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH, SRG (Hanover, 1911), pp. 7-8; translated in P. Dutton, *Charlemagne’s Courtier: the Complete Einhard*, 2nd edn. (Toronto, 1998), p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. J. Campbell, ‘Asser’s Life of Alfred’, in eds. C. Holdsworth and T.P. Wiseman *The Inheritance of Historiography: 350-900* (Exeter, 1986), p. 117; Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 15; *VÆ*, pp. lxxix-lxxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. M. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’ in ed. T. Reuter *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh Centenary Conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 27-48; for Asser’s relationship with the Alfredian corpus, see Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, The Stenton Lecture 1967(Reading, 1968), pp. 9-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. Abels, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 16-18; see also R.H.C. Davis, ‘Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth’, *History* 56 (1971): p. 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. Keynes and Lapidge*, Alfred the Great*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 12; Campbell, ‘Asser’s Life’, pp. 122-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 41; Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, p. 5; M. Schütt, ‘The Literary Form of Asser’s ‘Vita Alfredi’’, *EHR* 72 (1957): 209-220. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. Campbell, ‘Asser’s Life of Alfred’, pp. 122-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. Campbell, ‘Asser’s Life of Alfred’, pp. 127-128. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Keynes, ‘Asser’, *BEASE*, pp. 49-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. *VÆ*, pp. xxxii-xxxiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. *VÆ*, pp. li, liii and liv. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. T. Wright, ‘Some Historical Doubts Relating to the Biographer Asser’, *Archaeologia*, 29 (1842): pp. 192-201. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. V.H. Galbraith, *Historical Research in Medieval England*, Creighton Lecture in History 1949(London, 1951); V.H. Galbraith, ‘Who Wrote Asser’s Life of Alfred’, in V.H. Galbraith *An Introduction to the Study of History* (London, 1964), pp. 88-128. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. A. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 150-151. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. Smyth, *King Alfred*, pp. 151-154; See also Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 268 and 269 n. 1; Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, pp. 9-13; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, esp. pp. 48-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. Smyth, *King Alfred*, pp. 153, 272-302 and 306-314. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. J. Nelson, ‘Waiting for Alfred’, *EME* 7, no. 1 (1998): pp. 115-124. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Smyth, *King Alfred*, pp. 203-4;Nelson, ‘Waiting for Alfred’, pp. 122-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. S. Keynes, ‘On the Authenticity of Asser’s Life of King Alfred’, *JEH* 7 (1996), pp. 534 and 535. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. Keynes, ‘Authenticity of Asser’, pp. 532-539. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. Keynes, ‘Authenticity of Asser’, pp. 538-544. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. Keynes, ‘Authenticity of Asser’, pp. 530-531 [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. Keynes, ‘Authenticity of Asser’, p. 544. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. *VÆ*, c.76, pp. 59-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.76, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. *VÆ*,cc.79 and 81; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, cc*.* 79 and 81, pp.93-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. *VÆ*, cc.77-78, pp. 62-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. *VÆ*, cc.77-78, pp. 62-63; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, cc.77-78, pp. 92-93 and n. 169 p. 260. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. *VÆ*,c.80, pp. 66-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. *VÆ*,c.80, pp. 66-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. *VÆ*, c.101, pp. 87-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.101, pp. 106-107. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. On *dignitas*, see *DMLBS*, fasc. III, p. 678. Intriguingly, Asser’s description of Alfred’s generosity to foreigners also recalls similar provisions in Charlemagne’s *Admonitio Generalis* issued at Manz in 789; Charlemagne’s provisions were themselves inspired by portions of Mosaic Law. See Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 146-147; H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes, and M. Glatthaar, eds., *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Grossen*, *MGH*, *Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi* 16 (Hannover, 2012). The implications of this mirroring of Old Testament law is discussed further in my section about Alfred’s *domboc* below. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. *Secundam autem operatoribus, quos* ***ex multis gentibus*** *collectos et comparatos propemodum innumerabiles habebat, in omni terreno aedificio edoctos. VÆ*, c. 101, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. *VÆ*, c.102, pp. 88-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. *VÆ*, cc. 77 and 106, pp. 62-3 and 92-5; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, cc. 77 and 106, pp. 92-3 and 109-110. Mention of the translation work at Alfred’s behest is also made in the prologue to the Old English translation of Gregory the Great’s *Regula Pastoralis*:see M. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, pp. 31-32; C. Schreiber, ed., *King Alfred’s Translation of Pope Gregory the Great’s* Regula Pastoralis *and its Cultural Context* (New York, 2003), p. 195; Alfred of Wessex, ‘Preface to St. Gregory’s *Pastoral Care*’, trans. in ed. M. Swanton *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London, 1993), pp. 61-62. Evidence of foreign visitors sharing information can be found in the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan: J. Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, EETS Supplementary Series 6 (London, 1980), pp. lxvii-lxix, lxxi-lxxii, and 12-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. *VÆ,* c. 78, p. 63; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c. 78, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. *VÆ*, c.79, pp. 63-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.79, pp. 93-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. *VÆ*, c.79, pp. 65-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.79, pp. 94-96. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. Dorothy Whitelock puts forth this suggestion, building on Marie Schütt’s argument that Asser’s work was in part meant for a Welsh audience. Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, p. 5; Schütt, ‘The Literary Form of Asser’s ‘Vita Ӕlfredi’’, pp. 210 and 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. *VÆ*, c.1, pp. 1-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. *ASC* ‘A’, 855, pp. 45-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, n.4 pp. 228-229. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. *VÆ*, c.1, pp. 1-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. *Þæs þe eft ferde to Sancte Petre 7 þær eft his feorh gesealde*; *ASC* ‘A’, 855, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. *VÆ*, c.1, p. 2; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.1, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. *Ine* pp. 89-123;Attenborough, *Laws*, pp. 50-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. *Af* 49.8, p. 46; Attenborough, *Laws*, pp. 62-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 71-73; B. Yorke, ‘Ine’, *BEASE*, pp. 251-252. On Ine’s laws dealing with movement and protection of foreigners in Wessex, see *Ine*, cc. 20-21 and 23, pp. 98-100; Attenborough, *Laws*, cc. 20-21 and 23, pp. 42-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. Yorke, ‘Ine’, *BEASE*, p. 251; on shires, see *Ine*,cc. 8 and 36.1, pp. 92-93 and 104-105 and Attenborough, *Laws*,pp. 38-39 and 48-49; on ealdormen see *Ine*, cc. Prol., 6.2, 36.1, 45, and 50, pp. 89, 90-91, 104-105, 108-109 and 110-111 and Attenborough, *Laws*, pp. 38-39, 48-49, and 50-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. *VÆ*, c.1, p. 2: *qui Ine Romam perrexit, et ibi vitam praesentem finiens honorifice, caelestem patriam, cum Christo regnaturus, adiit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. *cupiens in uicinia sanctorum locorum ad tempus peregrinari in terris, quo familiarius a sanctis recipi mereretur in caelis: HE* V.7 [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. M. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’, pp. 38-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xxii; see also recent works G. Molyneaux, ‘The *Old English Bede*: English Ideology or Christian Instruction’, *EHR* 124, no. 511 (2009): 1289-1323; S. Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede’s* Historia Ecclesiastica (Cambridge, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. *VÆ*, c.8, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.8, p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. *VÆ*, c.11, pp. 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.11, pp. 69-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. J. Nelson, ‘The Problem of King Alfred’s Royal Anointing’, in her *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe*, reprinted from *JEH* 18 (1967) (London, 1986), p. 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. Nelson suggests also that the Chronicle’s entry for 853 is likely due to the tradition that Alfred was anointed by the pope during his visit; by ascribing Alfred’s visit to 853, the chronicler may have wished to have a more impressive pontiff involved in this important event, saying Leo IV was ‘a name to conjure with’ while asking ‘what mystique was there after all in the name of Benedict III who had, in fact, received Ӕthelwulf and, it may now be assumed, his son in 855?’; Nelson, ‘The Problem of King Alfred’s Royal Anointing’, pp. 325-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. S. Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Entries in the ‘Liber Vitae’ of Brescia’, in eds. J. Roberts and J. Nelson *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 99-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Entries’, pp. 109-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Entries’, n. 69, p. 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Entries’, p. 116. Barbara Yorke agrees that a journey was made in 853; see B. Yorke, ‘The Representation of Early West Saxon History in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, in ed. A. Jorgensen *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages (Turnhout, 2010), p. 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. J. Nelson, ‘Alfred’s Carolingian Contemporaries’, in ed. T. Reuter *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. *VÆ*, c.4, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.4, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. *ASC* ‘A’ 853, pp. 44-5; Whitelock, *ASC*, 853, p. 43. The Chronicler uses a similar grammatical construction to Asser’s concerning this episode: *7 gefliemdon Beorhtwulf Biercna cyning mid his fierde…* [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. Keynes, *BEASE*, Appendix, p. 506. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. *VÆ*, c.27, p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.27, p. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. Early medieval concepts of the devil and demons as agents of God’s wraths are discussed in D. Johnson, ‘Divine Justice in Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*’ in eds. S. Baxter, C. Karkov, J. Nelson and D. Pelteret *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 115-128. Asser’s familiarity with the *Dialogues* is noted in M. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’, pp. 35-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. On *discordia*: *DMLBS*, fasc. III, p. 681. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. *ASC* ‘A’ 878, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. Whitelock, *ASC* 878, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. It is intriguing that the Vikings here are not the divine punishment enacted but instead, present a greater target for God’s anger. See discussion on the Vikings as a scourge below, pp. 191-192. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. Perhaps the fault of the surviving work’s unfinished status, noted above. See Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 42 and 56; Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, pp. 3-4; Schütt, ‘The Literary Form of Asser’s *Vita Alfredi*’, pp. 209-220. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. *VÆ*, c.46, pp. 34-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.46, p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. See discussion below in section on typology, pp. 146-150. See also Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’, pp. 38-9; *HE,* V.7, pp. 468-473. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. Alfred’s visit/s to Rome has already been discussed; see above, pp. 115-117. On pilgrimage and self-imposed exile to religious lives, see Stancliffe, ‘Kings Who Opted Out’, in eds. P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983), esp. pp. 168 and 170-1; and W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. *Qui Scholam Saxonum in Roma morantium, pro amore et deprecatione Ӕlfredi*; *VÆ*, c.71, p. 53; trans.Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.71, p. 88. The chronicler also notes Marinus’ death and Alfred’s intercession on behalf of the Saxon quarter; *ASC* ‘A’, 885, pp. 52-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. *ASC* ‘A’, 887, p. 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. Whitelock, *ASC*, 887, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. *VÆ*, c.85, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.85, p.98. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. Bosworth-Toller, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. On *expulerat*: *DMLBS*, fasc. III, p. 856. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. Bosworth-Toller, p. 995. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. On *conscindere*: *DMLBS*, fasc. II, p. 446. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. *VÆ*, c.12, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.12, p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. ‘And afterwards he came home to his people, and they were glad of it.’ *ASC* ‘A’ 855, p. 45; Whitelock, *ASC* 855, p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. To my knowledge, this has speculation has not been pursued in previous scholarship, nor has Æthelwulf’s journey been described as a banishment. See, for instance, S. Keynes, ‘The West Saxon Charters of King Æthelwulf and His Sons’, *EHR* 109, no. 434 (1994): 1109-1149, esp. 1128. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. *VÆ*, c.12, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. *VÆ*, c.12, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.12, p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. *VÆ*, c.12, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. The Chronicle’s annals for 855-858 are presented as a brief narrative covering the four-year period; see *ASC* ‘A’, 855, p. 45; and Whitelock, *ASC*, no. 11, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. D. Pratt, *The Political Thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 177-178; D. Pratt, ‘The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great’, *ASE* 30 (2001), pp. 81-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. *ASC* ‘A’, 878, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. Whitelock, *ASC* ‘A’, 878, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. *VÆ*, c.52, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.52, p. 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. The Chronicler uses *ofer winter sæt* in entries for 851 and 855 and *sæt .i. gear* for 869; in these instances *sittan* is expressed as temporary by the context of the phrases in which it is found. The Chronicler repeatedly uses forms of the phrase *nam wintersetl* for the annals 866, 868, 870, 872, 873, 874, and 875, with *wintersetl* inherently suggesting temporary settlement determined by the season. Permanent settlement is perhaps best expressed by the *ASC* in the annal for 876, wherein Viking settlers or soldiers under Halfdan begin to farm Northumbrian lands. *ASC* ‘A’, 851, 855, 866, 868, 870 and 872-875, pp. 44, 45, 47, and 49; Bosworth-Toller, *sittan*,p. 879, and *wintersetl*, p. 1236. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. The geographic detail given by Asser is also notable, defining the region in terms of its locality in Wiltshire; the importance of this inclusion will be discussed further below. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. *ASC* ‘A’, 878, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. Whitelock, *ASC*, 878, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. *VÆ*, c.52, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. *VÆ*, c.53, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp.20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. On the importance of popular support for rulers, see I. Wood, ‘Kings, Kingdoms and Consent’, in eds. P.H. Sawyer and I. Wood *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), pp. 6-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. R.H.C. Davis, ‘Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth’, *History* 56, no. 187 (1971): 169-170 and 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. Davis, ‘Propaganda and Truth’, pp. 171-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. Ibid, p. 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. D. Whitelock, ‘The Importance of the Battle of Edington, AD 878*,* in *Report for 1975, 1976 and 1977 of the Society of Friends of the Priory Church of Edington* (1977): 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. Whitelock, ‘Battle of Edington’, p. 7. Davis responded to this argument in a footnote, stating that there was probably an earlier, incomplete circulation that the final version of the *ASC* drew upon: ‘The version which we now have would, in my view, be what Alfred had been saying, and circulating, for years and which was now put in its final form.’ R.H.C. Davis, ‘Alfred and Guthrum’s Frontier’, *HER* 97, no. 385 (1982): 805. Davis cites for support: M.B. Parkes, ‘The Paleography of the Parker Manuscript of the *Chronicle*, Laws and Sedulius, and History at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries’, *ASE* 5 (1976): 149-172; J. Bately, ‘The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 66 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as Evidence’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 64 (1980): 93-129, at pp. 110 and 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. Ibid, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. Ibid, pp. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. Ibid, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. Ibid, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. Ibid, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. Whitelock, ‘Battle of Edington’, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. M. Godden, ‘The Old English Life of St Neot’, *ASE* 39 (2011): 224-225. Also Smyth, *King Alfred the Great*, p. 72; Yorke, ‘Alfred, King of Wessex’, p. 27; P. Wormald, ‘Alfred (848/9-899), King of the West Saxons and of the Anglo-Saxons’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 21/03/2012, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/183?docPos=1. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. Godden, ‘The Old English Life of St Neot’, p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. Nelson has suggested that one of these may have been Wulfhere, Alfred’s ealdorman in Wiltshire and quite possibly the former brother-in-law of Alfred’s predecessor, King Æthelred. As uncle to Æthelred’s surviving *æthelings*, Wulfhere may have had a grievance with Alfred as well as potential gains to be had from an alliance with the Vikings. At a time when Alfred had little to offer his leading men, the Vikings may have presented an opportunity for Wulfhere and others to claim greater wealth and power.See J. Nelson, ‘Power and Authority at the Court of Alfred’, in eds. J. Roberts and J. Nelson *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy* (London, 2000), pp. 324-5; Nelson, ‘Wealth and Wisdom: the Politics of Alfred the Great’, in ed. J.T. Rosenthal *Kings and Kingship* (Binghamton, 1986), p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. *HSC*, p.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. *HSC*, c. 17, pp. 56-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. Typological comparisons such as these will be explored more fully below. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. *HSC*, c. 25, pp. 64-65. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 197-8; *VSN*, c. 12, pp. 125-6; on dating, ibid., pp. lxxxv-xcvi, ci. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. *VSN*, c.12, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, Appendix I, p. 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. A translation for this story is provided in an appendix to Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 197-8. Although not specifically mentioned therein, this story of the king of the English relying upon and chided by a swineherd’s wife clearly carries elements of the topics of humility and ‘the upsidedown world’ discussed in Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 83-85 and 94-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. On *exul*: *DMLBS*, fasc. III, p. 881. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. *GRA*, c. 122, pp. 183-184. For more complete discussions of traditions concerning Alfred’s episode in the marshes of Somerset, see S. Keynes, ‘The Cult of King Alfred the Great’, *ASE* 28 (1999): 225-356; B. Yorke, ‘Alfredism: the Use and Abuse of King Alfred’s Reputation in Later Centuries’, in ed. T. Reuter *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 361-380. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. Katherine Holman twice refers to Alfred’s time in the marshes as a period of ‘exile’ in her monograph concerning the Viking invasions; her placement of inverted commas around the word in the second instance suggests that she recognizes that Alfred was not wholly exiled in 878, but was perhaps living an exile-like existence. K. Holman, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 33 and 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. *ASC* ‘A’, 878, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. *VÆ*, c.53, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. *VÆ*, c.52, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. Alfred’s flight to Somerset in 878 may have been calculated to eventually call upon known military support in that region, but Alfred was familiar with Somerset from his time as an *ætheling* in waiting; J. Nelson, ‘Power and Authority at the Court of Alfred’, p.324. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. *VÆ*, c.53, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. *VÆ*, c.54, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. Whitelock, ‘Battle of Edington’, p. 12; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp.20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. See below, n. 642 and n. 643. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. *VÆ*, c.54, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. *VÆ*, c.54, pp. 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.54, p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. *VÆ*, c.55, p. 45; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 21 and 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. Located somewhere between Athelney and Chippenham, and likely to be near Penselwood where the boundaries of Somerset and Wiltshire meet; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 248 no. 103; *VÆ*, pp. 268-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. *ASC* ‘A’, 878, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. Whitelock, *ASC*, 878, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. *VÆ*, c.55, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.55, p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. *VÆ*, c.13, pp.10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p.22. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. Io 11:1-43. The ‘great tribulations’ (*tanta tribulationes*)mentioned here echo the suffering of Alfred in the previous chapter (*magna tribulatione*), perhaps suggesting some connection between the king and his kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. On *redivivus*: *DMLBS*, fasc. XIII, pp. 2699-2700. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. Schütt, ‘The Literary Form of Asser’s ‘Vita Alfredi’’, pp. 209-220; *VÆ*, pp. lxxviii-lxxix. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. D. Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, pp. 4-5; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. D.P. Kirby, ‘Asser and his *Life* of King Alfred’, *Studia Celtica*, 6 (1971), pp. 12-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. M. Kempshall, ‘No Bishop, No King: the Ministerial Ideology of Kingship and Asser’s *Res Gestae Aelfredi*, in eds. R. Gameson and H. Leyser *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 106-127. There is a marked preoccupation with Gregory the Great at Alfred’s court and by Alfred himself; see Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, pp. 254-261. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. Campbell, ‘Asser’s *Life of Alfred*’, pp. 27-29. Alfred is the dedicatee of Asser’s work (*VÆ*, Pr., p. 1), so it is clear that the king himself was part of the intended audience. It may also be that the *Life* failed to garner sufficient favour by the king for additional copies to be made: on Carolingian examples of authors seeking royal permissions, see P. Meyvaert, ‘Medieval Notions of Publication: the ‘Unpublished’ *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* and the Council of Frankfort (794), *Journal of Medieval Latin* 12 (2002): 78-89, esp. 78-9, 82 and 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. See above, pp. 80-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’, pp. 36-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’, p. 31; *VÆ*, pp. xciv-xcv. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. 1 Sm 24 and 26; 2 Sm 3. Three of Saul’s sons were killed in this battle, and the only surviving son, Isobeth, reigned only for two years before he was murdered by two of his own captains. See Bright, *A History of Israel*, pp. 182-190;1 Sm 19-31 and 2 Sm 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. *VÆ*, c. 42, p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. For instance, the famous story of young David’s killing of the giant Goliath (I Sm 17), and also David’s repeated triumphs against the Philistines which incurred Saul’s jealousy (I Sm 18:6-9). [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, in his *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent: the Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 1970* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 128-130. For images, see Stuttgarter Psaler, Cod. Bibl.fol.23, 21r, 21v, and 24r: http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/digitale-sammlungen/seitenansicht/ (last accessed 01/12/2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. *VÆ*, c.42, p. 32; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 80-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. 1 Sm 24 and 26:7-11; *VÆ*, c. 42, p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. I Sm 17:13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. R. Deshman, ‘The Exalted Servant: the Ruler Theology of the Prayerbook of Charles the Bald’, *Viator* 11 (1980), pp. 406-409. The ivory covers depict Psalms 50 and 56. On Charles the Bald, see P. Depreux, *Prosopographie de l’entourage de Louis de Pieux (781-840)* , Instrumenta 1 (Sigmaringen, 1997), pp. 150-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. Deshman, ‘The Exalted Servant’, pp. 406-9; 1 Sm 24:7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. *VӔ*, c.78, p. 63; and see discussion above on foreigners at Alfred’s court, pp. 95-102. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, pp. 137-138; see also Sedulius Scottus, *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis*, ed. S. Hellmann in *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philoogie des Mittelalters*, I.i (Munich, 1906), pp. 19-91; Loup de Ferriѐres, *Correspondance*, ed. Léon Levillain (Paris, 1964), pp. 140-147, 160-165 and 192-197. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. 1 Sm 16; *VÆ*, c.8, p. 7. The anointing of Alfred has alread been discussed above. See Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 272-273 n.3 and 692; Whitelock, *ASC*, pp. xxii-xxiii; Nelson, ‘The Problem of King Alfred’s Royal Anointing’, pp. 309-327. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. *VӔ*, c. 8, p. 7; see also J. Nelson, ‘The Political Ideas of Alfred of Wessex’, in her *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald and Others* (Brookfield, 1999),p. II.138. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. Nelson, ‘King Alfred’s Royal Anointing’, p. 320; Aelred of Rievaulx, *Genealogy of English Kings*, *PL* 195, p. 718. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. *HSC*, c. 17, pp. 56-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. Nelson, ‘King Alfred’s Royal Anointing’; Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 136-139; Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, pp. 130 and 135; also K.J. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London, 1979), pp. 78 and 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. Charity, *Events and their Afterlife*, pp. 112 and 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. Mt 1; Charity, *Events and Their Afterlife*, pp. 112 and 132. On Christ’s lineage and links to David, see also St Ambrose, *De concordia Mattaei et Lucae in genealogia Christ*, *PL* 17, cols. 1011-1014; St Augustine of Hippo, *De consensu evangelistarum libri quator*, *PL* 17, cc.2 and 4, cols. 1044 and 1045; Bede, *In Matthaei evangelium expositio*, *PL* 92, I.1, colls. 0009B-0012B. [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. 1 Sm 16:3, 24 and 26; Mt 3:13-17, 4:1-11, and 5:38-42; Mk 1:9-13; Lc 3:21-22, 4:1-13, 6:27-31 and 23:32; Io 1:29-33. St Ambrose, *Apologia altera prophetae David*, *PL* 14, cols. 891-960, esp. at 893D-897C, 899C-900C;St Augustine of Hippo, *De diversis quaestionibus ad simplicianum libri duo*, *PL* 40, cols. 134-5 and 142; Bede, *In Matthaei*, I.3, II.21 and IV.26, colls. 0017C-0017D, 0094D, and 0116D-0117A; Bede, *In Lucae evangelium expositio*, *PL* 92, I.2 and II.4 at colls. 0335A-0335D and 0401D-0402A. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. *VÆ*, c.89, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.89, p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. Lc 23:42. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. Asser,*Vita Ӕlfredi*, c.90, pp. 75-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.90, p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. *VÆ*, c.91, c. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.91, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great*, p. 251. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great*,pp. 251-252 and 256-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. This christomimetic imagery is also noted by Paul Kershaw, who argues that Asser presented Alfred’s bodily ailments as reflecting those of his kingdom, and so promoted Alfred’s legitimacy. Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, pp. 260-1. See also B.C. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 59-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. As Christ is referred to in 1 Tim 6:15, and Apc 17:14 and 19:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. *constituere*: *DMLBS,* fasc. 2, pp. 457-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. *VÆ*, c.91, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.91, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. Anton Scharer has argued persuasively for Asser’s use of Sedulius Scottus’ *Liber de rectoribus Christianis* which holds similar nautical references. A. Scharer, ‘The Writing of History at King Alfred’s Court’, *EME* 5 (1996), pp. 201-203; Sedulius Scottus, *Liber de rectoribus Christianis*, ed. S. Hellmann (Munich, 1906), c.6, pp. 37-8. Gregory the Great also compared governance to steering a ship: G.E. Demacopoulos, ed., *St Gregory the Great: The Book of Pastoral Rule* (Crestwood, New York, 2007), I.9, p. 42. On nautical themes elsewhere in the Alfredian corpus, see M. Wilcox, ‘Alfred’s Epistemological Metaphors: *eagan modes* and *scip modes*’, *ASE* 35 (2007), pp. 179-217. Ernst Curtius, in his landmark *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, gave a brief account of nautical metaphors passed from the ancient world into the medieval; he also notes the nautical metaphors of the mid-fifth-century Christian poet Sedulius, who refers to himself as a sailor in a little boat crossing the ‘ocean of Paschal majesty’ and implores a presbyter named Macedonius to ‘bestow the anchor of your authority’. E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, English translation of the 1948 work in German, trans. W.R. Trask (Princeton, 1973), pp. 128-30 and 460. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. Nautical metaphors for life on earth have been a staple of Christian thought and writing since the earliest days of the Church; the strong influence of this view may be seen in the Old English elegies, most notably *The Seafarer*. Hugo Rahner has discussed how early Christians used such metaphors drawn from the Greek legends of their ancestors to help explain Christian life as a voyage not unlike that of Odysseus, wherein the perils of the sea and the perils of Hell depict the nearness of danger to the soul: the Church is the ship, and the cross is the mast clung to for safety. H. Rahner, ‘Odysseus at the Mast’, in his *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. from 1957 edn. by B. Battershaw, reprint of 1963 edn. (New York, 1971), pp. 328-371. See also Scharer, ‘The Writing of History’, pp. 201-202. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. Piloting a vessel to safety as a metaphor for good leadership is mirrored also by pastoral metaphors of kings as shepherds, a point demonstrated by Oswyn Murray. Drawing from shared cultures of the Near East and developing concepts of kingship there, Murray shows how the peoples of Assyria, Persia, and Israel applied the concepts of animal husbandry and care to kings (and to God). David’s youth was spent as a shepherd for his father’s flock, and his Psalm 23 clearly expresses the metaphor of the Israelites as a flock watched over by God. The same care by good kings is expressed by commentators of Carolingian rulers in terms which Murray suggests expressed ‘mock humility in the presence of exalted themes.’ Although not clearly expressed within Asser’s *Vita Ӕlfredi*,Asser and those involved with translating Gregory’s *Regula Pastoralis* were surely aware of the poignancy of this metaphor for right leadership. O. Murray, ‘The Idea of the Shepherd King: from Cyrus to Charlemagne’, in eds. P. Godman and O. Murray *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 1-14, esp. pp. 3-5 and 10-12. On modesty as a topos of classical and medieval literature, see Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 83-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, p. 130; on Hilduin, see Depreux, pp. 250-256. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. Deshman, ‘The Exalted Servant’, pp. 391-392. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. *In cruce qui mundi solvisti cirmina Christe/ Orando mihimet tu vulnera cuncta resolve* (‘O Christ, you who on the cross have absolved the sins of the world, absolve, I pray, all my wounds for me.’) Inscription quoted in Deshman, ‘The Exalted Servant’, pp. 390-391. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. Deshman, ‘The Exalted Servant’, pp. 392-393 and 402-404. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Deshman, ‘The Exalted Servant’, p. 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. See Chapter 1 above, pp. 71-2 and 78-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. Lapidge, ‘Asser’s Reading’, pp. 38-39; *VÆ*, cc. 22, 76 and 91, pp. 20, 60 and 77; *HE*, I.33, IV.24 and IV.1, pp. 114-115, 328-329, and 414-417. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. *VÆ*, c.92, p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
534. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.92, p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
535. *VÆ*, c.99, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
536. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.99, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
537. *VÆ*, c.103, p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
538. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.103, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
539. *VÆ*, c.104, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
540. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c. 104, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
541. *Sed et ipse, cum esset uir natura sagacissimus, saepe diu solus residens ore quidem tacito sed in intimis cordis multa secum conloquens, quid sibi esset faciendum…*; *HE,* II.9, pp. 166-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
542. *HE,* II.12, pp. 178-179, my own translation in parentheses. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
543. *HE,* II.12, pp. 180-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
544. *HE,* II.12, pp. 180-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
545. *VÆ*, cc. 76 and 105, pp. 59-60 and 91-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
546. *HE,* II.16, pp. 192-193. [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
547. *HE,* II.V, pp. 148-151 [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
548. Berhtwulf of Mercia’s flight following Viking invasion, Osberht of Northumbria’s usurpation by Ælle, Burgred of Mercia’s expulsion by Vikings, and the removal of Charles the Fat by his nephew: *VÆ*, cc. 4, 27, 46, 85, pp. 5, 22, 34-5 and 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
549. *VÆ*, c. 12, pp. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
550. The Israelites initially existed as separate tribes, even when nominally unified as a single people following the Exodus out of Egypt. The First Book of Samuel gives accounts on how the Israelites came to desire and request a king from God, and on the origins of the Davidic dynasty. I Sm 8:5-9; W.O.H. Oesterly and T. Robinson, *A History of Israel*, vol. 1 of 2 (Oxford, 1932), pp. 180-1 and 194; J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, reprint of 1972 2nd edn. (London, 1974), pp. 179-190.For discussion on adopting biblical royal practice elsewhere, see J. Nelson, ‘The Lord’s Anointed and the People’s Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual’, in her *The Frankish World, 750-900*, reprinted from 1988 edn. (London, 1996), pp. 99-132, and esp. pp. 109-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
551. *VÆ*, c.91, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
552. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.91, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
553. *VÆ*, c.91, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
554. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.91, pp. 101-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
555. *VÆ*, c.91, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
556. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.91, p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
557. *VÆ*, c.91, p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
558. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.91, p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
559. On *poenitentia*: *DMLBS*, fasc. 9, pp. 2077-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
560. *VÆ*, c.93, pp. 80-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
561. *VÆ*, c. 94, pp. 81-82. Here, Asser notes that John was of Old Saxon origins, but that many of the monks were of the Gallic race; one monk was apparently of Viking descent. Why Asser decided to include this information is unclear, but he also notes that the two offenders conspiring against Abbot John, as well as the two slaves helping them, were of Gallic origin. Keynes and Lapidge have noted that this may be the same John who aided Alfred in his translation of Gregory’s *Regula Pastoralis*; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, n. 169, p. 260. [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
562. *VÆ*, c.96, pp. 82-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
563. *VÆ* c.97, pp. 84-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
564. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c.97, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
565. Mt 26:57-67; Io 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
566. *VÆ*, cc. 96 and 97, pp. 82 and 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
567. T. Fry, ed. and trans., *Regula Sancti Benedicti* (Collegeville, 1981), c.2.2-3 and 2.9-10, pp. 172-3: Christi enim agere vices in monasterio creditur, quando ipsius vocatur pronomine, dicente apostolo: *Accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus: abba, pater*...Tantundem iterum erit ut, si inquieto vel inoboedienti gregi pastoris fuerit omnis diligentia attributa et morbidis earum actibus universa fuerit cura exhibita, pastor eorum in iudicio Domini absolutus dicat cum propheta Domino: *Iustitiam tuam non abscondi in corde meo, veritatem tuam et salutare tuum dixi; ipsi autem contemnentes spreverunt me*, et tunc demum inoboedientibus curae suae ovibus poena sit eis praevalens ipsa mors. (For he is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, when he is called by his name, according to the saying of the Apostle: “You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba”....On the other hand he will be blameless, if he gave all a shepherd's care to his restless and unruly flock, and took all pains to correct their corrupt manners; so that their shepherd, acquitted at the Lord's judgment seat, may say to the Lord with the Prophet: “I have not hid Thy justice within my heart. I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation”. “But they contemning have despised me”. Then at length eternal death will be the crushing doom of the rebellious sheep under his charge.’) [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
568. *VÆ*, cc.76 and 97, pp. 59 and 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
569. Concerning the possibility of a treasonous nobility, see f.n. 148 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
570. See above, pp. 124-128; and *VÆ*, cc. 27 and 85, pp. 22 and 71-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
571. *VÆ*, cc. 23, 38, 42, 54, 56, 66, 74 and 76, pp. 20, 29-30, 32, 43-44, 46, 50 and 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
572. For an extensive discussion on the similarities between Alfred and Solomon, see Abels, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 219-257. [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
573. *VӔ*, c.76, pp. 60-61. Notker’s *De Carolo Magno* similarly displays a a similar typological connection between Solomon and Charlemagne; in one instance Notker compares the relationship between the Franks and the Northmen with that between Solomon and his enemies (c.19) while in another he directly states that Charlemagne followed Solomon’s example of pursuing building projects (c.27). Notker Balbuli, *Gesta Karoli Magni I*, ed. H. Haefele *MGH*, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum Nova Series* 12 (Munich, 1980), pp. 25 and 37-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
574. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c. 76, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
575. *Cor regis in manu Domini* (The heart of the king is in the hands fo God): *VӔ*, c.99, p. 86; Prv 21:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
576. Kempshall, ‘No Bishop, No King’, pp. 109-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
577. Ibid; cf. III Rg 5.13-14, 3.28, 4.7, 4.29-33, 7.49, 9.17-19, and 26; II Par 2.7, 8.5-6; *VӔ*, c. 100, pp. 86-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
578. Af Prol.-c.49, pp. 26-46; Acts 23:21-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
579. Af. c.49.9, pp. 46-48; Ine, c. Prol.-c.76, pp. 88-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
580. Af. cc. 1-77, pp. 46-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
581. Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, pp. 417, 418 and 426. In his discussion on the impact of Irish learning on the West Saxon court, David Pratt has noted the influence of Irish sources in including Mosaic elements in the *domboc*: Pratt, *The Political Thought of Alfred the Great*, p. 250. [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
582. Af. ‘E’ Intro. c.49, p. 42; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
583. Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, p. 423. [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
584. Ex. 19-40; Ios. 1:2-6. Following a period of enslavement in Egypt, Israel escaped at some point in the thirteenth century B.C.E. Unification of the tribes into Israel as a nation came with the Sinaitic Covenant wherein Moses famously brought the Israelites under the authority of a single god in the Yahwistic tradition, usually referred to as the Ten Commandments in modern Western culture although a number of additional statutes were included in the Covenant. This Covenant was of singular importance to the development of the Davidic Covenant, held to establish King David’s hereditary line through promoting and upholding the laws God gave to Moses. This Covenant was strengthened by David’s son Solomon, as will be discussed, and was recognized as security for royal legitimacy throughout the history of Israel. For a thorough overview, see Bright, *A History of Israel*, esp. pp. 139, 144-153, 160-161, 220-221, 245-6, 442-444. [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
585. Kempshall, ‘No Bishop, No King’, p. 110; cf. II Par. 29.3, 30.26 and 34; IV Rg. 20 and 23.2-3; Is. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
586. R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789-895* (London, 1977), pp. 1-3; Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 147-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
587. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, commenting on the decline in European legislation prior to Alfred’s reign, suggested that Alfred ‘resumed the practice because he knew that Carolingians had found a use for it’. While this is likely to have been the case, he and Mary Garrison have noted that ideas on Old Testament comparisons and divine election did not originate with the Franks but through the importation of ideas and development of Frankish culture over time, with much of this thought coming from England during Charlemagne’s reign. Alcuin, who closely advised Charlemagne, believed that biblical law could still serve a purpose in the eighth century, which may explain inclusion of Old and New Testament quotations in the *Admonitio Generalis* (c.789). Though the resurrection of legislation as a kingly duty may have been inspired by Frankish actions, many ideas on legislation and election were derived from English churchmen. That Bede had promoted a concept of the English as God’s chosen, just as Gildas had done with the Britons in the sixth century, establishes that these concepts were not new to Anglo-Saxon thinking. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, pp. 147-149 and ‘Charlemagne and Offa’, p. 100; Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 137, 145, 147, and 156-158. [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
588. Af. Prol.-c.48, pp. 26-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
589. III Rg. 8:55-61; Bright, *A History of Israel*, pp. 213-214. [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
590. Af. Prol., pp. 26-7; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
591. This concept seems to have been picked up by William of Malmesbury, whose later account of St Cuthbert’s meeting with Alfred voices Cuthbert’s observation that England had ‘long been paying very heavy penalties for all her sins’ (*quia enim Anglia iam dudum peccatorum penas enormiter luit*); *GRA*, c. 122, pp. 183-184. [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
592. Charity, *Events and Their Afterlife*, pp. 21-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
593. Charity, *Events and Their Afterlife*, p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
594. Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
595. H.E.J. Cowdrey, ‘Bede and the ‘English People’’, *The Journal of Religious History* 11, no. 4 (1981): pp. 501-523; G. Tugene, ‘L’histoire “ecclésiastique” du peuple anglais: Réflexions su le particularisme et l’universalisme chez Bѐde’, *Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. 17 (1982): 129-172. [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
596. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charlemagne and Offa’, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
597. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charlemagne and Offa’, pp. 100-105; Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, pp. 120-121, 138, and 145-147. [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
598. Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, pp. 426-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
599. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, vol. 3, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
600. Attenborough, *Laws*, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-600)
601. S. Keynes, ‘King Alfred and the Mercians’, in eds. M. Blackburn and D. Dumville *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 25-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-601)
602. Whitelock, *EHD*, vol. 1, p. 407. See also Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 182-186; D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C.L. Brooke, eds., *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 7-13; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-602)
603. The *Life* is dated by Asser’s statement in c.91: ...*a vigesimo aetatis anno usque ad quadragesimum quintum annum, quem nunc agit...* (‘...from his twentieth year until his forty-fifth (which is now in course)...’); *VӔ*, c.91, p. 76; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 53 and 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-603)
604. The last West Saxon law-code was issued by Ine c. AD 694; see Attenborough, *Laws*, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-604)
605. *VӔ*, c.106, pp. 92-96. [↑](#footnote-ref-605)
606. For instance, Af. cc. 1.3, 4.2, 9, 10, 11, 25 and 35, pp. 48-51, 54-57, 62-65 and 68-69; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 275-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-606)
607. *VÆ*, c. 105, pp. 91-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-607)
608. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c. 105, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-608)
609. *VÆ*, c. 106, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-609)
610. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, c. 106, pp. 109-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-610)
611. On *iudicare*: *DMLBS*, fasc. V, pp. 1507-1508. [↑](#footnote-ref-611)
612. Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, p. 429. [↑](#footnote-ref-612)
613. *Ic ða Ӕlfred cyning þas togædere gegaderode, 7 awritan het monege þara þe ure foregengan heldon...*This may have been a recitation at a gathering, or a hard-copy distribution of the code. Keynes and Lapidge translate that the king ordered the laws to be ‘written’, whereas Attenborough’s slightly looser translation has the king order ‘copies to be made’; the former presents a simple recording of laws, while the latter suggests a process which might have led to dissemination of the code and greater access by the king’s nobles. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 164; Attenborough, *Laws*, pp. 62-63. On evidence that legal texts were in use by lay thegns and reeves by the late tenth century, see C. Cubitt, ‘As the Lawbook Teaches’: Reeves, Lawbooks and Urban Life in the Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers’, *EHR* 124, no. 510 (2009):1021-1049. [↑](#footnote-ref-613)
614. *ðæt we eac sume bec ða ðe niedbeðyrfesta sien eallum monnum to witanne*: C. Schreiber, ed., *King Alfred’s Translation of Pope Gregory the Great’s* Regula Pastoralis *and its Cultural Context* (New York, 2003), p. 195; translated in Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, pp. 31-32; and Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-614)
615. This is also suggested in S. Keynes, ‘Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, in ed. R. McKitterick *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 231. On the development of literacy, Clanchy notes that ‘lay literacy grew out of bureaucracy, rather than from an abstract desire for eduction or literacy’: M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1993), p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-615)
616. P. Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta* and *Verbum Regis*: Legislation and Germanic Kingship, from Euric to Cnut’, in P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood, eds. *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), pp. 112-113 and 125-133. [↑](#footnote-ref-616)
617. Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta*’, pp. 118-119 and 124-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-617)
618. Specifically the final clause concerning injuring oneself on a spear being carried over the shoulder of another; Af. c.77, pp. 88-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-618)
619. Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta*’, pp. 112-113, 115 and 120; I Ew., Prologue, pp. 138-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-619)
620. Keynes, ‘Royal Government and the Written Word’, pp. 228 and 230-233. [↑](#footnote-ref-620)
621. II Ew. cc.5 and 5.2, pp. 142-145; II As. c.5, pp. 152-153; II Eg. cc.3 and 5, pp. 196-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-621)
622. Keynes, ‘Royal Government and the Written Word’, p. 233; Cubitt, ‘As the Lawbook Teaches’, pp. 1047-1049. [↑](#footnote-ref-622)
623. *VÆ*, cc. 24 and 88, pp. 21 and 73-74. [↑](#footnote-ref-623)
624. R. Jayatilaka, ‘Werferth’, *BEASE*, p. 469; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 26-27; on earlier copies of the will, Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 173, 177, and 313; Harmer, *SEHD*, no. 11, pp. 15-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-624)
625. *VÆ*, c.93, pp. 80-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-625)
626. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-626)
627. *VÆ*, c. 91, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-627)
628. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-628)
629. *VÆ*, c. 105, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-629)
630. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-630)
631. Praise is primarily reserved for Alfred and though some small groups, such as the un-named thegns of Somerset who supported Alfred in 878 (*VÆ*, c.55, pp. 44-45), are mentioned positively, much of what Asser has to say regarding the English pertains to their faults, errors, losses, and corrections. [↑](#footnote-ref-631)
632. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-632)
633. There are three primary covenants in the Hebrew Bible, the first being the Abrahamic Covenant passed from Abraham down through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Ephraim; this was an agreement concerning the land and prosperity of Abraham’s family (Gn 12:1-3, 15:7-12, 26:2-4, 28:13-15). The Sinaic, or Mosaic, Covenant was established between God and Moses to ensure a homeland and protection for Israel in exchange for adhering to God’s Law (Ex 19-24). The Davidic Covenant, incorporating the Sinaic Covenant’s tenets, establishes a royal dynastic line over Israel, making obeisance to the divinely appointed king an added condition of the Sinaic Covenant (2 Sm 7:12-17). On Abrahamic/Patriarchal Covenant, see Bright, *A History of Israel*, pp. 95 and 99-102; for Mosaic/Sinaic Covenant, Ibid. pp. 144-151; and for Davidic Covenant, Ibid. pp. 220-223 and 292-296. [↑](#footnote-ref-633)
634. See for instance I Sm 12:14-15; Dt 28:36-37; II Par 29:3, 30:26 and 34; IV Rg 20; Is 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-634)
635. Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, p. 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-635)
636. Pratt, ‘The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great’, pp. 58, 64-5, 71, and 84; see also P. Kershaw, ‘Illness, Power and Prayer in Asser’s *Life of King Alfred*’, *EME* 10, no. 2 (2001): 201-224. [↑](#footnote-ref-636)
637. Pratt, ‘The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great’, pp. 87-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-637)
638. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Charles the Bald and Alfred’, pp. 142-145. [↑](#footnote-ref-638)
639. Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-639)
640. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-640)
641. *VÆ*, cc. 3-6, 9-10, 17-18, 20-21, 25-27, 30-33, 35-36, 38-40, 42-44, 46-50, 53-59, 61-62, 64, 66-67, 69, 72, 76, 83-84, 91, and 94, pp. 4-8, 16-19, 21-36, 38-39, 41-52, 54, 59-60, 69-71, 76 and 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-641)
642. *VÆ*, cc.3, 5, 9, 27, 30, 35-39, 42, and 53-54, pp. 4, 6, 8, 23, 25, 27-31, 33, 41, and 43. Asser also refers to armies on the continent as *christianus* when giving accounts of their own battles against the Vikings: c.69, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-642)
643. S. Coupland, ‘The Rod of God’s Wrath or the People of God’s Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions’, *JEH* 42 (1991): pp. 535 and 540; M. Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England: Linguistic Relations between Speakers of Old Norse and Old English* (Turnhout, 2002), p. 173; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Vikings in Francia*, Stenton Lecture 1975 (Reading 1975), p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-643)
644. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Vikings in Francia*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-644)
645. Townend, *Language and History*, p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-645)
646. Townend, *Language and History*, pp. 174-176; Jer. 1.13-16, 4.6, 6.1, 6.22-23, 10.22, 13.20 and 25.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-646)
647. Garrison, ‘The Franks as the New Israel?’, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-647)
648. Scharer, ‘The Writing of History’, pp. 185-206, esp. 204-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-648)
649. For overview, see S. Miller, ‘Æthelred’, *BEASE*, pp. 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-649)
650. T. Hodgkin, *The History of England from the Earliest Times to the Norman Conquest* (London, 1914), p. 373. [↑](#footnote-ref-650)
651. S. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation of King Ӕthelred the Unready’, in ed. D. Hill *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, BAR Series 59 (Oxford, 1978), p. 229. The Chronicler gives remarkable attention to the details of Æthelred’s ruin, culminating in the interruption in the royal dynasty by the anointing of Cnut in 1016. On the style of these annals, see C. Clark, ‘The Narrative Mode of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Before the Conquest’, in eds. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 215-235. [↑](#footnote-ref-651)
652. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation’, pp. 230-1. Keynes here also suggests here that only one Chronicler was responsible for the *ASC*entries 993-1013. [↑](#footnote-ref-652)
653. See above, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-653)
654. Whitelock, *ASC*, 984 and 1001, pp. xi-xii, 81 and 85-86; Swanton, *ASC*, pp. ix-xx. [↑](#footnote-ref-654)
655. Keynes, ‘A Tale of Two Kings: Alfred the Great and Æthelred the Unready’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 36, Fifth Series (1986): 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-655)
656. Bately, ‘Manuscript Layout and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-656)
657. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xvii; Swanton, *ASC*, p. xxviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-657)
658. Swanton, *ASC*, pp. xxvii-xxviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-658)
659. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xvii; Swanton, *ASC*, p. xxviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-659)
660. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. xvii; Bately, ‘Manuscript Layout and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, pp. 27-8; Irvine, *ASC* ‘E’, pp. lxiv-lxix [↑](#footnote-ref-660)
661. Whitelock, *ASC*, pp. xvii-xviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-661)
662. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation of King Ӕthelred the Unready’, pp. 229-231; O’Brien O’Keefe, *ASC* ‘C’, pp. lxiv-lxvii; Cubbin, *ASC* ‘D’, pp. liii-lv; Irvine, *ASC* ‘E’, pp. lxiv-lxv; S. Baxter, ‘MS C of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and The Politics of Mid-Eleventh-Century England’, *EHR*, vol. 122, no. 499 (December 2007), pp. 1190-1194. [↑](#footnote-ref-662)
663. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation of King Ӕthelred the Unready’, pp. 229-231. [↑](#footnote-ref-663)
664. The extracts from the *ASC* which follow are from K. O’Brien O’Keeffe, ed., ‘MS. C’, in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition* 5 (Cambridge, 2001). Modern English translations are from Whitelock, *ASC*. [↑](#footnote-ref-664)
665. Whitelock, *ASC* 1013, pp. 92-3; *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, pp. 97-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-665)
666. Whitelock, *ASC*, 1011 and 1012, pp. 91-92; *ASC* ‘C’, pp. 95-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-666)
667. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 97; trans. Whitelock, *ASC* 1013, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-667)
668. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation’, pp. 230-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-668)
669. Whitelock, *ASC* ‘A’, 991, p. 82; ‘C-E’, 1006 and 1009, pp. 87 and 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-669)
670. Whitelock, *ASC* 1011 and 1012, pp. 91-92; *ASC* ‘C’, pp. 95-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-670)
671. S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred ‘The Unready’, 978-1016: a Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 216-217. [↑](#footnote-ref-671)
672. Attenborough, *Laws*, ‘Alfred and Guthrum’, c.1, pp. 98-99; also N.J. Higham, ‘Danelaw’, *BEASE* pp. 136-7; B. Yorke, ‘Guthrum’, *BEASE*, p. 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-672)
673. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, p. 10; Ӕthelweard, *The Chronicles of Ӕthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), pp. 18-21 and 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-673)
674. Anon., *The Battle of Maldon,* in ed. S.A.J. Bradley *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, reprint of 1982 edn. (London, 2004), pp. 519-528, at lines 45-61, p. 521; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe: 900-1300*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1997), pp. 263-264. [↑](#footnote-ref-674)
675. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 97; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1013, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-675)
676. Jonathan Wilcox suggests that fear of such internal betrayals from Danish settlers and their descendants may have spurred the 1002 pogrom on St Brice’s Day, which reflects persistent cultural and political fears at that time: J. Wilcox, ‘The St. Brice’s Day Massacre and Archbishop Wulfstan’, in ed. D. Wolfthal *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages adn the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2000), esp. 85-86. See also A. Williams, ‘‘Cockles Amongst the Wheat’: Danes and the English in the Western Midlands in the First Half of the Eleventh Century’, *Midland History* 11 (1986): 1-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-676)
677. R. Lavelle, ‘The Use and Abuse of Hostages in Later Anglo-Saxon England’, *EME* 14 (2006), p. 281. Bosworth and Toller, p. 532. [↑](#footnote-ref-677)
678. Bosworth and Toller, pp. 787 and 895. [↑](#footnote-ref-678)
679. Bosworth and Toller, pp. 13 and 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-679)
680. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 98; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1013, p. 92; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-680)
681. For more on Swein’s invasion, see Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 226; also N. Lund, ‘The Armies of Swein Forkbeard and Cnut: *leding* or *li(th)*’, *ASE* 15 (1986): 105-118. [↑](#footnote-ref-681)
682. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, pp. 264-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-682)
683. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, esp. pp. 6-7 and 32. Also on English unification, see also R. van Caenegem, ‘Foundations: c.750-c.1150, Government, Law and Society’, in ed. J.H. Burns *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350-1450* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 183-185; P. Wormald, ‘*Engla Lond*: the Making of an Allegiance’, in ed. P. Wormald *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience*, reprint of 1994 article (London, 1999), pp. 359-382. [↑](#footnote-ref-683)
684. Keynes, ‘Re-Reading King Ӕthelred the Unready’, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-684)
685. P. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II: a Study in the Limitations on Royal Policy and Action’, in ed. D. Hill *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, BAR Series 59 (1978), p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-685)
686. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 35; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1006, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-686)
687. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-687)
688. R. Lavelle, ‘Hostages in Later Anglo-Saxon England’, pp. 274-281. [↑](#footnote-ref-688)
689. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-689)
690. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 97; trans. Whitelock, *ASC* 1013, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-690)
691. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 97; trans. Whitelock, *ASC* 1013, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-691)
692. Intriguingly, Archbishop Wulfstan of York uses *mæste yfel* to describe Antichrist in his homily Secundum Marcum: see J. Lionarons, *The Homiletic Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan* (Woodbridge, 2010),pp. 68-69; see also D.M. Hadley, ‘Viking and Native: Re-thinking Identity in the Danelaw’, *EME* 11, no. 1 (2002): pp. 45-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-692)
693. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 98; Whitelock, *ASC* 1013, p. 92. Thorkell and a portion of the army he led from 1009-1012 had joined as mercenary support for Ӕthelred after peace was bought in 1012, which is why Thorkell was in London with the king in 1013. [↑](#footnote-ref-693)
694. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation of King Æthelred the Unready’, pp. 231-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-694)
695. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 98; trans. Whitelock, *ASC* 1013, pp. 92-3; Whitelock notes that D and E state ‘When he had won everything thus…’ (*Þa he eall þus gefaren heafde…*), but these differ only in the inclusion of *eall* and I am not persuaded that this slight deviation is sufficient to alter our understanding of the entry. [↑](#footnote-ref-695)
696. The Chronicler states that these died in great numbers ‘because they did not trouble to find a bridge’ (*forðam þe hi nanre bricge ne cepton*); *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, pp. 98-99; trans. Whitelock *ASC*, 1013, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-696)
697. Keynes, ‘A Tale of Two Kings’, p. 201; Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation’, pp. 230-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-697)
698. Frank Stenton suggests that the language of the agreement made between Æthelred and the *witan* upon his restoration from exile might indicate that the kings subjects feared and distrusted him, and thus submitted to Swein willingly; Stenton, *ASE*, p. 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-698)
699. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 225-226; *ASC* ‘C’, 1011, p. 95; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1011, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-699)
700. *ASC*, ‘C’, 1012, pp. 96-97; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1012, pp. 91-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-700)
701. M.K. Lawson, ‘The Collections of Danegeld and Heregeld in the Reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut’, *EHR* 99 (1984): 721-738. [↑](#footnote-ref-701)
702. *ASC* ‘C’, 1011, p. 95; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1011, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-702)
703. *Videntes itaque Eboraci se a nullo iuuari, obsidibus datis, se illius subigunt dominatui* (‘When the people of Yorkshire perceived that they were not to be helped, they gave him [Swein] hostages and submitted to his rule.’): William of Jumièges, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni,* vol. 2 of 2 volumes, ed. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts (Oxford, 1995), p. 18-19; *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-703)
704. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 87; Whitelock, *ASC*, pp. 92-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-704)
705. Bosworth-Toller, p. 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-705)
706. *ASC* ‘E’, 1036, p. 76; Whitelock, *ASC*, p. 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-706)
707. M.K. Lawson, ‘Harold I (d. 1040), King of England’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 27/7/2012, http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/12359?docPos=1; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 420-421. [↑](#footnote-ref-707)
708. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 98; also S. Keynes, ‘The Ӕthelings in Normandy’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1996): 173-205. On Ælfsige’s gathering of relics during this exile, see entries in Whitelock, *ASC*, p. 93 n.2; *ASC* ‘E’, 1013, pp. 70-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-708)
709. *ASC* ‘C’, 1013, p. 98 [↑](#footnote-ref-709)
710. Whitelock, *ASC*, 1014, p. 93; *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-710)
711. *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, p. 93; Whitelock, *ASC* 1014, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-711)
712. Stenton, *ASE*, p. 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-712)
713. Whitelock notes that the phrase *þe on Engla lande wæron* is only found in the ‘C’ manuscript, which would suggest that some of the king’s councillors had traveled to Normandy with him. The exclusion of this phrase from D and E does not seem to alter the meaning of the entry greatly, though the C manuscript more clearly portrays the king’s return as being instigated from England rather than conceived in Normandy. Whitelock, *ASC*, n.4, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-713)
714. Jonathan Wilcox has hypothesized that this council would have met at York on 16 February 1014, and that this council was originally organized prior to Swein’s death with the intention of planning Swein’s coronation. Wilcox also argues that Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* was first delivered at this council. J. Wilcox, ‘Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond’, in ed. M. Townend *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: the Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, vol. 10 (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 376-383. [↑](#footnote-ref-714)
715. Bosworth-Toller, p. 382. The *ASC* entry for 1014 echoes similar sentiments on lordship as seen in the 755 entry concerning Cynewulf and Cyneheard: *7 þa cuedon hie þæt him nænig mæg leofra nære tonne hiera hlaford* (Then they replied that no kinsman was dearer to them than their lord); *ASC* ‘A’, 755, p. 37; Whitelock, *ASC*, 755, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-715)
716. *ASC* ‘A’, 867, p. 47; Whitelock, *ASC*, 867, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-716)
717. *ASC* ‘C’, 1042, p. 108; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1042, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-717)
718. Harmer has noted that the *ASC* entry concerning Ӕthelred’s conditional return follows wording associated with royal writs of the time, and so Edward may have been carrying a writ to the *witan* on behalf of his father; Edward’s importance as an *ætheling* and agent of the king is in no way diminished by this possibility. See F.E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester, 1952), pp. 16 and 541-542. [↑](#footnote-ref-718)
719. The Chronicler uses the Old Norse loan word *utlah* in this entry. Elisabeth van Houts notes that *utlah* had been adopted by the English and incorporated into legislation during the late tenth century, and may have been aimed at regions of significant Danish settlement. Van Houts, ‘The Vocabulary of Exile and Outlawry’, pp. 13-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-719)
720. Clark, ‘The Narrative Mode of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*’, pp. 227-228. [↑](#footnote-ref-720)
721. S. Keynes, ‘Re-Reading King Ӕthelred the Unready’, in eds. D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton *Writing Medieval Biography, 750-1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 85. Patrick Wormald also argues that oaths were important, but is careful to state that these did not necessarily guarantee lasting submission: Wormald, ‘*Engla Lond*: the Making of an Allegiance’, pp. 370-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-721)
722. III Atr, 13.2: *7 þæt dom stande þar þegenas sammæle beon; gif hig sacan, stande þæt hig viii secgað; 7 þa þe ðær oferdrifene beoð, gilde heora ælc vi healfmarc.* (‘And a verdict in which the thegns are unanimous shall be held valid; if they disagree, the verdict of eight of them shall be valid, and those who are outvoted in such a case shall each pay 6 half-marks.’); III Atr, 13.3: *7 þar þegen age twegen costas, lufe oððe lage, 7 he þonne lufe geceose, stande þæt swa fæst swa se dom.* (‘And where a thegn has two alternatives before him – amicable agreement or legal proceedings – and he decides upon the former, it shall be as binding as a legal decision.’). Translation in Robertson, *Laws*, III Atr 13.2 and 13.3, pp. 68-71; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe*, p. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-722)
723. *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-723)
724. *...7 wende þa suðweard oþ he com to Sandwic 7 let don up þær ða gislas þe his fæder gesealde wæron 7 cearf of hiora handa 7 earan 7 nosa*: *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-724)
725. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, pp. 99-100; Whitelock, *ASC* p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-725)
726. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, pp. 99-100; Whitelock, *ASC* p. 94; Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 35-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-726)
727. Keynes, ‘A Tale of Two Kings’, p. 213; A. Williams, ‘The Spoliation of Worcester’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* 19 (1997): 385;on early signs of Eadric’s reluctance to fight the Danes and eventual defection to Cnut, see Lawson, ‘Collection of Danegeld and Heregeld’, pp. 732-734. [↑](#footnote-ref-727)
728. *ASC* ‘C’, 1016, pp. 100-101; Whitelock, *ASC* pp. 94-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-728)
729. This is the same Ealdorman Uhtred of Northumbria who had submitted to Swein in 1013. [↑](#footnote-ref-729)
730. *ASC* ‘C’, 1016, pp. 100-101; Whitelock, *ASC* pp. 94-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-730)
731. On the Chronicler’s sympathies for Æthelred, see Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 297; and Keynes, ‘Declining Reputation’, p. 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-731)
732. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-732)
733. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-733)
734. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 33; Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Ӕthelred ‘The Unready’*, pp. 186-187. [↑](#footnote-ref-734)
735. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, pp. 15-16 and 32-35; Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, pp. 31 and 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-735)
736. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-736)
737. R. Fleming, ‘The New Wealth, the New Rich and the New Political Style in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* 23 (2000): 1-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-737)
738. Fleming, ‘The New Wealth’, pp. 15-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-738)
739. S. Keynes, ‘Charters and Writs’, *BEASE*, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-739)
740. Karl Heidecker notes that across nationalities and periods, the word commonly used to describe legal documents is ‘charter’, a very broad sense of meaning resulting in epistemological problems. See his introduction in K. Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 5 (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 2-3. See also H. Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, vol. 1 of 2 vols., 2nd edn. (Berlin, 1912), p.1; for a broader discussion of relevant terminology, M. Milagros Cárcel Ortí, ed., *Vocabulaire international de la diplomatique* (Valencia, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-740)
741. Keynes, ‘Charters and Writs’, *BEASE*, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-741)
742. Whitelock, *EHD*, pp. 375, 754 and 805. [↑](#footnote-ref-742)
743. P. Chaplais, ‘Who Introduced Charters into England? The Case for Augustine’, in ed. F. Ranger *Prisca Munimenta: Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr. A.E.J. Hollaender* (London, 1973), pp. 88-107. [↑](#footnote-ref-743)
744. P. Wormald, *Bede and the Conversion of England: The Charter Evidence*, Jarrow Lecture 1984 (Jarrow, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-744)
745. S.B. Chrimes, *An Introduction to the Administrative History of Mediaeval England* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 1-8; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-745)
746. P. Chaplais, ‘The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma’ and ‘The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: from the Diploma to the Writ’, ed. F. Ranger *Prisca Munimenta: Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr. A.E.J. Hollaender* (London, 1973), pp. 28-42 and 43-62. For a more detailed assessment of this debate, see S.D. Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas: a Palaeography* (Woodbridge, 2006),pp. 8-18. Thompson happens to agree with Keynes. [↑](#footnote-ref-746)
747. Keynes, ‘Charters and Writs’, *BEASE,* p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-747)
748. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 344. [↑](#footnote-ref-748)
749. Whitelock refers to ‘a cult of originality’, and Keynes believes the draftsmen ‘appear to have favoured originality of expression as if for its own sake’; Whitelock, *EHD,* p. 345; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-749)
750. D. Bates, ‘Charters and Historians’, in eds. M.T. Flanagan and J.A. Green *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-750)
751. Bates, ‘Charters and Historians’, pp. 2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-751)
752. N. Brooks, ‘Anglo-Saxon Charters: the Work of the Last Twenty Years’, *ASE* 3 (1973): 211-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-752)
753. Charters named and discussed in the present work adhere to their respective Sawyer numbers (S XXX). P. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968).This work is now online, providing a ready reference which can be easily updated when necessary: British Academy and Royal Historical Society Joint Committee on Anglo-Saxon Charters, ‘The Electronic Sawyer’, last accessed 9 July 2012, http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/esawyer.99/esawyer2.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-753)
754. H.P.R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands*, 2nd edn. (Leicester, 1972); C. Hart, *The Early Charters of Essex*, 2nd edn. (Leicester, 1971); F. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 2nd edn. (Stamford, 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-754)
755. C. Insley, ‘Athelstan, Charters and the English in Cornwall’, in eds. M.T. Flanagan and J.A. Green *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 15-31. See also Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 339-342. [↑](#footnote-ref-755)
756. Keynes, *Diplomas*. [↑](#footnote-ref-756)
757. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 95, 98, 186-189. [↑](#footnote-ref-757)
758. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-758)
759. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 95-125 and 186-208. [↑](#footnote-ref-759)
760. P. Stafford, ‘Political Ideas in Late Tenth-Century England: Charters as Evidence’, in eds. P. Stafford, J. Nelson and J. Martindale *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds* (Manchester, 2001), p. 69, 71, 72, 73-5 and 82. The charters discussed there include: S 876, 880, 881, 891, 893, 894, 895, 896, 898, 899, 909, 911, 913, 937, 942, and 944. [↑](#footnote-ref-760)
761. Stafford, ‘Political Ideas in Late Tenth-Century England’, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-761)
762. Special thanks to Catherine Cubitt for having made this article available to me prior to publication. Cubitt, Catherine. ‘The Politics of Remorse: Penance and Royal Piety in the Reign of Æthelred the Unready’. *Historical Research* 85, no. 228 (2012): 179-192. [↑](#footnote-ref-762)
763. Keynes, *Diplomas,* pp. 266-7; Keynes, *Abbotsbury*, pp. 227-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-763)
764. I exclude S 935 from my primary discussion because of serious concerns about its authenticity. Keynes notes that the charter, if genuine, would have to have been produced before Ӕthelred’s death on 23 April 1016. However, Archbishop Dunstan, who died 19 May 988, and Ӕthelred’s son Ӕthelstan, who died 25 June 1014, both appear on this charter dated 1016. Furthermore, Eadric Streona would have already defected to Cnut by 1016, yet he too is in the witness list. Keynes considers the charter to be questionable, in its extant form, but does not condemn it as a forgery. John Blair considers the charter to be a forgery, and proposes that it may have been an attempt ‘to assimilate an obscure St. Eadweard to a famous one’, and thus raise the monastery’s standing. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 97 no. 43 and pp. 267-8; J. Blair, ‘A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints’, in eds. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), p. 529. [↑](#footnote-ref-764)
765. Finberg, *ECWM*, no. 419, p. 144-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-765)
766. On nostalgic references during this period see M.T. Clanchy, ‘Remembering the Past and the Good Old Law’, *History* 55 (1970): 165-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-766)
767. See Keynes, *A Tale of Two Kings*, pp. 200 and 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-767)
768. For a full discussion on Leofwine’s developing career in Æthelred’s reign and his establishment of a powerful aristocratic family, see S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 17-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-768)
769. Keynes, *Diplomas,* p. 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-769)
770. Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXII 1 and 2 of 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-770)
771. On royal patronage and land grants, see Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 145-149. [↑](#footnote-ref-771)
772. Indeed, the cartulary may even refer to the original charter in a note concerning the bounds: ‘S 932’, *The Electronic Sawyer*, last accessed 9 July 2012, http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/esawyer.99/esawyer2.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-772)
773. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, p. 35; Wormald, ‘*Engla Lond*: the Making of an Allegiance’, p. 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-773)
774. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 17. On the system of patronage and the distinction between folkland and bookland, see S. Baxter and J. Blair, ‘A Model of Land Tenure and Royal Patronage in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, in ed. C.P. Lewis *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2005* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 19-29; Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia*, esp. pp. 145-149; P. Depreux, ‘The Development of Charters Confirming Exchange by the Royal Administration (Eighth-Tenth Centuries)’, in ed. Karl Heidecker *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Socity*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 5 (Brepols, 2000) pp. 43-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-774)
775. Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-775)
776. Wormald, ‘*Engla Lond*: the Making of an Allegiance’, p. 367. [↑](#footnote-ref-776)
777. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, p.36-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-777)
778. For S 934, see Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137; for S 935, see K 723. [↑](#footnote-ref-778)
779. See the brief list of executions in Whitelock, *ASC*, 1017, p. 97. Also S. Keynes, ‘Cnut’, *BEASE*, pp. 108-9; Stenton, *ASE*, p. 397 and 413-414;Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 25-26 and 73-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-779)
780. Sealwyne’s name is not recorded elsewhere, either in royal documents or by the Chronicler. [↑](#footnote-ref-780)
781. Keynes, *Diplomas,* p. 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-781)
782. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-782)
783. My translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-783)
784. Keynes, ‘Re-Reading King Ӕthelred the Unready’, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-784)
785. See Robinson, *Laws*, III Em, c.1, and V Atr, c.22.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-785)
786. Keynes, *Diplomas,* p. 120 n. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-786)
787. O’Donovan, *Sherborne,* p. 53: *libenter annotaui, humiliter consensi, benigniter subarraui, gratanter muniui,* and *clementer subscripsi.* [↑](#footnote-ref-787)
788. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 115; O’Donovan, *Sherborne*, p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-788)
789. See above, n. 787. [↑](#footnote-ref-789)
790. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-790)
791. Cf. S 926, 927, 931a, 931b, 931, 932, 933 and 934; Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXII, 2 of 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-791)
792. All versions of the *ASC* entry for 1013 specifically name Uhtred and Ӕthelmær as having submitted to Swein. The statement that ‘all the nation regarded him (Swein) as full king’ would suggest that all ealdormen concerned would also have submitted. However, the C entry for 1014 regarding Ӕthelred’s recall to England states that Ӕthelred was invited back by ‘all the councillors who were in England’. This may suggest that some of the king’s councillors had not remained in England, but it is uncertain whether any of his ealdormen or thegns necessarily accompanied the king in exile. Furthermore, it brings us to question whether the people of Lindsey acted of their own volition when they supported Cnut in 1014, or if they were led by the thegns Sigeferth and Morcar who were later murdered by Eadric in 1015. [↑](#footnote-ref-792)
793. *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, pp. 98-99; Whitelock, *ASC* p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-793)
794. *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-794)
795. *ASC* ‘C’, 1014; and discussed in detail above. [↑](#footnote-ref-795)
796. These include S 854, S 900, S 903, S 906, S 907, S 910, S 911, S 912, S 915, S 916, S 918, S 922, S 926, S 931, S 931b, S 933, and S 938. Ulfcytel also attests S 935, but the witness list is spurious. [↑](#footnote-ref-796)
797. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 131, p. 509. [↑](#footnote-ref-797)
798. Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXIV 2 of 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-798)
799. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 120, p. 464. [↑](#footnote-ref-799)
800. Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXIII. [↑](#footnote-ref-800)
801. However, Keynes suggests that this charter is spurious due to the apologetic nature of its narrative which he feels puts the charter at a date later than 981: Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 97 n. 43 and 180 n. 101. Ӕlfmær’s attestation appears next in 1004 (S 906) which may also suggest that S 838 should be dated somewhat later than 981, but for my purpose here it is the number of Ӕlfmær’s attestations throughout Ӕthelred’s reign which I would like to stress. K 1234. [↑](#footnote-ref-801)
802. Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXIII;Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 27, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-802)
803. Keynes notes that Ӕlfgar may have been ‘Ӕlfgar son of Meaw’ who John of Worcester says sided with Eadric Streona and Cnut at the battle of Sherston in 1016. He also suggests that the ‘Ӕlmer Darling’ who joined Eadric in 1016 could have been the Ӕlfmær who subscribes here; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 227 n. 265; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, Volume II: the Annals from 450 to 1066*, eds. R. Darlington and P. McGurk (Oxford, 1995), p. 487. [↑](#footnote-ref-803)
804. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, p. 537; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-804)
805. *arcipotentis Dei pietate regali fretus dignitate* [↑](#footnote-ref-805)
806. Keynes, ‘Re-Reading King Ӕthelred the Unready’, pp. 91-2; Cubitt, ‘The Politics of Remorse’, pp. 186-187. [↑](#footnote-ref-806)
807. M. Clayton, ‘Ӕlfric and Ӕthelred’, in eds. J. Roberts and J. Nelson *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy* (London, 2000), pp. 68-9; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 98 and 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-807)
808. Cubitt, ‘The Politics of Remorse’, p. 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-808)
809. S 876 is, intriguingly, marked at the beginning with the Alpha and Omega ( and includes: *Haec igitur mecum uigilanti p[e]ctore uoluens . et citius a tanto tamque exhorrendo anathemate liberari cupiens..*. S 911: *Et quia in nostris temporibus bellorum incendia direptionesque opum nostrarum patimur, necnon ex uastantium crudelissima depraedatione hostium barbarorum, paganarumque gentium multiplici tribulatione, affligentiumque nos usque ad internecionem tempora cernimus incumbere periculosa*. The proem for S 911 contains notes God’s wrath and the means by which his anger is brought down upon the English: *iram plus solito seuientis Dei in nos...Et quia in nostris temporibus bellorum incendia direptionesque opum nostrarum patimur, necnon et uastantium crudelissima depredatione hostium barbarorum, paganorumque gentium multiplici tribulatione, affligentiumque nos usque ad internitionem, tempora cerniumus incumbere periculosa...* Keynes, ‘Re-Reading King Ӕthelred the Unready’, pp. 92 and 96; Kelly, *Abingdon* 2, no. 124, pp. 473; Salter, *Eynsham Cartulary* 1, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-809)
810. M. Godden, ‘Ælfric of Eynsham’, *BEASE*, pp. 8-9; A. Orchard, ‘Wulfstan the Homilist’, *BEASE*, pp. 494-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-810)
811. Ælfric does not comment on Æthelred’s reign in his own writings. Clayton, ‘Ӕlfric and Ӕthelred’, p. 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-811)
812. Clayton, ‘Ӕlfric and Ӕthelred’, pp. 75-77; Ælfric of Eynsham, ‘Abdon’, ‘Sennes’, ‘Oswald’, and ‘Edmund’, in ed. W.W. Skeat Ælfric's Lives of Saints , EETS 76, 82, 94 and 114 (London, 1881) [repr. in 2 vols. 1966], pp. 54-59, 123-143 and 313-334. [↑](#footnote-ref-812)
813. R. Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies*, EETS 29 and 34 (London, 1867-8), pp. 296-304. [↑](#footnote-ref-813)
814. Clayton, ‘Ӕlfric and Ӕthelred’, pp. 80-82; Ælfric of Eynsham, ‘Dominica post Ascensionem Domini’, in ed. J.C. Pope *Homilies of Ӕlfric*,v.1, pp. 380-1; M.K. Lawson, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element in the Laws of Ӕthelred II and Cnut’, in ed. A.R Rumble *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway* (London, 1994), pp. 143 and 148-149. See also A. Peden, ‘Unity, Order and Ottonian Kingship in the Thought of Abbo of Fleury’, in eds. R. Gameson and H. Leyser *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 162-165. [↑](#footnote-ref-814)
815. Wulfstan of York, *Die Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical: ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, ed. Karl Jost (Bern, 1959), pp. 41 and 43; translation from Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-815)
816. Wulfstan, *Die Institutes of Polity*, pp. 12 and 52; trans. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, pp. 125 and 127; Wormald, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder’, in ed. M. Townend *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: the Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 10 (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 19-20 and 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-816)
817. Loyn, *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England 500-1087*, pp. 86-7; [↑](#footnote-ref-817)
818. Wulfstan of York, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. D. Whitelock (London, 1963). [↑](#footnote-ref-818)
819. C. Cubitt, ‘The Politics of Remorse’, p. 189-190. [↑](#footnote-ref-819)
820. Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, lines 74-80, pp. 56-7; translation from Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, p. 118; translation in brackets by myself. [↑](#footnote-ref-820)
821. S. Keynes, ‘An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids’, *ASE* 36 (2008): 203-213. [↑](#footnote-ref-821)
822. The accusative noun is the charter itself, and is commonly assumed in attestations with similar verbs. [↑](#footnote-ref-822)
823. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 213-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-823)
824. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, pp. 99-100; Whitelock, *ASC* p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-824)
825. Lawson, ‘Archbishop Wulfstand and the Homiletic Element’, p. 147; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-825)
826. See also A. Williams, *Land, Power and Politics: the Family and Career of Odda of Deerhurst*, Deerhurst Lecture 1996 (Deerhurst, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-826)
827. This warning concerning Leofwine’s name is given by editors of the *PASE*: http://www.pase.ac.uk/pase/apps/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?personKey=874, accessed 16/10/2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-827)
828. Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXIII. [↑](#footnote-ref-828)
829. Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXIV 3 of 3; Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 135 and 136; Hart, *ECEE*, p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-829)
830. Hart, *ECEE*, pp. 194 and 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-830)
831. Sawyer, *Burton*, nos. 32, 34 and 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-831)
832. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, p. 99; Whitelock, *ASC* 1015, p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-832)
833. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, pp. 99-100; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 388-9; Williams, *Ӕthelred the Unready, the Ill-counseled King* (London, 2003), pp. 132-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-833)
834. It is unclear why Sigeferth’s widow was sent to Malmesbury, although the king’s intention may have been to either secure her as a hostage or to have her take vows as a nun. [↑](#footnote-ref-834)
835. On instances of royally sanctioned violence during the reign, see also Wilcox, ‘The St. Brice’s Day Massacre’, pp. 79-91, esp. 81-83; Stafford, ‘The Reign of Ӕthelred II’, p. 35; Whitelock, *ASC*, 1002 and 1006, pp. 86-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-835)
836. Williams, *Ӕthelred the Unready*, pp. 132-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-836)
837. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, pp. 99-100; Whitelock, *ASC* 1015, p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-837)
838. Williams, *Ӕthelred the Unready*, p 134; also R. Lavelle, *Æthelred II: King of the English, 978-1016* (Stroud, 2008), pp. 169-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-838)
839. *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-839)
840. I have already discounted S 935 as a spurious document, but its proem is intriguing nonetheless. If the charter had been forged after Æthelred’s reign, then it is curious how the author chose to present the sense of hope on the part of the English despite the continued Viking threat (*Quamuis quassantibus undique bellis piratarum infestorum nobis, tamen omnipotenti deo in nobis triumphanti, ac uictoriam iam crebrius praestanti eius munimine inuicto gaudentes*). If written after the king’s death, as with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the final years of Æthelred’s reign, then why would the author have chosen to write this proem which appears to be unique among Anglo-Saxon diplomatics? The evidence against this charter’s authenticity is based upon problems with the witness-list; perhaps this is insufficient to declare the main body of the charter to be spurious, but for now I will omit S 935 from my discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-840)
841. Finberg, *ECWM*, no. 419, pp. 143-145. [↑](#footnote-ref-841)
842. Finberg, *ECWM*, no. 419, pp. 143 and 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-842)
843. Cf. S 920, 921, 924, 926, and 929; S 934 is superscribed *Huius inexauste felicitatis dulcedine delectatus*, referring to the proem’s listing of those dwelling in heaven. [↑](#footnote-ref-843)
844. It is of course possible that the charter, while made out to a layperson, was actually being used to provide freedoms for the estate in question so that Leofwine could legally offer the land as a gift to a religious house; thus Keynes argues that charters issued to individuals may not necessarily indicate ‘royal favour’; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 32-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-844)
845. Finberg, *ECWM*, no. 419, pp. 143-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-845)
846. Finberg, *ECWM*, no. 419, pp. 143-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-846)
847. Finberg, *ECWM*, no. 419, p. 145. This is cited above on p. 224: *Ego Ӕthelred non minus antecessoribus meis regali pollens gloria biblum hunc sub sancte crucis inpressione signatum instans corroboravi*. [↑](#footnote-ref-847)
848. O’Donovan, *Sherborne,* no. 15, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-848)
849. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, p. 536; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-849)
850. S 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 931, 931a and 931b; S 930 has been deemed spurious by Sawyer, Hart and Keynes, and so has not been included in the discussion here: Sawyer, *Burton*, p. 69; Hart, *ECNE*, p. 239; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 123 n. 128 and 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-850)
851. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, p. 532: ‘reigning by assent of almighty God’ (my translation). [↑](#footnote-ref-851)
852. Hart, *Barking Abbey*, no. 11; http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/kemble/index.php?menuitem=6&pagename=-3#931b, accessed 25 November 2009; ‘elevated as sole king of all Brittain by consent of the Almighty’ (my translation). [↑](#footnote-ref-852)
853. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 136, p. 532: *Et in hac uita labili summis studiis eterna mortalibus mercanda est*. [↑](#footnote-ref-853)
854. The use of envelope structures has already been discussed above in the chapter on Edwin of Northumbria, pp. 44-45. See again Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, p. 70; Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, pp. 263-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-854)
855. Finberg, *ECWM*, pp. 143-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-855)
856. O’Donovan, *Sherborne,* no. 15, p. 52; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-856)
857. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, pp. 535-538. [↑](#footnote-ref-857)
858. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, p. 536. [↑](#footnote-ref-858)
859. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, p. 536.; use of the word *tartari* is also seen in the anathema of S 933, and the language is sufficiently similar to indicate that the author of S 934 was either working from a draft of S 933 as an exemplar, or that one person authored both charters. [↑](#footnote-ref-859)
860. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, p. 536; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-860)
861. K 720; see also Harmer, *Writs*, p. 383; translation in Rumble, *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester: Documents Relating to the Anglo-Saxon and Norman City and its Minsters*, Winchester Studies 4 (Oxford, 2002)*,* p. 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-861)
862. Rumble, *Property and Piety,* p. 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-862)
863. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 125 n. 135; Keynes has pointed out that this charter does not fit well into the mainstream of Æthelred’s diplomas due to its unique terms, including the exemption of the *trimoda necessitas*,and the lack of subscriptions other than those of the king and his sons; he considers this to be due to the nature of the recipient’s relationship to the king. [↑](#footnote-ref-863)
864. Rumble, *Property and Piety,* p. 217; this proem also has much to say about events contemporary with its issuance, though whether the draftsman was implying dishonest nobles and rulers or raiding Vikings is difficult to tell here. [↑](#footnote-ref-864)
865. This charter is currently not in print and the only Latin text available is online: http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=charter&id=931a, accessed 3/7/2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-865)
866. Act 5:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-866)
867. Finberg, *ECWM*, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-867)
868. O’Donovan, *Sherborne,* no. 15, pp. 52-3; also see above, pp. 242-244. [↑](#footnote-ref-868)
869. O’Donovan, *Sherborne,* no. 15, p. 51; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-869)
870. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, pp. 536. [↑](#footnote-ref-870)
871. Campbell, *Rochester*, no. 33, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-871)
872. Hart, *ECNE*, p. 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-872)
873. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 95-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-873)
874. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 137, pp. 536; my translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-874)
875. For an example of this connection between land and instability during Æthelred’s reign, see Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia*, p. 123, and also see pp. 68-71 and 145-149. See also Depreux, ‘The Development of Charters’, pp. 43-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-875)
876. Robertson, *Laws*, p. 49. Texts and translations are taken from A.J. Robertson, ed., *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge, 1925); and F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1 of 3 (Halle, 1916). [↑](#footnote-ref-876)
877. Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 49-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-877)
878. Keynes, ‘An Abbot, an Archbishop’, p. 179; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 217, n. 224; Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1999), n.314, p. 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-878)
879. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, in ed. D. Hill *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (Oxford, 1978), p. 60; cf. Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 52-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-879)
880. X Atr, c.1-2, p. 270; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 130-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-880)
881. P. Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta* and *Verbum Regis*’, in eds. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-881)
882. Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta*’, pp. 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-882)
883. Patrick Wormald argues that the promulgation of law was primarily an oral process, with a principally ideological function of binding a king or dynasty with his people: Wormald, ‘*Lex Scripta*’, pp. 135-136. It should be noted that both first and third person are used in Anglo-Saxon writs, which are fairly formulaic in their use with a third person greeting before a first person announcement. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, pp. 61-66 and 182-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-883)
884. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, p. 69; Keynes, ‘An Abbot, an Archbishop’, pp. 171 and 177-189. [↑](#footnote-ref-884)
885. Whitelock, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman’, pp. 27-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-885)
886. N. Ker, ‘The Handwriting of Archbishop Wulfstan’, in ed. A. Watson *Books, Collectors and Libraries* (London, 1985), pp. 315-331; P. Wormald, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society’, in his *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London, 1999), pp. 225-251. [↑](#footnote-ref-886)
887. I Em, Pr., p. 184; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-887)
888. II Em, Pr., p. 186; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-888)
889. III Em, Pr., p. 190; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 12-3. Preserved only in the *Quadripartitus*, a Latin copy of a lost Old English manuscript. [↑](#footnote-ref-889)
890. II Eg, Pr., p. 194; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 20-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-890)
891. IV Eg, Pr., p. 206; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 28-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-891)
892. It should also be noted that the only codes omitted here, I and III Edgar, do not refer to the advice of counsellors. Both of these codes deal almost exclusively with the administration of hundreds which would presumably have been overseen by the same chief men that would otherwise have been called upon for counsel; perhaps the potential conflict of interests might explain their omission from I and III Edgar, but this is a matter for a separate work. [↑](#footnote-ref-892)
893. IV Eg, c.4.1, p. 207; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 30-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-893)
894. I Atr, Pr., p. 216; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 52-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-894)
895. II Atr, Pr., p. 220; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 56-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-895)
896. III Atr, Pr., p. 228; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 64-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-896)
897. V Atr, Pr., p. 236; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 78-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-897)
898. VI Atr, Pr., p. 246; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-1. The exclusive mention of the council in the prologue to VI Atr is unique among Æthelred’s codes, and may signify some level of constitutional decision-making in English government operating independently from the king, though this power surely relied upon the king’s disgression. The body of VI Atr has five instances wherein chapters begin with the phrase *7 witena gerædnes* (cc. 2, 3, 8-10), further emphasizing the council’s role in fashioning laws. See J.R. Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament, 924-1327* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 1-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-898)
899. VII Atr, Pr., p. 260; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 108-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-899)
900. IV Atr, c.4.2, pp. 232-5; Robertson, *Laws*, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-900)
901. Janet Nelson’s discussion on the personal voice and intent of Charlemagne highlights the difficulty of discerning authorship or direction of texts issued by the throne, noting that subject-matter may express the emperor’s wishes without clearly using Charlemagne’s ‘voice’ even when the royal ‘we’ is utilized. Though perhaps giving a voice to Ӕthelred rather than expressing his actual voice, I would argue that the use of person and voice in the works composed by Wulfstan during his reign is likely to have been carefully chosen, as will be discussed. See J. Nelson, ‘The Voice of Charlemagne’, in eds. R. Gameson and H. Leyser *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 76-85, esp. pp. 79-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-901)
902. IV Atr, c.4.2, pp. 74-5; Robertson, *Laws*, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-902)
903. IV Atr, c.5, p. 234; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 74-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-903)
904. IV Atr, c.5.2, p. 234; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 74-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-904)
905. IV Atr, pp. 234-236; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 76-9. The only clear use of the first person plural here is in c.9.3: *Et custodiant omnes monetam, sicut vos docere praecipio et omnes elegimus.* (And the coinage is to be maintained by all at the standard which I lay down in your instructions, in accordance with the decision at which we have all arrived.) [↑](#footnote-ref-905)
906. On the consensual nature of late Anglo-Saxon legislation, see Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament*, pp. 28-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-906)
907. VI Atr, c.5, p. 248; Robertson, *Laws*, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-907)
908. VII Atr, cc.7.1 and 8, pp. 261-2; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 112 and 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-908)
909. Robertson, *Laws*, p. 50; Robertson notes that king’s name, which would help date the document as being within the span of Ӕthelred’s reign, is absent, but that resemblances to the earlier V and VI Atr codes, as well as similarities to Wulfstan’s sermon of the same year, make this date of 1014 plausible. [↑](#footnote-ref-909)
910. VIII Atr, Pr., p. 263; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 116-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-910)
911. VIII Atr, c.31, p. 267; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 126-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-911)
912. VIII Atr, c.43, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-912)
913. VIII Atr, c.44, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-913)
914. VIII Atr, c.44, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-914)
915. VIII Atr, c.44.1, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-915)
916. On Wulfstan’s sermon style, see Whitelock, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman’, pp. 27-28; R. Trilling, ‘Sovereignty and Social Order: Archbishop Wulfstan and the *Institutes of Polity*’, in eds. A.T. Jones and J.S. Ott *The Bishop Reformed: Studies in Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 61-2 and 66; Lawson, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element’, pp. 142-3; M. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ӕlfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 18-22; A. Orchard, ‘Wulfstan as Reader, Writer, and Rewriter’, in ed. A. Kleist *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 17 (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 315-322; on rhythmic style, see A. McIntosh, ‘Wulfstan’s Prose’, in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 35 (1949), pp. 109-142. [↑](#footnote-ref-916)
917. Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 96; see also Orchard, ‘Wulfstan as Reader’, p. 322; A. Orchard, ‘Crying Wolf: Oral Style and the ‘*Sermones Lupi*’’, *ASE* 21 (1992), p. 250. [↑](#footnote-ref-917)
918. On legislation as an expression of royal legitimacy, see Wallace-Hadrill, ‘King Æthelberht’, pp. 40-44; P. Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, p. 95. Wulfstan’s ideas about kingship as seen in the *Institues of Polity* and as confronted in the content of those law codes which he is presumed to have taken an authorial hand in are discussed in greater detail in the section on II Cnut below. [↑](#footnote-ref-918)
919. VIII Atr, c.1, p. 263; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 116-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-919)
920. VIII Atr, c.32, p. 267; Robertson, *Laws,* pp. 126-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-920)
921. VIII Atr, c.6, p. 263; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 120-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-921)
922. As discussed above, the *witan* invited Ӕthelred to return from Normandy if he would rule them more justly than before; *ASC* ‘C’, 1014, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-922)
923. V Atr, Pr., c.1.1, c.2, c.3, c.4, c.5, pp. 237-238; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 78-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-923)
924. V Atr, c.16, p. 240; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 84-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-924)
925. VI Atr, c.2, c.3, c.8-10, pp. 246-248 and 250; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-1 and 94-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-925)
926. VI Atr, c.51, p. 258; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 104-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-926)
927. VII Atr (Latin) Prol., c.1-6, pp. 260-261; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 108-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-927)
928. VII Atr (Anglo-Saxon), c.1, p. 262; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 114-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-928)
929. VIII Atr, c.1.1, c.2.1, c.3, c.5.1, c.7, c.8, c.10.1, c.11, c.33, c.34, c.36, c.37, c.38, c.42, pp. 263-265 and 267-268; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 116-121 and 126-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-929)
930. VIII Atr, c.44.1, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws*, p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-930)
931. V Atr, c.21, c.28-30, pp. 242-244; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 84-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-931)
932. VI Atr, c.13, c.14, c.26, c.34-37, pp. 250 and 255-256; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 96-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-932)
933. VII Atr, c.1, c.2.4, c.3, c.3.2, p. 262; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 108-111. [↑](#footnote-ref-933)
934. V Atr, c.2, c.32, pp. 238 and 244; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 78-79 and 88-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-934)
935. V Atr, c.35, p. 246; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-935)
936. VI Atr, c.1, p. 246; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-936)
937. VI Atr, c.1, p. 246; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-937)
938. VIII Atr c.2.1, p. 263; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 118-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-938)
939. Especially Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, lines 74-80, pp. 56-7; quoted and discussed above, p. 237. [↑](#footnote-ref-939)
940. VIII Atr c.44.1, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws,* pp. 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-940)
941. V Atr, c.35, p. 246; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-1; VI Atr, c.1, p. 246; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 90-1; VII Atr, c.1, p. 261; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 108-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-941)
942. VIII Atr c.7, pp. 264-265; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 120-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-942)
943. VIII Atr c.37, p. 267; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 126-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-943)
944. VIII Atr c.43, p. 268; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-944)
945. VI Atr c.23.1, p. 252; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 98-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-945)
946. On referals to past events to understand or justify present legal conditions, see Clanchy, ‘Remembering the Past and the Good Old Law’, pp. 165-176, esp. 171-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-946)
947. VI Atr c.36, p. 256; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 126-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-947)
948. VIII Atr, Prol., p. 263; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 116-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-948)
949. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 411; Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-949)
950. Whitelock, *EHD*, pp. 411 and 419. [↑](#footnote-ref-950)
951. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, p. 59; Wormald, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society’, p. 226; also *ASC* ‘C’ 1014, pp. 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-951)
952. Extant Old English copies of II Cn are found complete in London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.1 (MS G) and London British Library MS Harley 55 (MS A), and all but the first fourteen chapters in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383 (MS B); fragments are also found in Corpus Christi College MS 201 (MS D); three Latin translations are extant in the *Quadripartitus*, the *Instituta Cnuti* and the *Consiliatio Cnuti*. Robertson’s edition is from MS B, with missing clauses taken from MS G as necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-952)
953. D. Whitelock, ‘Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut’, *EHR* 63 (1968): 133-152. [↑](#footnote-ref-953)
954. Whitelock gives six reasons for believing Wulfstan was the author of Cnut’s laws: the author’s familiarity with Wulfstan’s writings, a tendency to reuse and modify passages directly, the addition of Wulfstan phrases to non-Wulfstanian passages, the inclusion of unique passages in Wulfstan’s style of writing, changes of previous laws to reduce instances of the death penalty, and the absence of other apparent influences. Elsewhere, Whitelock discusses key attributes of Wulfstan’s style of writing, noting that the combination of style and vocabulary within a work likely authored by one of high standing would also indicate the work of Archbishop Wulfstan. On Wulfstan’s authoring of the laws of Cnut, see Whitelock, ‘Wulfstan’s Authorship of Cnut’s Laws’, *EHR* 70 (1955): 72-85; see again Whitelock, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman’, pp. 27-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-954)
955. Wormald, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society’, p. 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-955)
956. Whitelock, ‘Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut’, p. 447. [↑](#footnote-ref-956)
957. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, p. 59; Wormald, *The Making of English Law*,p. 337 n. 344. See II Cn, c.64, p. 352; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 206-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-957)
958. K. Jost, *Wulfstanstudien*, Schweizer anglistische Arbeiten 23 (Bern, 1950), pp. 104-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-958)
959. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, p. 60; Wormald, *The Making of English Law*,p. 337 n. 344; V Atr, c.1, pp. 237, 246 and 269; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 78-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-959)
960. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, p. 59; Wormald, *Making of English Law*,n. 344, p. 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-960)
961. The term ‘mitigation chapters’ is drawn from the opening statement of this group: *ðis ðonne se lihtincg* (now this is the mitigation…); II Cn, c.69, p. 356; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-209. [↑](#footnote-ref-961)
962. Wormald, *Making of English Law*,p. 361; II Cn, c.1.1, p. 308; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 174-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-962)
963. Wormald, *Making of English Law*,p. 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-963)
964. II Cn, c.69, p. 356; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-209. [↑](#footnote-ref-964)
965. *Đis is ðonne seo woruldcunde gerædnysse ðe ic wille, mid minan witenan ræde, þæt man healde ofer eall Englaland.* (This is further the secular ordinance which, by the advice of my councillors, I desire should be observed over all England.) II Cn, Prol., p. 308; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-965)
966. P. Stafford, ‘The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo-Saxon Royal Promises’, *ASE* 10 (1981): 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-966)
967. Stafford, ‘The Laws of Cnut’, pp. 177-8 and 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-967)
968. II Cn, c.69, p. 356; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.208-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-968)
969. II Cn, c.69.1, p. 356; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.208-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-969)
970. II Cn, c.75, p. 362; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 212-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-970)
971. II Cn, c.76.3, p. 364; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-971)
972. II Cn, c.80, p. 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-972)
973. II Cn, c.82, p. 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.216-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-973)
974. II Cn, Prol., p. 308; Robertson, *Laws*, p. 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-974)
975. II Cn, c.1, p. 308; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-975)
976. II Cn, c.84, p. 368; Robertson, *Laws,* pp. 216-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-976)
977. II Cn, c.2, p. 308; Robertson, *Laws,* pp. 174-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-977)
978. II Cn, c.2.1 and c.5, p. 308; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 176-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-978)
979. II Cn, c.3, c.4 and c.4a.1, p. 310; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 176-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-979)
980. II Cn, c.20 and c.21, pp. 322 and 324; Robertson, Laws, pp. 184-185. Robertson translates ‘It is our desire…’, but I suggest that use of the pronoun *we* (we would have it that…), rather than the possessive pronoun *úre* implied by Robertson’s translation, is more technically correct and subtly alters the tone of the statement to one of people taking action, and therefore exercising legislative authority, rather than expressing some unmet desire which sounds more like a hint or suggestion than a command. [↑](#footnote-ref-980)
981. ‘But we regard it as unjust that…’: II Cn, c.24.3, p. 328; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 186-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-981)
982. Again, for a similar discussion on voice in royally promulgated texts, see Nelson, ‘The Voice of Charlemagne’, pp. 79-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-982)
983. II Cn, c.68, c.68.1a and c.68.1b, p. 354; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 206-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-983)
984. X Atr, Prol. and c.2, p. 270; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 130-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-984)
985. X Æthelred survives as a prologue and two clauses; the prologue is unusual for Æthelred’s legislation and seems to have been drawn from earlier Anglo-Saxon laws (e.g. II Em), while the two clauses are quotes from V Æthelred c.1 and VI Atr c.8. Patrick Wormald has noted the use of the first person singular in X Æthelred as unique among the king’s codes, which otherwise refer to the king in the third person. This and the prologue’s suggestion that the code was written at a previous assembly at Enham led Wormald to propose the likelihood that X Æthelred, though written at a later date, represents an ‘official’ edited and amended version of the Enham codes promulgated in 1008. While X Æthelred fits with Wulfstan’s style and is written in an eleventh-century hand, Wormald concedes that the extant manuscript is not necessarily connected with the scriptoria of Wulfstan and that Wulfstan appears to have promoted the distribution of the versions of V and VI Atr found twice in Nero A i and again in CCCC 201. If I am reading Wormald correctly, this would all suggest that X Atr was probably written after the council at Enham in 1008 as a corrected version of V Atr, but that the archbishop did not distribute this amended work, circulating instead the Enham codes V and VI Atr and continuing to use V Atr for his own use as suggested by its inclusion in the relatively late Nero manuscript. This does not strike me as a particularly strong argument for X Atr’s status as an ‘official’ version of the laws promulgated at Enham, and Wormald agrees that this is all speculative. In short, we don’t really know what X Atr was meant to be other than what it is in its extant form. Wormald, ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, pp. 52-3, 56 and 63; Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, pp. 336-7; Keynes, ‘An Abbot, an Archbishop’, pp. 177-179. [↑](#footnote-ref-985)
986. *ASC*, 1014, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-986)
987. II Cn, c.70-1, 77, and 79, pp. 356 and 364-366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-211 and 214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-987)
988. II Cn, c.69.2, c.71a.1, c.71a.3, c.71a.4, c.73a.1, c.77.1 and c.83, pp. 356-361, 364, and 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-11 and 214-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-988)
989. II Cn, c.12, c.13, c.13.1, c.13.2, c.15a.1, c.15.2, c.17, c.25.2, c.29.1, c.30.6, c.30.9, c.31a.1, c.31a.2, c.33, c.33.2, c.37, c.40, c.40.1, c.40.2, c.42, c.44.1, c.57, c.58, c.59, c.62, c.63, c.65, c.66, pp. 316, 320, 328, 330-336, 338, 340-342, and 348-352; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 180-83, 188-99, and 204-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-989)
990. II Cn, c.75.1, p. 362; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 212-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-990)
991. II Cn, c.76.3, p. 364; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-991)
992. Quoted above, p. 283; II Cn, c.69.1, p. 356; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.208-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-992)
993. III Atr, c.14, p. 232; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 70-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-993)
994. V Atr, c.21, p. 242; VI Atr, c.26, p. 254; Roberston, *Laws*, pp. 84-5 and 98-9; Wulfstan of York, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, pp. 56-59; S. Hollis, “The Protection of God and the King’: Wulfstan’s Legislation on Widows’, in ed. M. Townend *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: the Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 443-460, esp. pp. 448-450. [↑](#footnote-ref-994)
995. II Cn, c.81, p. 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 216-17. *Drincelean* is an Old Norse loanword derived from ON *drekkulaun* meaning ‘reward for drink’, which Pons-Sanz describes as ‘a gift presented by the king to one who has entertained him’. Robertson translates *drinclean* as indicating that a bargain has been struck, with the *drincelean* being a form of drink exchanged between buyer and seller to seal a deal. This is problematic, as Whitelock notes, but Robertson’s interpretation seems appropriate, with *drincelean* suggesting that some exchange of trust has occurred, as that between buyer and seller, servant and lord, or landholder and heir. Pons-Sanz agrees and suggests that this law pertains to land rights received through *drincelean* as it follows c.80 which deals with land rights and hunting specifically. See Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 430 n.3; S. Pons-Sanz, *Norse-Derived Vocabulary in Late Old English Texts: Wulfstan’s Works, a Case Study* (Odense, 2007), pp. 62-5; L.M. Larson, ed, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws Being the Gulathing Law and the Frostathing Law*, Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies 20 (New York, 1935), p. 418. [↑](#footnote-ref-995)
996. II Cn, c.71-74 and 78-9, pp. 356-360 and 364-366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-215; the king’s reliance upon his own property to support himself is also mentioned in c.69.1, while the use of property for hunting by landholders appears in c.80. [↑](#footnote-ref-996)
997. Quoted above, p. 283; II Cn, c.80, p. 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-997)
998. Quoted above, p. 283; II Cn, c.75, p. 362; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 212-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-998)
999. II Cn, c.76, pp. 362-364; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 212-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-999)
1000. Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, pp. 56-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-1000)
1001. II Cn, c.70 and 71, p. 356; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-11. Heriots were weapons, equipment, horses and funds given as a symbolic expression of the mutual obligation between a lord and his man, similar to later Norman reliefs. N.P. Brooks, ‘Arms, Status and Warfare in Late-Saxon England’, in ed. D. Hill *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, BAR Series 59 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 91-2; R. Abels, ‘Heriot’, *BEASE*, pp. 235-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-1001)
1002. II Cn, c.78, p. 364; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1002)
1003. Brooks, ‘Arms, Status and Warfare’, pp. 89-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-1003)
1004. II Cn, c.77 and c.79, pp. 364-366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1004)
1005. Quoted above, p. 284; II Cn, c.82, p. 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp.216-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1005)
1006. *ASC* ‘C’, 1015, p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-1006)
1007. Ibid; the assembly at Oxford took place in 1015, sometime before Edmund’s departure from the royal court on 8 September: see above and Williams, *Ӕthelred the Unready*, p 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-1007)
1008. Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 388-9; Williams, *Ӕthelred the Unready*, pp. 132-3. Discussed in my section on charters above, see n. 748. [↑](#footnote-ref-1008)
1009. II Cn, c.83, p. 366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 216-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1009)
1010. I Atr, c.1 and 2, pp. 216-220; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 52-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-1010)
1011. Pauline Stafford recognizes the potential for a shared theme of ‘just kingship’ in VIII Atr and II Cn, noting the political circumstances of the early portion of Cnut’s reign and the end of Ӕthelred’s, as well as the likelihood that Wulfstan would have had the same legal commentary in mind for both codes. Stafford, ‘The Laws of Cnut’, pp. 181-183. [↑](#footnote-ref-1011)
1012. Stafford, ‘The Laws of Cnut’, pp. 182 and 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-1012)
1013. II Cn, c.72-74 and c.76, pp. 358-360 and 364; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 210-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1013)
1014. II Cn, c.70-1 and c.77-79, pp. 356 and 364-366; Robertson, *Laws*, pp. 208-11 and 214-215. [↑](#footnote-ref-1014)
1015. Stafford, ‘Laws of Cnut’, p. 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-1015)
1016. Stafford, ‘Laws of Cnut’, pp. 189-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-1016)
1017. See introductory chapter above, pp. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-1017)
1018. As evident by the works cited throughout this dissertation, which mark only a representative body of scholarship. [↑](#footnote-ref-1018)
1019. Seen above, pp. 53-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-1019)
1020. As seen in discussions of the *HSC* and *VSN* above, pp. 137-140. [↑](#footnote-ref-1020)
1021. See above, pp. 69-70 and 163; *HE,* II.16, pp. 192-193. [↑](#footnote-ref-1021)