The Representation of the Book in the Visual and Textual Culture of Southern Anglo-Saxon England: mid-ninth to mid-eleventh centuries

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Abstract

The role of the book in early medieval culture has received widespread scholarly attention. From investigations into the production and circulation of books, to scrutiny of the codex as a symbol of devotion, more than ever is known about the meaning and function of the book in the medieval world. This study, whilst drawing on this work, yet takes a rather different approach. It asks not how the book was made or used, but how the codex was *portrayed* in contemporary sources. Through examination of a range of late Anglo-Saxon sources, this thesis probes how books were represented in texts and images from the period. It argues, overall, that late Anglo-Saxon book culture can better be understood by attention to the way that contemporaries themselves described, imagined and imaged the book. Analysis of these images and their meaning allows, furthermore, some important insights into the political and socio-cultural significance of books as they were portrayed between the late ninth and early eleventh centuries.

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List of Abbreviations

ANQ	*American Notes and Queries*
AntJ	*Antiquaries Journal*
ANS	*Anglo-Norman Studies*
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*
BLJ	*British Library Journal*
CBP	*Corpus benedictionum pontificalium latinarum*
CPL	Clavis Patrum Latinorum
DLMBS	Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
EETS	Early English Texts Society
EHR	*English Historical Review*
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
ES	*English Studies*
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society Publications
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
LLT-A	Library of Latin Texts – Series A
LSE	*Leeds Studies in English*
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MLR	*The Modern Language Review*
MP	*Modern Philology*
N&Q	*Notes and Queries*

OEN	*Old English Newsletter*
P&P	*Past and Present*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PQ	*Philological Quarterly*
RB	*Revue Bénédictine*
S	Sawyer (no.)
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

§1) Book, Word and Text in Anglo-Saxon Sources

Moðde word fræt.	Me þæt þuhte
wrætlice wyrd	þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn
þæt se worm forswealg	wera gied sumes
þeof in þystro	þrymfæstne cwide
ond þæs strangan staþol.	Stælgiest ne wæs
wihte þy gleawra,	þe he ðam wordum swealg.[1]

> A moth ate words. That seemed to me a remarkable fate, when I learned of that wonder: that the worm, a thief in the night, had swallowed both the speech of a man, a renowned saying, and its strong foundation. The thieving stranger was yet none the wiser, though he swallowed those words.

With these words, taken from Riddle 47 of the Exeter Book, an anonymous speaker describes the consumption, and destruction, of a book. The perpetrator, a "moðde", "eats" words, yet remains "ne wihte þy gleawra" ("none the wiser") for swallowing "gied" ("speech"). The riddle turns on the paradox between the creature's "taste" for wise sayings and the destructive consequences of his rapacity. In his quest for "þrymfæstne cwide", the moth destroys both language and "þæs strangan staþol" ("the strong foundation") for wise words. This "foundation" might be interpreted as the intellectual basis for authoritative "cwide".[2] It also, as E.G. Stanley has shown, refers to the material fabric of a manuscript book.[3]

Riddle 47, more commonly known as the "book-moth" poem, offers one of the most compelling portraits of a book in Old English poetry. Martin Foys, in a recent re-reading of the poem, shows how the riddle plays on the materiality of a book as the "foundation" for learning,

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[1] Bernard Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501,* vol. 1 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 323.
[2] Fred C. Robinson, "Artful Ambiguities in the Old English 'Book-Moth' Riddle", in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation, for John C. McGalliard,* ed. Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 357-8.
[3] E.G. Stanley, "Staþol: A Firm Foundation for Imagery", in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin,* ed. A.J. Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 331.

a corporeal "staþol" that is irreducibly tied to human processes of creation and cognition.[4] In describing the consumption of a book, the riddle, as Foys shows, highlights the anxious relationship between mind and matter, in which "the twin cultural foundations of cognition and codex [have] become destabilized".[5] This interpretation yet contrasts significantly with a broader tradition of scholarship focused on the riddle and its significance. For Geoffrey Russom, the poem hinges on the mutability of language, in which words, as the repositories for heroic fame, are lost to time.[6] For John Scattergood, the poem turns on the symbolism of written words as the signs for speech, signs which are metaphorically "eaten", or ruminated on, in the production of memory.[7] The poem draws upon, but inverts, the scriptural motif of devotional "eating" and ruminating on books, portraying the "book-moth" as one who erases speech from intellectual, and material, history.[8] In this, the transcendent meaning of the Word is paramount: "the Anglo-Saxon poet calls the book a 'support' (*staþol*) for words: it is, in itself of secondary importance".[9]

The example of Riddle 47 and its scholarly background positions the book and the book-moth at the heart of several important debates. The book and its meaning emerges as a contested feature of the poem, in which the material, intellective and spiritual connotations of the codex receive divergent, if not polarized, assessment. Such readings raise broader questions about the role of the book in the poem, which, though invoked by the Anglo-Saxon poet, is accorded rather less importance by modern scholars. Is the "strangan staþol" of the book in the poem a significant feature of the text, or is it, as Scattergood asserts, a cipher for more pressing concerns about speech and memory? If, as Foys argues, the material and cognitive resonances of books in the poem are carefully entwined, how might one contextualise the evocative portrayal of bibliographic destruction in the riddle? What relevance, furthermore, might the image of the book in the poem have for a broader understanding of the codex and its conceptual importance to Anglo-Saxon makers and users of books? More fundamentally, perhaps, what is the difference, in such a complex poem, between "word", text and book?

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[4] Martin Foys, "The Undoing of Exeter Book Riddle 47: 'Bookmoth'", in *Transitional States: Cultural Change, Tradition and Memory in Medieval England,* ed. Graham Caie and Michael D.C. Drout (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018), 101-30.
[5] Foys, "The Undoing of Exeter Book Riddle 47", 116-7.
[6] Geoffrey Russom, "Exeter Riddle 47: A Moth Laid Waste to Fame", *PQ* 56, no. 1 (1977): 129-36.
[7] John Scattergood, "Eating the Book: *Riddle 47* and Memory", in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Learning and Literature Presented to Joseph Donavan Pheifer,* ed. Helen Conrad O'Briain, Anne Marie D'Arcy and John Scattergood (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 119-27.
[8] Scattergood, "Eating the Book", 121-7.
[9] Scattergood, "Eating the Book", 126.

This thesis, taking its cue from these debates, probes the symbolism and meaning of the book in late Anglo-Saxon sources. Its premise, in contrast with approaches focused solely on the significance of reading, writing or literacy in Anglo-Saxon England, is that a close reading of the *book* and its symbolism sheds fresh light on the meaning and significance of early English book-culture. Books, as one of the most fundamental components of a literate, Christian culture, are ubiquitous in contemporary sources, yet, as in the "book-moth" riddle, are seldom subjected to sustained scholarly analysis. As we shall discover through close readings of selected late Anglo-Saxon sources, books are represented, and portrayed, in a diversity of contexts in the period. At stake in such an undertaking is a reading of the "book", not merely as a "secondary" referent, but as an image and idea, depicted across a range of literary, documentary and visual sources. At stake, further, is the precise significance of the "Anglo-Saxon book" at a time when the political, geographical and cultural boundaries of the space known to modern scholars as "Anglo-Saxon England" were by no means as homogenous or fixed as the phrase might suggest.

§2) The Book as a Symbol

A study of the book and its significance in late Anglo-Saxon sources, as the foregoing introduction to the topic might suggest, is one that presents particular challenges. The book, if a seemingly ubiquitous artefact and idea, is yet bound up with a complex range of connotations and possible interpretations. The "book-moth" poem, as but one example from a substantial corpus of Anglo-Saxon portrayals, hints at the complexity and plurality of ideas about books in contemporary sources. Such challenges, as we have seen, are also historiographical and methodological. The symbolic meaning of the book, as read through literary critical, material and art historical analyses, emerges from an array of perspectives, depending on the approach taken to the image and idea of the medieval codex.

Approaches to the Book in Medieval Scholarship

Perhaps the most important approach to the book and its meaning drawn upon in this thesis is the traditional, and influential, analysis of the "book as symbol" advanced by Ernst Curtius.[10] Curtius's work, first published in 1948, offers a sustained analysis of the book as a "metaphor" or literary "symbol". The image of the book, as Curtius shows, can be traced throughout European literature, from the literary metaphorics of Greek and Roman writings to the powerful

[10] Ernst Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages,* trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon, 1953), 302-47.

descriptions of books in nineteenth-century authors such as Goethe.[11] The devotional symbolism of the book in the Bible and early medieval texts, as Curtius demonstrates, offers a particularly evocative set of images about books and book-culture.[12] The book, in this analysis, may be viewed as a "topos", which exerted a powerful influence over the literary imagination of the West.

A study of the metaphorical portrayal of the book, as seen in Curtius' work, allows a close engagement with the codex as it appears across a range of textual sources. Rather than viewing the book as an incidental, or literal, referent in literary works, Curtius highlights the rhetorical and figurative significance of the codex, which appears in conjunction with some much broader cultural, and devotional, ideas. Albrecht Classen, in a more recent summation of Curtius's research, has demonstrated how a careful focus on the rhetoric and symbolism of the book in scriptural and early medieval sources allows one to identify the book as a "root metaphor" of the period, indexed, moreover, to broader observations about contemporary culture and its values.[13] The appearance of the book as a theme in medieval literary works signals, more broadly, the pervasive power of the Bible as a book encompassing the totality of salvific experience.[14] As Classen notes, "the topos of the book ... was not simply a rhetorical device, but instead implied a profound difference in worldview and epistemology".[15]

Somewhat surprisingly, however, and as Classen notes, the study of the book as a literary motif has been largely neglected in subsequent scholarship. Classen notes the steady dominance of alternative critical methodologies in the wake of Curtius's work, in which a fascination with the role of orality and memory in the construction of literary culture has led to a de-prioritisation of the book and its portrayal.[16] We might also observe here a broader theoretical shift in literary studies, towards an emphasis on the semiotic, rather than bibliographic, metaphorics of literary "works". This can be seen most clearly in Jesse M. Gellrich's *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages,* which, despite its title, is concerned less with a discussion of books and their representation, and more with a theoretical analysis of the "book" as a structural principle in the organization of medieval culture.[17] Gellrich, drawing

[11] Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages,* 302-47.
[12] Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages,* 310-15.
[13] Albrecht Classen, "Robert Curtius and the Topos of the Book: The Impact of an Idea on Modern Philological Research", *Leuvense Bildragen* 87 (1998): 77.
[14] Classen, "Robert Curtius and the Topos of the Book", 59-78.
[15] Classen, "Robert Curtius and the Topos of the Book", 70.
[16] Classen, "Robert Curtius and the Topos of the Book", 72-7.
[17] Jesse M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 17-50.

heavily on Saussarean and Derridean theory, discusses the "idea of the book" in the period as "a sign of the mythologizing preoccupation with oneness, totality, and the presence of meaning as absolute".[18] This approach, though indebted to Curtius's observations about the epistemological resonances of the codex, is used by Gellrich to highlight the broader role of the written word in shaping and structuring medieval culture. Such "ideas of the book" are traced not through analysis of the book as a motif, but rather in relation to a more diffuse body of evidence, from the layout and structure of manuscript books to the way in which medieval education was organised through the traditions of grammatical and glossarial teaching.[19]

These readings of the mythology of the sign in portrayals of text and book have had explicit impact on approaches to Anglo-Saxon book-culture. Seth Lerer, in one of the most cogent discussions of Gellrich's arguments, observes the powerful mythological portrayals of literacy and language in contemporary sources, in which "the text could be a comprehensive collection of words and pictures that encompass the scope of Creation, and in which one may read the signs of God's work".[20] At stake here, and in Lerer's own study of "literacy and power" in Anglo-Saxon texts, is a view of the book as that which foregrounds a "mythology of writing", in which the self-referential nature of contemporary texts points to the broader cultural signification of Word and world.[21] This approach, as we saw in our brief overview of scholarship on Riddle 47, takes a view of the "book" as that which is subordinate to a broader range of ideas about textuality, orality and literacy. Its influence can be detected in several recent approaches to Anglo-Saxon literary culture, from Ananya Kabir's discussion of "Anglo-Saxon textual attitudes",[22] to Catherine A.M. Clarke's more recent study of "writing power" in contemporary "texts".[23]

If literary critical approaches to the "book" are bound up with a complex of theoretical debates about the interplay between book(s), text(s) and language, art-historical readings of the book have traditionally offered a more focused discussion of the visual and material symbolism of the codex. A very early study of bibliographic imagery, Theodor's Birt's *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst,* offers a particularly compelling picture of the possibilities of a sustained close

[18] Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book,* 41.
[19] Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book*, 51-93; 94-138.
[20] Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1991)*,* 7.
[21] Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 12-29.
[22] Ananya Jahanara Kabir, "Anglo-Saxon Textual Attitudes", in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism,* vol. 2, ed. Alistair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 314.
[23] Catherine A.M. Clarke, *Writing Power in Anglo-Saxon England: Texts, Hierarchies, Economies* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), 1-10.

reading of such motifs, albeit, in this case, concerned with scrolls rather than books in late antique sources.[24] More recent studies of the book as a coherent theme in medieval visual sources, such as that by James Finn Cotter, have drawn attention to the particular significance of the "book within the book" in manuscript portrayals. The portrayal of books within books, as Cotter notes, is pervasive in Christian iconography, from images of the four evangelists to portraits of the Virgin Mary.[25] Scrutiny of such sources, as Cotter argues, facilitates an understanding not merely of the visual dynamics of the book in individual images, but of the broader meaning of manuscript books and their (sacred) contents, which such portrayals can be said to "mirror" from within.[26]

Cotter's work, though rarely cited by medievalists, may yet be related to a broader body of work on the iconography of the codex. One might point here to Ulrich Kuder's admirable overview of the portrayal of the book in medieval visual sources, in which the author outlines a brief typology of bibliographic iconography, from portrayals of the "book-roll" as a symbol of the divine to the depiction of the codex as an image for the "earthly transmission" of the Word.[27] These conclusions, though offered as a sketch rather than a thoroughgoing analysis, usefully indicate the diversity of contemporary portrayals. Similar ideas are highlighted in Michel Pastoureau's earlier (though brief) work on the broad visual symbolism of the book, in which the articulation of books, whether open or closed; inscribed or blank, is noted as an interesting feature of the "book-within-the-book" deserving of further research.[28]

Such work, regrettably, has had a minimal impact on Anglo-Saxon scholarship. One might yet note, in something of an exception to this, the considerable contribution made by Catherine E. Karkov. Karkov's work, though not explicitly focused on the codex and its iconography, has, across a number of publications, pointed to the visual symbolism of the book and its importance in late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Amongst her readings, Karkov shows how the iconography of the early eleventh-century manuscript known as Ælfwine's Prayerbook (London, British Library, MS Titus D.xxvi) offers "[an] image of the book ... [as] a particularly important symbol", indexed both to traditional portrayals of Christian authority and the

[24] Theodor Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst: Archäologisch-Antiquarische Untersuchungen zum antiken Buchwesen* (Leipzig: B.G. Tübner, 1907).
[25] James Finn Cotter, "The Book within the Book in Medieval Illumination", *Florilegium* 12 (1993): 107-40.
[26] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 117.
[27] Ulrich Kuder, "Das Buch in der mittelalterlichen Buchmalerei", in *Ksiega, naurka, wiara; w średniowiecznej Europie,* ed. Tomasz Ratajczak and Jacek Kowalski (Poland: Wydawn. Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjacioł Nauk, 2004), 9-21.
[28] Michel Pastoureau, "La symbolique médiévale du livre", *Revue française d'histoire du livre* 86-87 (1995): 17-36.

devotional aims of individual Anglo-Saxon patrons.[29] In further important work, Karkov has pointed to the political iconography of the codex in the tenth and eleventh centuries, in which images of late Anglo-Saxon kings with books highlight the topical adaptation of traditional bibliographic motifs.[30] These findings, offered across a number of studies, do not, however, amount to a sustained engagement with the iconography and symbolism of the book in the period. In some cases, moreover, Karkov's visual analyses of books are explained in relation not to the "topos" of the book, but to broader ideas about literacy, learning and the pervasive role of the written word in contemporary culture.[31]

More broadly, in an Anglo-Saxon context, one might highlight the work of Michelle P. Brown, whose research into Insular and early medieval manuscripts has repeatedly shown how contemporaries invested the book with "iconic" meaning.[32] Books, as Brown demonstrates, were regarded as a "sacred space", constructed and adorned as holy embodiments of the sacred Word.[33] In a particularly important reading of books in the age of Bede, Brown notes the pervasive role of the codex, from the sacred "aura" of manuscript books themselves to the reverential descriptions of books found in eighth-century literary and documentary sources.[34] This work, however, makes little distinction between the material symbolism of the book and the broader network of *representations* of books found in contemporary texts and images. These "books-within-the-book", as Cotter shows, offer insights into the book quite distinct from those found in more general readings of the cultural significance of books.[35] As in the literary sphere, a reading of Anglo-Saxon representations of books in material and visual sources is markedly diffuse, being neither presented as a coherent theme nor evaluated as a topic centred on a specific body of texts, images and representations.

In some of the most recent research, however, such ideas are steadily (re-)emerging as a discrete scholarly focus. Whilst the research for this thesis has been underway, a small group of medievalists have begun to investigate the book not merely as a material artefact or as a

[29] Catherine E. Karkov, "Text as Image in Ælfwine's Prayerbook", in *The Power of Words: Anglo-Saxon Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg on his Seventieth Birthday,* ed. Hugh Magennis and Jonathan Wilcox (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2006), 96.
[30] Catherine E. Karkov, *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 55-63; 84-99.
[31] Catherine E. Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 179-246.
[32] See, for instance, Michelle P. Brown, "Images to be Read and Words to be Seen: The Iconic Role of the Early Medieval Book", in *Iconic Books and Texts,* ed. James W. Watt (London: Equinox, 2013), 93-117.
[33] Michelle P. Brown, "The Book as a Sacred Space", in *Sacred Space, House of God, Gate of Heaven,* ed. Philip North and John North (London: Continuum, 2007), 43-63.
[34] Michelle P. Brown, "'In the Beginning was the Word': Books and Faith in the Age of Bede", *The Jarrow Lecture 2000* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Jarrow Lectures, 2000), 1-25.
[35] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 107.

repository for texts, but as a "representation" in contemporary sources. This important work has culminated in a recent publication, edited by Charlotte Denoël, dealing exclusively with the imagery and *idea* of the book in Carolingian texts and images.[36] This volume, explicitly treating the *Imago libri,* or "image of the book", has decisively demonstrated how the portrayal of the book, in both textual and visual sources, was of especial fascination to contemporaries. Books and their symbolism are found in contexts as diverse as Carolingian poetry,[37] and the iconography of Canon Tables in gospel books.[38] More importantly, as the essays in *Imago libri* demonstrate, the book is also to be understood as a broader cultural concept in the medieval period, suffusing art, literature and liturgy.

§3) The Anglo-Saxon "boc": What is a Book?

In calling for a fuller investigation into the symbolism of the book in the late Anglo-Saxon period, we must first probe the precise meaning of the "book" in contemporary sources. The book, though one of the most recognizable, and seemingly self-evident, symbols of medieval culture, has yet to be carefully defined in an Anglo-Saxon context. Old English "boc", a term used almost unilaterally in the period, is one of the few Germanic referents to have remained almost unchanged in Modern English, so heightening a sense of familiarity with the Anglo-Saxon book. This yet belies a much more complex literary and linguistic background, in which "boc" emerges in relation to a wide-ranging, and sometimes unexpected, set of contexts.

The primary definition of Old English "boc" that emerges from contemporary sources, is, as one might expect, the book as a manuscript volume. An overview of all extant vernacular written sources conducted using the *Toronto Dictionary of Old English Corpus (DOEC),* highlights approximately 2,500 references to books, of which around 2,100 refer unambiguously to the book as a codex.[39] This total includes both general references to books (OE "boc"; pl. "bec") and to particular types of book, such as those used in liturgical settings.[40] These citations occur across a range of sources, in both poetry and prose. At the most literal level, one comes across instances where the "boc" is invoked deictically to reference a given

[36] Charlotte Denoël, Anne-Orange Poilpré and Sumi Shimahara, eds., *Imago libri: Représentations carolingiennes du livre,* Bibliologia 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).
[37] Francesco Stella, "Les representations du livre dans les textes poétiques carolingiens et ottoniens. Naissance de la poésie paratextuelle", in *Imago libri,* ed. Denoël, Poilpré and Shimahara, 221-36.
[38] Fabrizio Crivello, "*Tabulae* et livres dans les tables des Canons de l'école de la cour de Charlemagne. Questions ouvertes", in *Imago libri,* ed. Denoël, Poilpré and Shimahara, 237-41.
[39] Antonette diPaolo Healey, John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang, eds., *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2009), https//www-doe-utoronto-ca.librproxy.york.ac.uk [Accessed 27 December 2019].
[40] For an overview of these, see **Diagram 1** and the brief outline on p. 26, below.

manuscript witness ("þeos boc …").[41] More commonly, one finds writers in the vernacular, such as King Alfred and the homilist Ælfric, describing their literary output as "bec", which are to be carefully organized and circulated in codex form.[42] Alongside these references to the material codex, one also finds more abstract references to the book, especially in late Anglo-Saxon homilies, where the formula "us secgað bec" ("as the books tell us") occurs as a universal appeal to bibliographic authority.[43]

Most striking amongst this evidence, however, is the sheer extent to which "boc" was used in the vernacular. Comparable terms for the "text" or "work", such as "(ge)writ",[44] or "(ge)weorc",[45] though sometimes used to refer to the literary artefact, are much less common than "boc". When Anglo-Saxon writers wished to discuss or describe any aspect of the literary process, from composition to dissemination, the "boc" (and related terms such as "boc-cræft"; "boc-weorc" or "boc-tæcing") was more usually invoked.[46] The "boc" was used not only to denote the material codex in its entirety, but to indicate the constituent parts of a book; its chapters; conceptual divisions, and pages.[47] Further, and perhaps most revealingly, it is clear from contemporary glossaries that "boc" acted as the equivalent for several Latin terms. In the late tenth-century grammar and glossary produced by Ælfric of Eynsham, for instance, one finds "boc" being used as a triple gloss for "liber"; "codex" and "uolumen".[48] From this evidence, it emerges, first, that the Anglo-Saxons had a clear vocabulary for denoting and describing the book, and second, that "boc" exerted a strong linguistic influence, especially in contexts where one might otherwise expect a literary work to be described in terms of its textual, rather than "boclic" function.

What the sources also reveal, however, is a far larger semantic range for "boc" than might be imagined. If its most common referent is the literary (or liturgical) codex, there is

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[41] Henry Sweet, ed., *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care,* EETS o.s. 45 (London: Oxford University Press, 1871), 3, l. 1.
[42] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 1-8; Jonathan Wilcox, ed. *Ælfric's Prefaces* (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1994), 110, ll. 86-91; 112, ll. 15-20.
[43] Richard Shaw, "'Just as the Books Tell Us': A New Work by Ælfric?", *N&Q* 64, no. 3 (2014): 328-36.
[44] Joseph Bosworth, *et al*., *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online,* edited by Thomas Northcote Toller and Others, (Faculty of Arts: Charles University in Prague, 2010), "ge-writ", http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/016905; http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/036659 [Accessed 29 December 2019].
[45] Bosworth-Toller, "(ge)weorc", http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/016784; http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/035136 [Accessed 29 December 2019].
[46] For these terms see **Diagram 2** and the discussion on pp. 26-7, below.
[47] Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandall Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey *et al.,* eds., "boc", in a *Dictionary of Old English: A to I Online* [DOE] (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018) https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.librpoxy.york.ac.uk/doe [Accessed 29 December 2019].
[48] Julius Zupitza, ed., *Ælfric's Grammatik und Glossar* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1880), 313, l. 13.

nonetheless a considerable body of contexts in which "boc" has a rather different meaning. Foremost amongst these are instances where "boc" is used to refer to a charter, or "land-book", a document used for the transference of land. This type of "book", contrary to what might be expected, does not simply mean a legal record contained in a bound codex, but a materially distinct artefact, usually written on a single sheet of parchment.[49] This definition of "boc" as "land-boc" appears in some 500 citations across the corpus, thus constituting a high proportion of the available linguistic evidence for the book. This sense of "boc", further, is linked to several related terms, including "boc-land", the name for the land granted by disposition of the charter "book",[50] and the verb "(ge)bocian" (lit. "to book"), which denotes the legal and material act of "booking" an estate to a recipient.[51]

This widened semantic scope of the book compared to Modern English opens out yet further. Evidence from Anglo-Latin glossaries is particularly helpful in this regard, wherein one finds "boc" as a gloss not only on "liber" and "cartula", but also on "phastus" ("register of judicial days");[52] "catalogo" ("catalogue"),[53] and "apex" ("letter; epistle").[54] Though these citations are rare, and only attested in glossarial sources, they provide important insights into the far-reaching nature of "boc" as a referent. Together with the "land-book", these citations point to a contemporary understanding of the book defined less by a particular material form or "literary" content and more as a space for the mediation of several distinct types of written authority. Etymological evidence that "boc" could have derived from proto-Germanic terminology for "letter" or, more simply "that which is folded", points to the meaning of the book within an expanded conceptual framework.[55] Though space precludes more detailed analysis of the evolution of these senses of "boc" in Old English, the evidence for the wide semantic field of the vernacular term provides an important corrective to modern scholarly assumptions. Further, such sources make it imperative that a study of Anglo-Saxon

[49] For a general account of Anglo-Saxon charters and their material survival, see especially Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready' (978-1016): A Study in their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 28-39.
[50] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-land".
[51] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōcian, bēcan".
[52] Arthur S. Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses: Chiefly Unpublished* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 187, l. 70.
[53] Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses,* 11, l. 341.
[54] Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses,* 186, l. 4.
[55] Bosworth-Toller, "boc", http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/004758 [Accessed 29 December 2019]. See also Elmar Seebold, "Buch", in *Etymologie: Eine Einführung am Beispiel der deutschen Sprache* (München: C. H. Beck, 1981), 289-92. For an alternative perspective, see Marc Pierce, "The Book and the Beech Tree Revisited: The Life Cycle of a Germanic Etymology", *Historische Sprachforschung* 119 (2006): 273-82.

representations of the book is sensitive to the rich and multivalent meanings bound up with the vernacular "boc".

By way of rounding off this brief survey, some mention must be made of the broader range of terms related to "boc", or which incorporate it as a lexical element. We have touched on some of these above, but they are worth drawing out a little further given the important light they shed on the meaning of the book in the period. One might point here to the large range of terms contemporaries used to describe different types of book. These, as shown in **Diagram 1**, indicate the sophisticated vocabulary of the "boc" in Old English, both for liturgical and scriptural books, and for native book-types, such as the "landboc" (cf. "freolsboc" [lit. "freedom-book"; "a charter of freedom"][56] and "geanboc" [lit. "again-book"; "a duplicate charter"]).[57] Of interest later in the study will be the extent of this vernacular compounding on "-boc", which, particularly in the tenth and eleventh centuries, indicates a proliferation of word formation to facilitate vernacular discussion of new or imported types of book.[58] Many of these, as in the transformation of Latin *epistola* into "pistolboc", point to a practical transliteration of ecclesiastical vocabulary which yet serves to underscore the semantic importance of the "boc" as a linguistic marker.

In addition, one may note the extraordinary range of prefixal compounds in which the vernacular term appears. These are laid out, and organized by category, in **Diagram 2**. Here again the semantic and conceptual "strength" of the "boc" in shaping contemporary vocabulary for book culture is apparent. "Boc" appears as a nominal element in words used to describe a range of literary (and documentary) activities, from the material act of book-making ("bocfell" ["parchment"];[59] "bocread" ["red ink"])[60] to the formal organization of learning ("boctalu" [lit. "book-tale", a story in a book];[61] "bocræding" ["the reading of books"]).[62] In some intriguing cases, such compounds shade in to rather more figurative meanings, as is clear in "bocgestreon"

[56] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "frēols-bōc".
[57] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "gēan-bōc".
[58] For fuller discussion of these terms, see Helmut Gneuss, "Liturgical Books in Anglo-Saxon England and their Old English Terminology", in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England. Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday,* ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 91-141.
[59] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-fell".
[60] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-rēad".
[61] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-talu".
[62] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-rǣding, bēc-rǣding".

Diagram 1: A Typology of Anglo-Saxon Words for Books

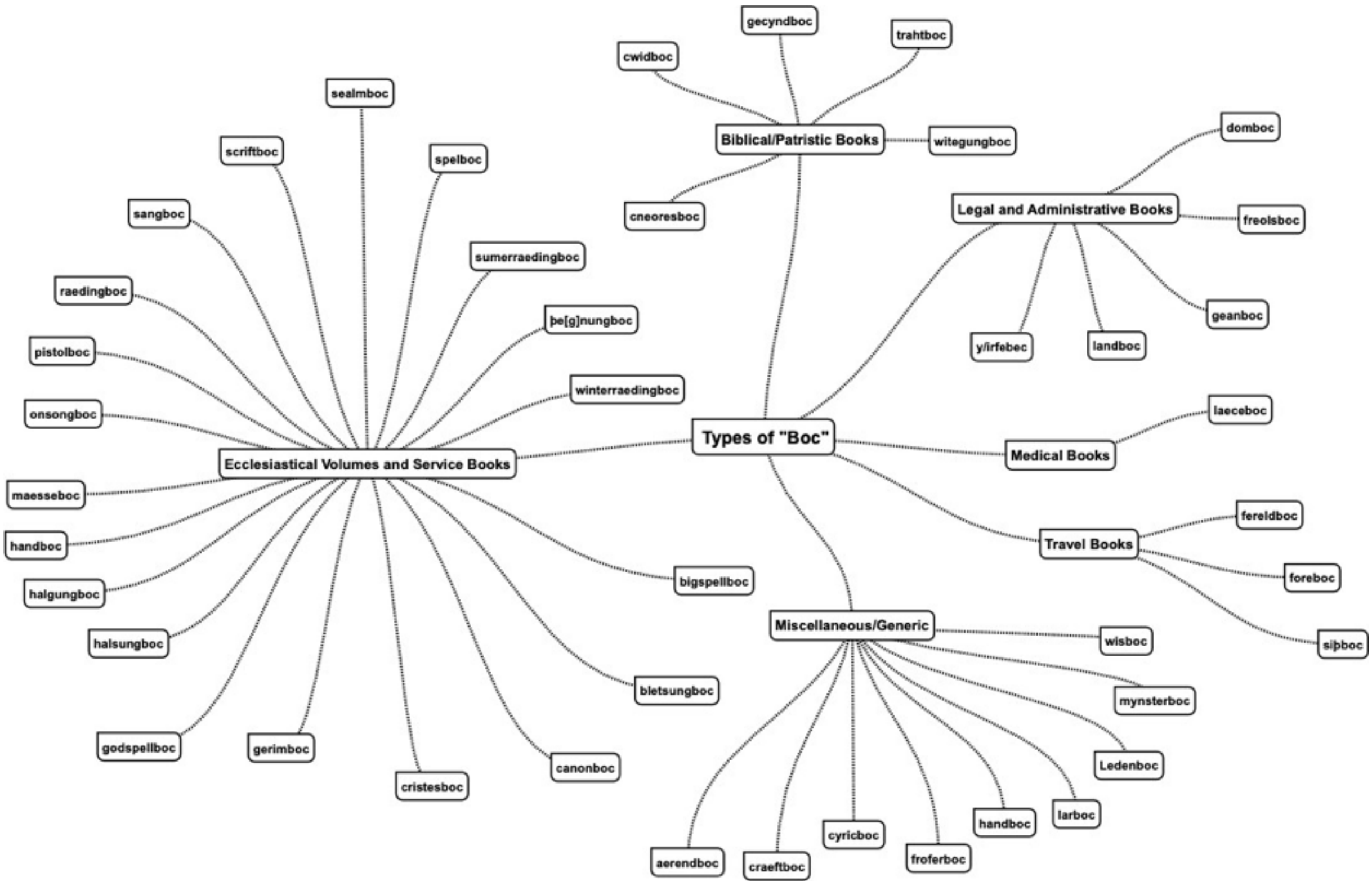
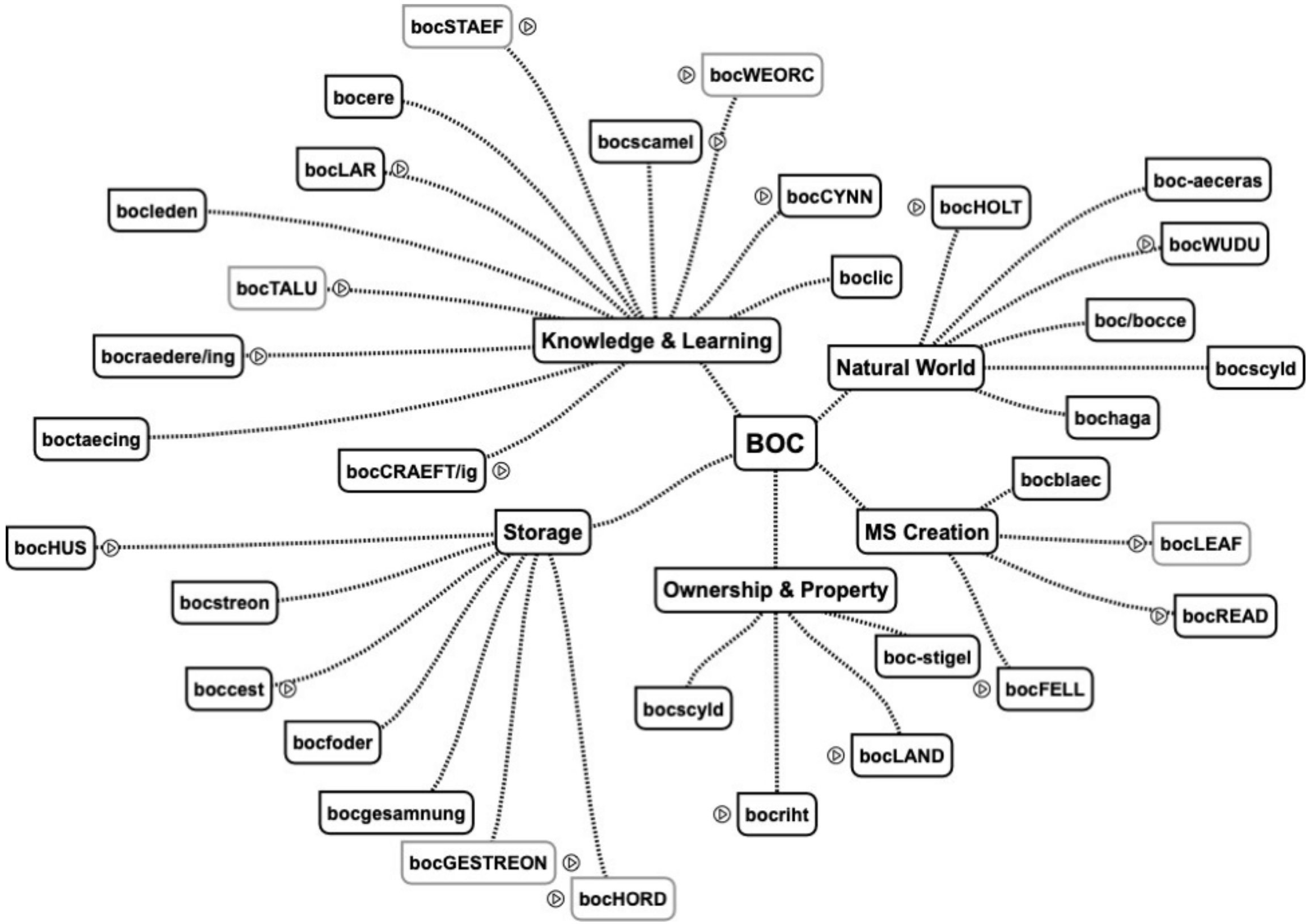


Diagram 2: Collocations and Compounds on the Term “Boc”



(lit. "book-treasury")[63] and "bochord" ("book-hoard")[64] where the kenning-like connotation of "library" is intended. In other cases, the wider collocation of compounds for the "boc" open up interesting associative avenues. This is apparent in terms such as "boc-gesamnung" (lit. "book-gathering"; "library"), where "gesamnung" is usually used to refer to gatherings of people rather than objects.[65] A similar phenomenon occurs in the *hapax legomenon* "boc-cynn" (lit. "book-kin"; "a kind of book"), where "cynn" is more conventionally found in contexts describing living creatures, whether animal or human.[66]

The key finding to emerge from this examination is the multifaceted nature of the Anglo-Saxon book. The vernacular term "boc", as the foregoing discussion indicates, occupied a wide semantic sphere, used by contemporaries to denote different types of literary artefact and to transmit different forms of written authority. Old English "boc", further, was used in preference to other words for literary creation or textual activity, appearing both in contexts where the material book is described, and where the "text" or literary content is indicated. As can be seen from the large range of "boc" compounds set out above, the book occupied an important place in contemporary discourse. As we shall explore in more detail throughout the thesis, this multivalent set of ideas about the book and its meaning played an important role in late Anglo-Saxon society and culture.

§4) Influences on the Anglo-Saxon Idea of the Book

The multivalent contexts and connotations attached to the book in the Anglo-Saxon period give some indication of the key role of the codex in contemporary thought. If the vernacular linguistic evidence helps illuminate the nature of the book and its meaning, we must yet also be aware of a broader set of ideas surrounding the early medieval "boc". Anglo-Saxon ideas about books, if partially filtered through Germanic vocabulary for the codex, were predominantly derived from ecclesiastical contexts, and from Christianity as a "religion of the book". When invoking or conceptualising the book in the ninth and tenth centuries, contemporaries were overwhelmingly influenced by idea(l)s drawn from scriptural authority, and, in some instances, from a broader tradition of patristic and Carolingian portrayals.

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[63] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-gestrēon". See also Thomas Miller, ed. and trans., *The Old English Version of Bede's History of the English People,* vol. 2, EETS o.s. 96 (London: N. Trübner, 1891), 466, l. 14.
[64] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-hord".
[65] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "bōc-gesamnung".
[66] James E. Cross and Thomas D. Hill, eds., *The Prose Solomon and Saturn and Adrian and Ritheus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 25-34 (59.1).

Scriptural Books

Perhaps the most obvious and important source of Anglo-Saxon book symbolism is the Bible. The Bible, as the most essential book of the Christian faith, contains a plethora of images and ideas about books. Book-culture, as Curtius shows, suffuses the language and rhetoric of scripture, from the tablets "scriptas digito Dei" ("written with the finger of God") given to Moses in *Exodus 31:18*,[67] to the powerful description of the sins of Judah, "scriptum ... stylo ferreo in ungue adamantino" ("written with a pen of iron [and] with the point of a diamond") in *Jeremiah 17:1*.[68] The literary metaphorics of the Bible, furthermore, combine with powerful devotional imagery such as that in *Psalms 44:2*, where, as the psalmist states, "lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis" ("my tongue is the pen of a scrivener that writeth swiftly").[69]

More relevant for our purposes is the extent to which the Bible foregrounds the book itself as a figurative trope. In the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, the eponymous prophet is presented with "involutus liber" ("a book rolled up"), and is enjoined to "comede volumen istud" ("eat this book") in order to preach the words of God to Israel [*Ezekiel 2:9-3:1-4*]. This powerful imagery of consumption is repeated in *Revelation 10:9*, when an angel commands St. John to "accipe librum et devora illum: et faciet amaricare ventrem tuum, sed in ore tuo erit dulce tamquam mel" ("take [this] book, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey"). This trope of "eating" the book is one with powerful devotional significance. Further, as we noted briefly in our discussion of Riddle 47, it is one which appears to have exerted a direct influence on Anglo-Saxon portrayals.

Elsewhere in the Bible (and as discussed in Curtius's work), one encounters the even more expansive figuration of Creation itself as a book. In the eschatological prophecy revealed to Isaiah, the prophet is shown how, "tabescet omnis militia caelorum, et conplicabuntur sicut liber caeli: et omnis militia eorum defluet, sicut defluit folium de vinea" ("all the host of the heavens shall pine away, and the heavens shall be folded together as a book: and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth from the vine") [*Isaiah 34:4*]. In *Revelation 6:14*, this imagery of world and book is reiterated, as "caelum recessit sicut liber involutus: et omnis mons, et insulae de locis suis motae sunt" ("the heaven departed as a book folded up: and every

[67] All references to the Bible are derived from Douay-Rheims, http://www.drbo.org [Accessed 28 December 2019].
[68] Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages,* 302-15.
[69] See also Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages,* 310-11.

mountain, and the islands were moved out of their places"). In some instances, Anglo-Saxon contemporaries showed considerable familiarity (and creative imagination) with these portrayals. In King Alfred's translation of the first fifty Psalms, for instance, the translator augments his version of Psalm 49 with book imagery directly evocative of these motifs: "he cleopað to þæm heofone; hæt hine þæt he hine fealde swa swa boc ..." ("he called to heaven; he commanded it to fold up just like a book ...").[70]

Closely related to this cosmological portrayal of world and book is the salvific symbolism of the codex in the Bible. This is mediated primarily through the trope of the *liber vitae* or "book of life", a volume said to be inscribed by God with the names of the saved. The symbolism of the "book of life" is most prominent in *Revelation,* where, amongst the books opened before the throne is "liber ... qui est vitae: et iudicati sunt mortui ex his, quae scripta erant in libris" ("another book ... which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books") [*Revelation 20:12*]. This trope, as with the "book of the world" and "eating the book" motifs, is typologically anticipated in the Old Testament, where, as in *Ecclesiasticus 24:32*, "haec omnia liber vitae, et testamentum Altissimi, et agnitio veritatis" ("all these things are the book of life, and the covenant of the most High, and the knowledge of truth"). In other instances, the motif is used to reference the negative inscription, or deletion, of names from the divine plan: "deleantur de libro viventium, et cum iustis non scribantur" ("let them be blotted out of the book of the living; and with the just let them not be written") [*Psalms 68:29*]. This image of the divine book of judgement, as we shall discuss later on, is one with particular cache in Anglo-Saxon sources, from visual portrayals of salvation and judgement to the anathemata found in contemporary charters.

Patristic and Early Medieval Influences

In addition to scriptural ideas about books, Anglo-Saxon portrayals seem likely to have been influenced by a broader set of tropes, derived from patristic and early medieval texts. Some especially powerful portrayals of the book are those which occur in the exegetical works of St. Augustine. St. Augustine, one of the key influences on late Anglo-Saxon theology, uses the image of the "book of the world" to particular effect, describing how God "unde sicut pellem extendisti firmamentum libri tui ... quos per mortalium ministerium superposuisti nobis" ("[has] extended like a skin the firmament of your Book ... over us by the ministry of

[70] Patrick P. O'Neill, ed., *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Medieval Academy of America, 2001), 161.

mortals").[71] Elsewhere in Augustine, as Eric Jager has shown, one finds powerful images of tablets and scrolls as figures for writing or inscribing the Word on the heart.[72] These "books of the heart", as Jager notes, were highly influential in medieval literature, resonant both in the works of Alcuin and, in a later Anglo-Saxon context, Alfred the Great.[73]

Amongst early Christian authors, one might point to the powerful metaphorics of the book found in Prudentius. Prudentius, as Gernot R. Wieland has demonstrated, was an author with special significance in Anglo-Saxon England, studied in the monastic classroom, and, on occasion, made the subject of lavish manuscript copies of his works.[74] Prudentius's *Peristephanon* foregrounds multiple images of the book, from the martyr Eulalia's description of her wounds as purple writing in praise of Christ,[75] to the murder of Cassian, who is symbolically killed by former pupils who shatter writing tablets on his head and pierce him with styluses.[76] Such motifs of the book and the body in a devotional context seem, like those found in Augustine, to have been well-known in the period, as indicated by some eight complete or partial copies of the *Peristephaneon* from Anglo-Saxon *scriptoria.*[77] Such powerful motifs might, further, be read in relation to broader devotional tropes. In Cassiodorus's *Institutiones,* for example, book-making is not merely a means of transmitting the Word, but figuratively acts to vanquish evil. Scribes, as Cassiodorus notes, "contra diaboli subreptiones illicitas calamo atramento que pugnare. Tot enim vulnera Satanas accipit, quot antiquaries Domini verba describit" ("fight with pen and ink against the unlawful snares of the devil. For Satan receives as many wounds as the scribe writes words of the Lord").[78] In some cases, as Karkov has shown, Anglo-Saxon visual imagery of the book appears to draw directly

[71] Augustine, *Confessionum libri tredecim,* CPL 0251, lib.: 13, cap.: 15, linea: 7, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=PAUG_0251 [Accessed 28 December 2019].
[72] Eric Jager, "The Book of the Heart: Reading and Writing the Medieval Subject", *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 1-26.
[73] Jager, "The Book of the Heart", 1-26.
[74] Gernot R. Wieland, "The Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*", *ASE* 16 (1987): 213-31.
[75] Prudentius, *Liber Peristefanon,* CPL 1443, carmen: 3, versus: 139, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=PPRUD1443 [Accessed 28 December 2019].
[76] Prudentius, *Liber Peristefanon,* carmen: 9, versus: 47. See also Curtius, *European Literature and the Middle Ages,* 312.
[77] Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 928.
[78] Cassiodorus, *Institutiones,* CPL 0906, lib.: 1, cap.: 30, par.: 1, pag.: 75, linea: 10-13, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=QCASS0906 [Accessed 28 December 2019].

on these textual sources, foregrounding some powerful representations of the devotional significance of book-making and inscription in monastic *scriptoria*.[79]

From Isidore of Seville, whose *Etymologies* are extant in some twenty-two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts,[80] contemporaries would have gained a particularly vivid sense of the codex and its origins. Isidore specifically explains the etymology of Latinate terminology for the book, noting how, "dictus codex per translationem a codicibus arborum seu uitium" ("the codex is [so] called by way of metaphor from the trunks of trees or vines").[81] He notes, further, how "uolumen liber est a uoluendo dictus, sicut apud ... uolumina Legis" ("a scroll (*volumen*) is a book so called from rolling (*volvere*) ... the scrolls of the Law"), and how "liber est interior tunica cortices, quae ligno cohaeret" ("*liber* is the inner membrane of bark, which clings to the wood").[82] The metaphorics of world and book are particularly pronounced in the *Etymologies,* which, as well as noting the verdurous origins of "liber" and "codex", notes how "versus autem uulgo uocati quia sic scribebant antique sicut aratur terra" ("a verse (*versus,* also meaning "furrow") is commonly so called because the ancients would write [a book] in the same way that land is plowed ...").[83] These images of book, land and text, recur in a number of early medieval portrayals, including in Carolingian poetry, where one finds such powerful images of inscription as an author "bibliales ... proscindere campos" ("cleaving the book fields").[84] The metaphorics of parchment and plough; script and seed are, further, recurrent throughout the Exeter Book riddles, which, as Dieter Bitterli has shown, are resonant with traditional tropes for writing, reading, and the role of the book in medieval culture.[85]

Iconographic Influences

The multivalent imagery of the book in scriptural and early Christian sources may be set beside a related influence on Anglo-Saxon portrayals: the iconography of the codex in manuscript art. Medieval depictions of the book, though so ubiquitous as to amount to *the* visual history of

[79] Catherine E. Karkov, "Writing and Having Written: Word and Image in the Eadwig Gospels", in *Writing and Texts in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Alexander R. Rumble (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 60-1. See also Karkov, "Evangelist Portraits and Book Production in Late Anglo-Saxon England", in *The Cambridge Illuminations: The Conference Papers,* ed. Stella Panayotova (London: Harvey Miller, 2007), 55-63.
[80] Gneuss and Lapidge, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,* 916.
[81] Isidore, *Etymologarium,* CPL 1186, lib.: 6, cap.: 13, par.: 1, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=QISID1186 [Accessed 28 December 2019]. For the translation of this text, see Stephen A. Barney, trans., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 142.
[82] Isidore, *Etymologarium,* lib.: 6, cap.: 13, par.: 2. Barney, trans., *Etymologies,* 142.
[83] Isidore, *Etymologarium,* lib.: 6, cap.: 14, par.: 7. Barney, trans., *Etymologies,* 142.
[84] Ernst Dümmler, ed., *Poetae Latini medii aevi Carolini,* vol. 1, MGH (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881), 93, l. 5.
[85] Dieter Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 135-50.

Western manuscripts,[86] may, as Cotter has shown, be identified as a distinct, and coherent tradition.[87] Portrayals of the *liber vitae,* or "book of life" are amongst the most ancient representations of the holy codex, extant in fifth-century mosaics and sixth-century gospel-books.[88] The biblical portrayal of Christ in Majesty holding the book of the saved is, moreover, extant in a particularly early English context: the powerful depiction of the *liber vitae* in the Codex Amiatainus produced at the Northumbrian monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow in c. 700 [**Figure 1**].[89] Such portrayals, as Cotter demonstrates, have a rich tradition in Carolingian iconography,[90] and, as we shall see, were subjected to powerful reinterpretation(s) in the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Perhaps the most prevalent portrayals of books in the period are those found in gospel-books. Depictions of the four evangelists holding scrolls or books are recurrent throughout early medieval art, illuminating the transmission of the Word, and the holy inspiration of the apostles. As Charlotte Denoël has recently shown, such portrayals, in Carolingian and Ottonian art, have a distinct visual typology, in which the orientation, inscription and opening/closure of books has symbolic meaning.[91] Portrayals of the four evangelists and their books in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, though relatively rarely explored, offer a similar diversity of bibliographic imagery. In some cases, as Jane Rosenthal and Patrick McGurk have demonstrated, English artists adapted the tradition to portray each evangelist at different stages of the book-making process [**Figures 2 and 2a**].[92] Such bibliographic "sequences", as Karkov has argued, highlight the important visual role of the book in contemporary manuscripts, demonstrating the symbolic power of the holy codex for evangelistic authors, scribes, and Anglo-Saxon readers.[93]

Set beside portrayals of divine books, one might point to the considerable tradition for the depiction of the codex in author portraits. Depictions of scriptural and patristic authors form an important sub-genre of "the book-within-the-book", encompassing both evangelical book-making and a wider corpus of authorial imagery. The depiction of the patristic author (and

[86] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 107.
[87] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 107-40.
[88] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 108-11.
[89] For discussion of this image, see Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 112.
[90] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 112.
[91] Charlotte Denoël, "L'Épiphanie du Verbe. Essai d'une typologie formelle des representations du livre au premier Moyen Âge dans les portraits des évangelists", in *Imago libri,* ed. Denoël, Poilpré and Shimahara, 15-26.
[92] Jane Rosenthal and Patrick McGurk, "Author, Symbol and Word: The Inspired Evangelists in Judith of Flanders's Anglo-Saxon Gospel Books", in *Tributes to Jonathan J.G. Alexander: The Making and Meaning of Illuminated Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, Art & Architecture,* ed. Susan L'Engle and Gerald B. Guest (London: Harvey Miller, 2006), 185-202.
[93] Karkov, "Evangelist Portraits", 59.

biblical translator) Jerome, as Cotter shows, appears in relation to some particularly innovative examples of book iconography in Carolingian manuscripts.[94] Such iconography exerted a strong influence over early medieval author portraits, which, as Rosamond McKitterick has demonstrated, foreground books and writing in relation to a range of contemporary figures, including Alcuin and Rabanus Maurus [**Figure 3**].[95] Portrayals of Anglo-Saxon authors and their books, though rarer, form an intriguing off-shoot of this tradition, iconographically derived, as we shall explore later on, from evangelist portraits. Books, in such images, are variously shown in the processes of composition, production, and dedication to divine and secular protagonists.

Closely linked to these depictions, as this overview might suggest, is the iconography of the book in donation portraits. Perhaps the most important development in this context in the early medieval period is the genre of the royal presentation portrait, in which rulers are portrayed as the direct recipient of scriptural, patristic or medieval volumes. Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the representation of imperial book-culture in Carolingian manuscripts such as the Vivian Bible, wherein one finds a particularly rich tradition for the portrayal of kings and books [**Figure 4**].[96] These portrayals, as Karkov and others have shown, influenced Anglo-Saxon "ruler portraits",[97] albeit, as we shall see, in subtle and sometimes divergent ways. For Richard Marsden, exploring the political connotations (rather than representations) of Anglo-Saxon books, such contexts point to a broad shift in the conceptualisation of book-culture in the later period, from "the almost numinous aura which attended so many Bibles of the seventh and eighth centuries", to a use of books driven by "the politics of patronage" in the tenth century and beyond.[98]

§5) Methodology

The complexity of the extant evidence, and the relative lack of attention to the specific portrayal of the book in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, means that the field offers scope for a wide-ranging analysis. The plurality of scholarly approaches to the book as an "icon", "symbol", or "portrayal", as set out above, casts a study of the "representation" of the Anglo-Saxon book as

[94] Cotter, "The Book within the Book", 116-7.
[95] Rosamond McKitterick, "Essai sur les representations de l'écrit dans les manuscrits carolingiens", *Revue française d'histoire du livre* 86-87 (1995): 37-64.
[96] For a useful overview and discussion of these portrayals, see Hartmut Hoffman, *Buchkunst und Königtum um ottonischen und frühsalischen Reich,* vol. 1, MGH 30 (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1986), 7-41.
[97] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 84-96.
[98] Richard Marsden, "'Ask What I Am Called': The Anglo-Saxons and their Bibles", in *The Bible as Book: The Manuscript Tradition,* ed. John L. Sharpe III and Kimberly van Kampen (London: British Library, 1998), 159.

a particularly wide-ranging, and conceptually complex, task. The multivalent meanings attached to "boc", and the diversity of contexts in which books and their symbolism occur, make it imperative, furthermore, that any such analysis takes into account a range of textual and visual sources. This approach, richly exemplified by the contributors to *Imago libri,* has amply demonstrated the place of the book, its "répresentation" and "symbolism", at the heart of an inherently interdisciplinary set of debates.

A comprehensive study of the book in the Anglo-Saxon period is, of course, beyond the remit of this thesis. In the discussion that follows, a narrower, but still ambitious scope is proposed, in which the idea of the book as a "representation" or "image" is examined in relation to a particularly important series of developments in late Anglo-Saxon culture. Following the generative suggestions by Marsden and Karkov about the richness of late Anglo-Saxon portrayals, this study directs attention to two broad chronological cross-sections: first, from the reign of King Alfred (r. 871-99) to his grandson Æthelstan (r. 924-939), and, second, from the mid-tenth-century "Benedictine Reform" to its "second generation" in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The late ninth and tenth centuries, long identified as a period during which book production was increasing and the role of the "written word" was becoming powerful in both religious and secular contexts, offer a particularly important body of evidence for the representation of the book. This period, marked by shifting ideas about elite, specifically West-Saxon, book-culture, offers some intriguing perspectives on the ways in which elite protagonists such as kings and monks sought to capitalize on the powerful "image" of the book. Such evidence, produced at a time of rapid political expansion and religious change, offers insights into the meaning and significance of the book in a cultural and political space not yet securely defined as "Anglo-Saxon". This focus on royal and monastic representations necessarily omits sources shedding light on the image of the book in relation to other social groups, such as those found, for instance, in Ælfric's homilies. It yet provides a useful starting point for probing the intersections between the textual, visual and documentary types of "bec" charted above.

Rather than foregrounding a series of discrete case studies of "royal" or "monastic" books and their portrayal(s), the thesis offers two wide-ranging chapters, in which a series of representations produced within a similar time-frame are examined. These chapters, better conceived of as two "parts", offer an in-depth analysis of several interrelated sources, in which a diversity of textual, visual and documentary contexts are examined for the light they shed on the book and its meaning. This approach, whilst offering a rather artificial division of the

material into traditional chronological "periods", helps illuminate the intersections between groups of royal and monastic representations, which were rarely, if ever, conceived by contemporaries as part of entirely separate cultural discourses. Commensurate with the diversity of the source material considered, the study draws upon a range of disciplinary approaches to help interrogate the evidence. In some cases, as in the discussion of Alfred's prefaces in Chapter One, a predominantly textual analysis of the codex and its symbolism is advanced, to help draw out the literary and rhetorical significance of the "boc". Elsewhere, as in the analysis of Benedictine frontispieces in Chapter Two, a primarily visual analysis is offered, the better to understand the nature and significance of bibliographic iconography. Across both these categories of evidence, the discussion is augmented through consideration of a wider range of source material, including charters, material artefacts and manuscript books, in order to help illuminate the contextual significance of a given set of depictions. Such analyses culminate, in both chapters, in case studies where textual *and* visual images of the book cohere, and for which an interdisciplinary approach, combining perspectives from literary and visual methodologies alongside this broader range of evidence, has been adopted.

In line with these different emphases, and following scholarly precedent for discussing the "book-within-the-book", the study makes use of several critical keywords: "symbol"; "image"; "representation"; "portrayal" and "depiction". These terms, which carry distinct shades of meaning, point us towards a more complex set of debates about the notion of "representation" than can be elucidated here. Broadly stated, the study follows Curtius in using the term "symbol" for bibliographic metaphor, and art-historical analyses in its discussion of the visual "image" or "portrayal" of the book. Such terms yet take on a different complexion in an interdisciplinary investigation, where there is considerable overlap between sources and ideas. Thus, for instance, the keyword "image" is also drawn upon here to denote the figurative or metaphorical "image(ry)" of the book; the term "symbol" to address literary traditions surrounding the codex *and* its broader cultural and material "symbolism". For this reason, and to delimit the overarching theme of the thesis more clearly, the specific term "representation", most recently deployed by Denoël *et al.* to an analysis of *both* visual and textual images of the book, is the one preferred to refer to the topic as a whole. In both chapters, as we shall see, this approach helps draw out connections between portrayals and circumstances of production that have sometimes been missed in more compartmentalized assessments of literary or visual sources. At stake in the two major chapters is an attempt to probe, as holistically as possible,

the Anglo-Saxon idea of the book and its "representation" at a particularly crucial moment in early English politics and culture.

Chapter One begins with a reassessment of the book in the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan, two late Anglo-Saxon rulers long noted for their interest in books. Building on an extensive body of extant scholarship on royal codices of the late ninth and early tenth centuries, the chapter draws attention to the specific ways in which the book was not merely commissioned and used by kings, but was portrayed in relation to rulership. The case studies presented here aim not for a complete consideration of all extant royal books, but offer a reading of selected textual and visual sources in which the "boc" features particularly prominently. The discussion opens with a consideration of the literary "symbolism" of the book in Alfred's prefaces to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies*, arguing that these texts offer some especially rich insights into the literary and political connotations of the codex in the late ninth century. Through a reading of Asser's *Life* alongside the portrayal of books in the royal translations, it is argued, further, that the king and his followers developed a particularly sophisticated series of strategies for representing the intellectual, devotional and material power of books. The chapter then moves to an analysis of Æthelstan's books, scrutinizing, in particular, the portrayal of the codex in donation inscriptions and frontispieces associated with the king. These portrayals, if long noted as a key means through which Æthelstan demonstrated his piety and learning, offer a plurality of ideas about the "boc" and its role in constructing a powerful royal self-image. Drawing together these ideas, the concluding part of the chapter foregrounds a rather different perspective on the "royal" image of the book by examining two poems loosely associated with the courts of both Alfred and Æthelstan: *Solomon and Saturn I and II*. These texts, which contain some especially powerful representations of books, are reexamined here for what they reveal about the relationship between kings and books in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.

Chapter Two moves forward to the tenth century, to examine a corpus of depictions associated with the ecclesiastical movement known as the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform. Building on extant scholarship on Benedictine book culture, the chapter aims to provide a deeper understanding of the religious and political symbolism of the codex as it was developed by the reformers. The chapter begins with an investigation of book imagery in the early tenth-century reformist schools, arguing that such famous codices as "St. Dunstan's Classbook" (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct F. 4.32) and the "Royal Aldhelm" manuscript (London, British Library, Royal MS 7 D.xxiv) encode some especially distinctive representations of the

book and its spiritual significance in the early phase of the movement. The central part of the discussion then turns to examine some of the more famous sources associated with the Reform, examining how the ideas and imagery surrounding the monastic book developed in the 940s and 950s culminated in such famous portrayals as those found in the "New Minster Charter" (London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A.viii) and the Tiberius copy of the *Regularis concordia* (London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii). These much-examined portrayals are explored, and recontextualized, with reference to a broader body of evidence, including the portrayal of the monastic "land-book" and its symbolism. Drawing together these themes, the chapter's principal case study offers an in-depth analysis of the "Benedictional of St. Æthelwold" (London, British Library, Additional MS 49598). This manuscript, which contains a complex of visual and textual representations of the book, offers a particularly valuable perspective on the way the reformers marshalled the sacred and political image of the codex in support of the movement. In the concluding part of the chapter, the impact of these Benedictine images of the book is probed through scrutiny of sources associated with the later phase of the Reform. Through examination of selected textual sources from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, this section considers how monastic writers of the "second generation" used the symbolism of the book to craft ideas about spiritual (and institutional) identity. This culminates in a close-reading of the *Enchiridion* by Byrhtferth of Ramsey, a text which offers some especially compelling evidence for the representation of the book and its cultural meaning at the turn of the eleventh century.

Chapter One

The Representation of the Book from Alfred to Æthelstan

§1) Introduction

In or around the year 890, King Alfred translated Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis* into English. This text, circulated to every episcopal see in the kingdom, represents the beginning of one of the most ambitious literary projects of the Anglo-Saxon period. Between 890 and the king's death in 899, at least three other works were translated: Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*; St. Augustine's *Soliloquies* and the Old Testament *Psalms*.[1] In a famous preface to the Old English *Pastoral Care,* the king addresses his subjects directly, outlining the practical and theoretical basis for his writings. The kingdom, once "maðma & boca gefyldæ" ("filled with treasures and books") [**App. §1.1/21**] has lapsed into poor levels of literacy, marked by the derivation of "swiðe lytle fiorme ðara boca" ("very little benefit from ... books") [**App. §1.1/22**].[2] Alfred's remedy for this, as he asserts in the preface's conclusion, is the translation of "sumæ bec, ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne" ("certain books which are the most necessary for all men to know") [**App. §1.1/37-8**].

The king's ninth-century translation programme has become subject to considerable recent debate about the precise nature of Alfredian "authorship".[3] It yet marks something of a turning point in late Anglo-Saxon book-culture. The declining standards and loss of books described in Alfred's preface led, after the abatement of the Viking threat in the 890s, to a revival of cultural activity, in which book production formed an important focus. Anglo-Saxon codices, once ransomed by the Danes for their monetary value,[4] were now promulgated in

[1] For an overview of the chronology and extent of Alfred's works, see Janet M. Bately, "Alfred as Author and Translator", in *A Companion to Alfred the Great,* ed. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 113-42.
[2] All citations of the *Pastoral Care* are taken from Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care*; translations are derived from Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, trans., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (London: Penguin, 1983). Alfred's preface to this text has, in addition, been reproduced as **Appendix §1.1)**. All citations of the preface in the discussion are followed by a cross-reference with the Appendix, as [**App. §1.1/22**], above.
[3] For the debates about Alfredian authorship, see Malcolm R. Godden, "Did King Alfred Write Anything?", *MÆ* 76, no. 1 (2007): 1-23; David Pratt, "Problems of Authorship and Audience in the Writings of Alfred the Great", in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World,* ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 162-91, and Janet M. Bately, "Did King Alfred Actually Translate Anything? The Integrity of the Alfredian Canon Revisited", *MÆ* 78, no. 2 (2009): 189-215.
[4] As, for instance, the Codex Aureus (Stockholm, Kungliga Bibliothek MS A.135). For discussion, see Leslie Webster, "The Art of Alfred and His Times", in *A Companion to Alfred,* ed. Discenza and Szarmach, 47.

support of a wider cultural renaissance spearheaded by the king. This movement was designed, as Alfred's biographer Asser observes, to educate the king's subjects in the books most necessary.[5] A further objective was to improve literary standards in an age where the written word was taking on an increasing importance in government administration, law-making and land-transfer.[6] By the reign of Alfred's grandson, Æthelstan, levels of book production were high, lavish charters (or "land-books") were issued in abundance, and the king himself was a noted donor of luxury manuscripts.[7]

The relationship between "kings and books" in the late ninth and early tenth centuries has received considerable attention. Notwithstanding scholarly focus on questions of authorship and authenticity in relation to royal books, David Pratt, in a recent overview of the subject, has shown how the patronage, ownership and dissemination of books by contemporary rulers played an important role in demonstrating royal piety and learning.[8] Alfred's prefaces, sent across the realm in the king's translated volumes, offer a vivid (if debated) picture of the king's authorship and authority. Æthelstan, whose gifts of books were accompanied by donation inscriptions and (in some cases) frontispieces, made considerable capital out of the association between the king's self-image and luxury liturgical books.[9] Such volumes, further, could be marshalled in support of ideological aims. Alfred and his successors, as Karkov has shown, exploited "the power of the book in the formation of cultural identity and the promotion of a specific political ... agenda".[10] This, as Pratt notes, might also be conceptualised as a territorial and dynastic strategy: "the expansion of territory under West Saxon control enabled books to play a symbolic role in kingdom-building".[11]

Rather less well-explored, however, is the degree to which books were not merely commissioned or promulgated by kings, but were *portrayed* in contemporary sources. Alfred's books, as the royal translations note, were to be regarded not as "texts" but as different types

[5] W.H. Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life of King Alfred: Together with the Annals of St. Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), 92-5 (Ch. 106).
[6] For discussion, see especially, Simon Keynes, "Royal Government and the Written Word", in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe,* ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 226-57. For a more recent discussion, see Keynes, "The Power of the Written Word: Alfredian England 871-899", in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences,* ed. Timothy Reuter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 175-97.
[7] For a useful overview of literacy and book-production in Æthelstan's reign, see Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 70-3; 117-26.
[8] David Pratt, "Kings and Books in Anglo-Saxon England", *ASE 43* (2014): 297-377.
[9] See especially Simon Keynes, "King Athelstan's Books", in *Learning and Literature,* ed. Lapidge and Gneuss, 143-201.
[10] Karkov, *Art of Anglo-Saxon England,* 179.
[11] Pratt, "Kings and Books", 376.

of book. The Alfredian translations, if framed as "writings" or "works" in Alfred's patristic or scriptural sources, are consistently described in the corpus as books: Gregory's *Regula* the "Hierdeboc" ('Shepherd-book') [**App. §1.1/47**]; the Old English *Boethius* a "froferboc" ("comfort book");[12] St. Augustine's *Soliloquies* a gathering of "blostman … [from] bec" ("blossoms from books").[13] Æthelstan's codices, if less discursive about the nature of the contemporary codex, are also consistently described, in the king's inscriptions, as "uolumen", "codicem", or "bec".[14] In one, especially important royal book donation, one finds the first surviving depiction of a late Anglo-Saxon king, shown, significantly, with the *image* of a book.[15]

The precise significance of these portrayals will be scrutinised in the sections that follow. In this, the book will be read not as a static symbol of literacy or written authority, but as part of a more complex set of ideas, bound up with scriptural, patristic and political discourses about books. In the first two sections of the chapter, Alfred's prefaces and translations will be reassessed for what they reveal about the nature of the book as it is imagined in the king's corpus. If often cast as a measure of royal authority or self-conscious textuality, we will investigate these portrayals for what they indicate about the broad cultural significance of the codex in the period. In the third section, we will turn to the volumes associated with Æthelstan's reign. Frequently discussed in relation to symbolic royal gift-giving, we shall analyse the corpus of inscriptions and donation images for the ways in which they represent the book. Scrutinising the literary and iconographic background to these portrayals, we will seek to recontextualise the royal codex as part of a more extensive set of traditions about the book and its symbolic power.

In the last section of the chapter, this scrutiny of kings and books will be bolstered through a re-reading of some vernacular poems often associated with the courts of Alfred and Æthelstan. These poems, *Solomon and Saturn I* and *Solomon and Saturn II,* have long been noted as providing a marked focus on the "boc".[16] Portrayals of the book, foregrounded in both poems, offer a particularly interesting set of reflections on books, their meaning and their

[12] Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's 'De Consolatione Philosophiae',* vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 286, l. 48.
[13] Thomas A. Carnicelli, ed., *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 83, l. 13.
[14] See **Appendix §1.7)**.
[15] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 183.
[16] For an overview of the poems, see Daniel Anlezark, ed. and trans., *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 1-57.

association with royal figures. Previous scholarly work on these texts will be reassessed in light of the chapter's close readings of Alfredian and Æthelstanian royal books. More importantly, the focus on the book in these poems, as in the royal translations and donation records, will be read as a measure of the importance of discourse and debate about books in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.

§2) Alfred's Books: The Book in the Late Anglo-Saxon Landscape

A reassessment of the Alfredian corpus for what it reveals about the book necessitates careful scrutiny of the king's language and rhetoric about books and book-culture. This book-culture, however, is one filtered and framed through various tropes and conceits familiar to an early medieval audience which can yet be missed in modern scholarly analysis of Alfred's texts. One such conceit, found throughout the prefaces and epilogue to the *Pastoral Care* and the preface to the *Soliloquies*, is the conceptual link between land and book. In elevating learning and wisdom, Alfredian rhetoric foregrounds a powerful chain of connections between the geographical circulation of the king's books and early Christian textual transmission; the spiritual resonance of the book in the Created world, and the place of the translations in the newly-reformulated space of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. Even more surprisingly, perhaps, his texts also encode a view of the literary book in relation to one of the king's most powerful legal instruments: the royal charter or "land-book".

§2.1) The Book as a Symbol of Past, Place and People

Some preliminary insights into the conceptual link between land and book may be found through a re-consideration of the prefaces. In the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care,* the king not only laments the decline of learning and Latinity across the realm, but does so with specific reference to "maðma and boca" ("treasures and books") [**App. §1.1/21**], and to the "bec, ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne" [**App. §1.1/37-8**] that he proposes to circulate throughout his kingdom. In the *Soliloquies,* the king's translated "structure" is figured in the wooded landscape as a dwelling built from the books of the Fathers.[17] The book, in both prefaces, is not only materially situated within the space of the kingdom, but used in conjunction with more conceptual ideas about the Anglo-Saxon past and the origins of its people. Taken as a whole, Alfred's texts frame a powerful vision of the book, not only as a

[17] All citations from this text are taken from Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* reproduced as **Appendix §1.4).**

vessel for knowledge and wisdom, but as representative of Anglo-Saxon cultural history and the Christian past of the *Angelcynn*.

Learning, Literacy and the "Book of Nature"

An illuminating instance of the king's sophisticated bibliographic imagery comes in a particularly famous passage in the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care*. This passage, following Alfred's description of literate ability "giond eall Angelcynn" ("throughout England") [**App. §1.1/21**], has the king imagine how scholars in both the recent and distant past would have lamented the loss of books now current among his people. In an especially striking episode, Alfred channels the voices of these "forefathers", figuring the inability to read the bibliographical legacy as like being unable to follow a "swæð" or hunting trail over the landscape: "Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð, ac we him ne cunnon æfterspyrigean" ("Here one can still see their track, but we cannot follow it") [**App. §1.1/25-6**].[18] This image of the hunt, which recurs in the *Soliloquies* and in Asser's biography of the king, has been interpreted as providing a fitting analogy between the king's literary activities and his aristocratic pursuits.[19]

Given Old English literary tradition, this motif recalls wider vernacular imagery for "reading and writing", such as the "swaþu swiþe blacu" ("very black tracks") made by a moving creature described in Riddle 51.[20] These poetic "tracks", like those in the *Pastoral Care,* make a metaphorical equation between the visible 'trail' of learning and the spores made by animals or other wild creatures in the landscape.[21] Scholarly work on this trope in the Old English tradition has shown how the solution to the riddle, "pen and four fingers", may be related to an increasing late Anglo-Saxon interest in the mechanisms of literacy and literary production.[22] By analogy with the riddles, the "swæð" in the *Pastoral Care* appears to figure Alfred's interest in textual and linguistic translation, situating these processes of writing and inscription as part of the cultural heritage of the English.

[18] For discussion of this episode, see T.A. Shippey, "Wealth and Wisdom in King Alfred's Preface to the Old English Pastoral Care", *EHR* 94, no. 371 (1979): 346-55.
[19] Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 77-8. For further discussion, see also Antonina Harbus, "Metaphors of Authority in Alfred's Prefaces", *Neophilologus* 91, no. 4 (2007), 721-2.
[20] Muir, ed., *Exeter Anthology,* 325.
[21] For a broader discussion of this trope, see Edward J. Chamberlin, "Hunting, Tracking and Reading", in *Literacy, Narrative and Culture,* ed. Jens Brockmeier, David R. Olson and Min Wang (London: Routledge, 2002), 67-85.
[22] For discussion of this riddle, see Bitterli, *Say What I Am Called,* 145-50.

Alfred's naturalistic imagery here, whilst drawing on traditions current in vernacular poetry, makes a link between nature and the book with broader significance. The concept of God's Creation as a "book" forms, as we noted earlier, a key trope in scriptural and patristic imagery. Images of books as *florilegia* or of the world as a "book of nature", appear, as Cillian O'Hogan has observed, as a recurrent feature of antique and patristic texts.[23] In one passage from Augustine's *Sermones,* the saint makes a direct comparison between books and the "magnus liber … species creaturae" ("great book … of created things"), a codex "non … de atramento litteras fecit ante oculos tuos posuit" ("not [written in] letters with ink [but] put in front of your eyes").[24] Alfred's version of Augustine's *Soliloquies,* which figures each constituent book of the work as "blostman"; "blostmena" ("blossoms"),[25] and his evocation of the ink-track of the *Pastoral Care* seem closely tied to such traditions, evocative not only of letters and literacy, but of a very particular piece of symbolism focused on the book.[26]

As it appears in the preface, Alfred's hunting imagery might thus be said to figure the English landscape as like a codex, collapsing the tangible signs of natural activity with the material legacy of cultural achievement. The place of the "book" in the kingdom takes on a key significance here, indexing a literal loss of literate skills to a moral observation about the inability of Alfred's ninth-century subjects to "read" the landscape they have inherited.[27] The spore-script of previous generations is not only a sign of past Anglo-Saxon learning, but a symbol of the divine "book of nature", which all Christian people should be able to read alongside scripture. Alfredian rhetoric here posits the book as an almost elemental force in the landscape, a sign of the English past and of God's Creation. That these material and symbolic books are now said to be destroyed or illegible creates a powerful image not only of declining standards, but of a fallen world, in which the bibliographic inheritance has been squandered, and nature is out of joint.

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[23] Cillian O'Hogan, *Prudentius and the Landscapes of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23-30. See also Donald F. Duclow, "Nature as Speech and Book in John Scotus Eriugena", *Mediaevalia* 3 (1977): 131-40.

[24] Augustine, *Sermones ad Populum* 68*,* CPL 0284, cap.: 2, par.: 6, linea: 161-3, LLT-A, http:/clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=PAUG_0284N [Accessed 28 December 2019]. For discussion, see O'Hogan, *Prudentius,* 23-4.

[25] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 83, ll. 13-14.

[26] For further useful background, see Paul E. Szarmach, "The Old English *Boethius* as a Book of Nature", in *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Medieval England* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 69-92.

[27] For a broader discussion of the links between land, memory and the formation of identity through texts, see Patrick J. Geary, "Land, Language and Memory in Europe, 700-1100", *TRHS* 9 (1999): 169-84.

The Book and Traditions of Anglo-Saxon Christianity

The link between the landscape of Alfred's forefathers and the bibliographic imagery of inscription and erasure in the *Pastoral Care* indicates the conceptual importance of the book to the meaning of the preface. Ideas about past, place and people, as well as literacy and learning, are filtered through a set of traditions focused on the *boc*. Careful contextualisation of the king's programme is therefore of paramount importance in drawing out these nuanced ideas. A further key context for Alfred's ideas about the book may be found in his verse preface to the *Pastoral Care,* which, though often overlooked in favour of its prose counterpart, is also carefully centred on the book in place and space.

The verse preface, which appears directly following Alfred's opening address, is a short poem describing the history of the work in the context of the king's translation. Split into two sections, the poem opens with an account of the origins of "þis ærendgewrit" ("this message") [**App. §1.2/1a**], recounting how it represents that which "Agustinus ofer sealtne sæ suðan brohte iegbuendum" ("Augustine brought ... from the south over the salt sea to the island-dwellers") [**App. §1.2/1b-3a**], following its composition by Gregory at Rome. Following a brief excursus on Gregory's intelligence and piety, the verse comments on Alfred's decision to translate the text. In this second part of the preface, the style and tone of the verse shifts dramatically, figuring the book as itself a "speaking" object.[28] The "book" explains, first, how the king has now "awende worda gehwelc" ("translated every word") [**App. §1.2/12a**] of Gregory's text, and then how, "me his writerum sende suð & norð" ("[he] sent me south and north to his scribes") [**App. §1.2/12b-13a**].

The location of the book in space and in relation to an imagined landscape is, once again, a powerful feature of Alfredian rhetoric. Moving outwards from the borders of the kingdom and its (once impressive) history of book-learning in the prose, the poetic preface positions the *Pastoral Care* as a boundary-crossing codex, part of a much broader tradition of Christian book-culture and sacred codicology. Collapsing the geographical and historical borders separating the sixth-century Latin text from the ninth-century English version, the poem relates this earlier phase of literary production to Alfred's project, hinging the two sections of the poem around the adverb "siððan" ("afterwards") [**App. §1.2/11a**]. Blending temporal and spatial imagery in a similar way to that found in the prose preface, the Alfredian

[28] For further discussion of this trope, see James W. Earl, "King Alfred's Talking Poems", in his *Thinking about Beowulf* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 87-99.

book is represented as a key part of the cultural landscape, defined, in this case, against the literal borders of the kingdom over land and sea.

Gregory's *Regula* here is not merely portrayed as one of the "books most necessary" for a ninth-century audience to know, but as a codex with much wider historical and spiritual significance. The "speaking" book of the *Regula* is articulated with reference not only to the pope's translation, but to a distant period of the "English" past, when St. Augustine brought the Christian faith to the shores of the kingdom. The collapsing of these successive historical moments in the poem telescopes Alfredian book-culture within a much broader spiritual inheritance, which, in the pithy style of the poem, manages to elide regional and ritual differences in the transmission of the Christian book to the "iegbuendum" ("island-dwellers"). The book in the preface is thus indexed to a foundational moment of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, heralding (the putative) origins of English book-culture. It is also, as the preface implies, a bibliographic arrival with political significance, in which the pre-Conversion "island-dwellers" are recognised as a single people, untrammelled by political division or ethnic difference.[29]

The dynamic imagery of the book in the preface lends Alfred's project a much broader importance, in which cultural history, ethnic and religious origins and patristic transmission are defined and focalised through the first-person framework of the book. In the rhetoric of the preface, the "speaking book", as Peter Orton has observed, becomes not merely a localised version of Alfred's translation akin to the inscription on a single material object, but appears as *the* book of Gregory's *Regula* composed by the pope and transmitted to the English via Augustine (and now Alfred).[30] Alfred's translation is therefore not only that designed to restore learning and literacy throughout his realm, but stands in a close, quasi-genealogical, relationship to a book viewed as the cornerstone of Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

Restoration and "Recentering" via the Book

Some further comments on these processes in Alfredian translation have been advanced by Nicole Discenza, who has shown how the king's programme did not only involve linguistic translation, but a reframing of "books rooted in the classical and late antique world" to fit an

[29] For discussion of this theme, see Fabienne Michelet, *Creation, Migration and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 260-9. See also Sarah Foot, "The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest", *TRHS* 6 (1996): 30.

[30] Peter Orton, "Deixis and the Untransferable Text: Anglo-Saxon Colophons, Verse-Prefaces and Inscriptions", in *Imagining the Book,* ed. Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 204.

Anglo-Saxon conception of space.[31] Gregory's *Regula,* as we have seen, is reimagined as the text that St. Augustine literally "ofer saltne sae … brohte iegbuendum", rooting the translation within a specifically Anglo-Saxon account of Christianisation and an incipient history of the book. The dynamic imagery of the book in this preface hinges on both (in Discenza's words) a conceptual "recentering",[32] and on the material portability of the book as an object capable of "crossing over" borders and boundaries, whether spatial or temporal. The book in the landscape, as both the prose and verse prefaces to the *Pastoral Care* indicate, is also situated in a unique relationship to past and people, whether to the ancient Anglo-Saxon "forefathers" who once learned all the books now languishing in the West-Saxon archives, or to the fathers of the faith who visited English shores and so established the *Angelcynn* as a Christian people.

Related to this, we may draw attention to another oft-cited passage of the prose preface, in which the king justifies translation into English by comparison with the practices of previous nations and empires: "gemunde ic hu sio æ wæs ærest on Ebr[e]isc geðiode funden … ða hie Creacas geliornodon … & eac ealle oðre bec & eft Lædenwære swæ same" ("I recalled how the Law was first composed in the Hebrew language, and thereafter, when the Greeks learned it, they translated it all into their own language, and all other books as well, and so too the Romans") [**App. §1.1/33-5**]. The processes of translation are related here to a powerful vision of the role of language and the place of the *Englisc* vernacular.[33] At the same time, as specific citation of "ealle oðre bec" in this passage shows, Alfred's view of translation is not only linguistic, but predicated on an assimilation of past book-culture with English practice. It is immediately after this citation of "all other books" in relation to past book-cultures that the king posits his own "bec ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien", to be produced through the efforts of "wise wealhstodas" ("learned interpreters") [**App. §1.1/35-6**] capable of mediating between these books of past and future.

Building on Discenza's comments, Alfred's cultural "recentering" does not only reframe *Angelcynn* as a central cultural space, but posits English books as the natural continuation of Christian cultural (and imperial) achievement. As Fabienne Michelet has noted, Alfred's rhetoric here appears to draw on the "four world empires" theory, drawing a direct line of

[31] Nicole Guenther Discenza, "A Map of the Universe: Geography and Cosmology in the Program of Alfred the Great", in *Conversion and Colonisation in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Catherine E. Karkov and Nicholas Howe (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 83. See also Michelet, *Creation, Migration and Conquest,* 25-31.
[32] Discenza, "Map of the Universe", 94-99.
[33] For further discussion, see Nicole Guenther Discenza, "Alfred's Verse Preface to the *Pastoral Care* and the Chain of Authority", *Neophilologus* 85, no. 4 (2001): 625-33.

connection between Jerusalem, Greece, Rome, and now Anglo-Saxon England as the central spaces of Christian culture and administration.[34] The genealogical "chain of authority", mediated through the real and symbolic books of these former peoples, must be repaired and restored through the addition of Alfredian books to this prestigious list.[35] This, moreover, situates the apparent contingency of providing books in the vernacular within an elevated view of Anglo-Saxon book culture. In appending "Englisc" books to those of the Israelites, Greeks and Romans, the king implies the completion and perfection of Anglo-Saxon book-culture, portraying the English vernacular not only as a first step towards the restoration of Latinity, but as itself in a direct line of descent from the great literary languages of Christendom.[36]

The king does not merely seek to offer his subjects skills in learning or literacy, but uses the occasion of his prefaces to frame the programme as a restoration of spiritual and quasi-imperial order focused and framed through the book. Alfred's description of the translator as a "wealhstod" is perhaps significant here, making explicit the sense in which his books are the product of a process of "turning" or "mediating" between languages. Though the etymology of this compound term is uncertain, one definition of "wealh-" appears in the extant corpus as "harrow", a farming implement used to literally turn over the soil in cultivation.[37] Set out in association with the book in the prose preface, this term bolsters Alfred's conceptual positioning of the book as indelibly linked to land and people. Following the king's hunting imagery and the powerful figuration of the "book of nature", this description additionally implies that his vernacular books represent a turning over of the illegible tracks of the forefathers, laying down a new trail over the same (bibliographic) landscape.

§2.2) The Book in King Alfred's Kingdom

The conceptual link between the book and the natural and geographical imagery of the prefaces shows how Alfred situated his codices within a broader framework of cultural and ethnographic symbolism. At the same time, however, this imagery taps into a much more topical, and political, set of ideas related to Alfred's royal role and ninth-century governance. The evocation of space, place and landscapes in Alfredian metaphor does not merely form a pleasingly

[34] Michelet, *Creation, Migration and Conquest,* 159.
[35] For further discussion of this term, see Discenza, "Alfred's Verse Preface", 625-33.
[36] For the linguistic and ideological processes involved in *translatio studii et imperii,* see the introductory discussion in Emma Campbell and Robert Mills, eds., *Rethinking Medieval Translation: Ethics, Politics, Theory* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), 1-16.
[37] Bosworth-Toller, "wealh", bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/034769 [Accessed 11 December 2019].

coherent literary *schema,* but indicates how the king understood his book programme as part of a wider network of political and administrative activities.

"The Book of Nature" and Alfredian Rule

Some indications of the topicality of Alfredian book imagery may be drawn out through closer scrutiny of the king's naturalistic tropes. The motif of the hunt, though filtered through Carolingian and Old English literary tradition,[38] carried political significance during the reign, highlighting not only Alfred's aristocratic status, but also his power as a legislator. As recent archaeological research has demonstrated, hunting and the exploitation of natural resources were becoming increasingly restricted by the elite for their own benefit during this period, a process contingent on the restriction of land-holdings to privileged social groups.[39] New systems of forestry and land-management, including the demarcation of hunting trails and the use of enclosures, were additionally helping to shape the appearance of the landscape during Alfred's reign.[40] The king's evocation of these seemingly timeless features of the landscape in the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies* accordingly belies some rather more topical debates about the organisation and governance of the late Anglo-Saxon landscape. Insofar as the king indexes these features of the socio-scape to the book, his imagery creates a powerful equation between the bibliographic "legacy" and West-Saxon administrative control.

Similar ideas appear in the preface to the *Soliloquies,* which as well as incorporating Alfred's imagery of the hunt, figures translation and book-making as a literary superstructure. Translation is depicted as the gathering of "kigclas, and stuþansceaftas, and lohsceaftas" ("staves and props and tie-shafts") [**App. §1.4/1**], terms which William Sayers has identified as precise "*termini technici*" for the literal process of construction.[41] The metaphoric significance of the trope, as Sayers notes, is stretched beyond figuration in Alfred's text to provide a highly detailed set of terminology for contemporary woodworking.[42] We might note in addition here how legal restrictions on tree-felling and the management of woodland were being used in the period to cement royal control over land.[43] This broader context might

[38] For discussion of this trope in relation to Carolingian literary culture and politics, see Eric. J. Goldberg, "Louis the Pious and the Hunt", *Speculum* 88, no. 3 (2013): 619-42.
[39] Naomi Sykes, "Deer, Land, Knives and Halls: Social Change in Early Medieval England", *AntJ* 90 (2010): 183-8.
[40] Sykes, "Deer, Land, Knives and Halls", 184-5.
[41] William Sayers, "King Alfred's Timbers", *Selim* 15 (2008): 123.
[42] Sayers, "King Alfred's Timbers", 119-22.
[43] See the discussion of this in Della Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Leicester University Press, 1998), 165.

mitigate for a view of the preface as signalling not merely the symbolic building of the "book house", but, as with the hunting motif, the king's privileged status in relation to the rural landscape.

Even in seemingly universal naturalistic imagery such as Alfred's books of "living water" in the epilogue to the *Pastoral Care,* one can detect more immediate concerns. As William Whobrey notes in a rare examination of this trope, Alfred's text carefully elaborates the aquatic imagery found in Gregory, incorporating a political, as well as spiritual, meaning.[44] Running parallel to the meticulous terminology for forestry in the *Soliloquies* is the king's careful attention to vocabulary for channelling and distributing water, which, in one of Alfred's emendations to the *Regula,* alters Gregory's text to invoke the dispensation of water "along the king's highways".[45] In the epilogue itself, as Whobrey observes, the extended metaphor of the book-as-holy-water is the occasion for a further emendation, transforming the Gregorian "mud" that results when water is not adequately channelled, into an Alfredian "fenne" or marsh [**App. §1.3/21b**],[46] a feature of the Anglo-Saxon landscape that had particular significance for boundary-making in the period.[47] This particular textual alteration might even point to a more political double-meaning: during the lowest point of the reign in 878, the struggle over territory with the Danes saw the king and his followers reduced to sheltering in the fens and marshes of the Somerset Levels.[48]

Books, Boundaries and the Scoping of the West-Saxon Kingdom

The connection between the Anglo-Saxon landscape and the book programme is one that posits the Alfredian codex as a sophisticated intermediary between the natural and social worlds. This is seen nowhere more vividly than in the macrocosmic rhetoric of the prefaces attached to the *Pastoral Care,* which, as we have seen, evoke the historical and geographical space of the kingdom in relation to the past glories of Christendom and empire. The *Pastoral Care* and *Soliloquies,* with their seemingly sempiternal images of seas, rivers and forests, are yet powerfully political in their vision for the book. The spatial categories that the king sets out as the scene for past and future book-culture are not merely metaphorical or conventional, but evoke the specific (and contested) boundaries of Alfred's late ninth-century kingdom.

[44] William T. Whobrey, "King Alfred's Metrical Epilogue to the Pastoral Care", *JEGP* 90, no. 2 (1991): 185-6.
[45] Whobrey, "Alfred's Metrical Epilogue", 183-4.
[46] Whobrey, "Alfred's Metrical Epilogue", 181-2.
[47] Hooke, *Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England,* 184.
[48] For the background to this episode, see Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life,* 41; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great,* 83. See also Whobrey, "Alfred's Metrical Epilogue", 185.

Developing these ideas further, one can identify the locations into which Alfred imagines his books as politically important. As Della Hooke has shown, forests, rivers and marshes, amongst other areas, formed important boundaries between kingdoms in the late Anglo-Saxon period.[49] In the *Pastoral Care,* moreover, the concept of boundaries and borders in relation to the book becomes paramount, allowing the king to juxtapose a remembrance of book-culture once widespread "giond eall Angelcynn" beside a present decline in standards, located both "behionan" ("this side") [**App. §1.1/10**] and "begiondan" ("beyond") [**App. §1.1/12**] the river Humber and "besuðan Temese" ("south of the Thames") [**App. §1.1/13**]. Kathleen Davis has observed the frequency of these spatial prepositions in the preface, arguing that these may be read as powerful invocations of the *Angelcynn* in relation to both place and people.[50] These specific geographical markers yet set up a clear association between the space of the kingdom and the (projected) space into which Alfred imagines his books. Thus, the king recalls how "ciricean *giond* Angelcynn stodon maðma & boca gefyldæ"; "wiotona ðe giu wæron *giond* Angelcynn, & ða bec eallæ befullan geliornod hæfdon ..." ("the good, wise men who were formerly throughout England and [who] had thoroughly studied all those books") [**App. §1.1/28-9**] (my emphases). In the closing lines of the preface, it is into this carefully delineated landscape that the king positions *his* books within *his* kingdom, as he announces that each translated book of the *Pastoral Care* is to go "to ælcum biscepstole on minum rice" ("to each bishopric in my kingdom") [**App. §1.1/51**].

The significance of this rhetoric, which might otherwise be read as a generically authoritative royal statement, is highlighted through awareness of the contested nature of the king's territories in the period. Alfred's struggle to maintain Anglo-Saxon rule in the face of Viking incursions led not only to military action but to a wider re-evaluation of the nature of the space belonging to the "Angelcynn".[51] The persistence of the Viking armies and the spread of Danish fortifications in Northumbria and East Anglia entailed an experiential reshaping of the "Anglo-Saxon" realm, with waterways and coastlines becoming dangerous breeding-grounds for raiding and attack.[52] Only after a decisive victory at Edington in 878 could Alfred gain diplomatic leverage over his opponents, resulting in a formal agreement over territory with Guthrum, leader of the Vikings in East Anglia. The terms of this treaty, in which the

[49] Hooke, *Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, 62-8.
[50] Kathleen Davis, "National Writing in the Ninth Century: A Reminder for Postcolonial Thinking about the Nation", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28, no. 3 (1998): 619-21.
[51] See, for instance, the discussion in Davis, "National Writing in the Ninth Century", 617-21.
[52] For Asser's account of these episodes, see Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life,* 18-9; 35-40; 47 [etc.] See also Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great,* 74; 82-3; 85 [etc.]

boundary between the Anglo-Saxon realm and the Danelaw was codified, sets out a geographical restructuring of the kingdom, in which major riverine features of the landscape "up on Temese, 7 ðonne up on Ligan" ("along the Thames and up the Lea") became the revised borders of the kingdom.[53] The geographical and topological descriptions found in the prefaces, which echo the new boundaries of Alfred's kingdom "besuðan Temese", situate books and book-learning firmly within the borders of this territorial settlement. Notwithstanding the king's portrait of decline and loss, Alfred's orientation of books (both symbolic and real) within this landscape serves to draw out an ethnic division between Anglo-Saxon identity and culture and that in the outlying Danish regions. Insofar as the king's translated books are to circulate within this newly demarcated territory, the royal codex is itself posited as a boundary-marker, tying the vernacular book to the reconfigured landscape of the *Angelcynn*.

Structuring the prefaces to the *PC* and the *Soliloquies* within evocations of rivers and forests, features of the landscape that traditionally formed border zones between territories and kingdoms, the king appears to fuse his military and political experience with his authority to promote his educational programme. The book is not only that which shapes a sense of cultural heritage, but has a practical and immediate significance within Alfred's realm. The prefaces' preoccupation with the borders of the landscape, and, in the case of the preface to the *Pastoral Care,* with the rhetorical structuring and reshaping of the land, seems geared towards direct evocation of Alfred's political struggle, and success, in guarding and reconfiguring the boundaries of his kingdom.

Networks of Books in the Distribution of Alfred's *Pastoral Care*

The significance of this association between the ninth-century landscape and the Alfredian book may be drawn out further through a more detailed analysis of the literal and rhetorical locations of the *Pastoral Care*. Though only two ninth-century copies of Alfred's book survive, (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20 and London, British Library Cotton Tiberius B. xi, with Kassel, Gesamthochschulbibliothek 4 MS theol. 131), later manuscript evidence allows reconstruction of the bishoprics that are known to have received copies. A memorandum formerly on folio 1r of MS Tiberius records that copies had already been sent to Archbishop Plegmund of Canterbury and Bishop Swiðulf of Rochester.[54] The preface to a tenth or eleventh-

[53] Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen,* vol. 1 (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1903), 126. See also Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, 171.
[54] For the text of this memorandum, as recorded by Junius, see Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 471.

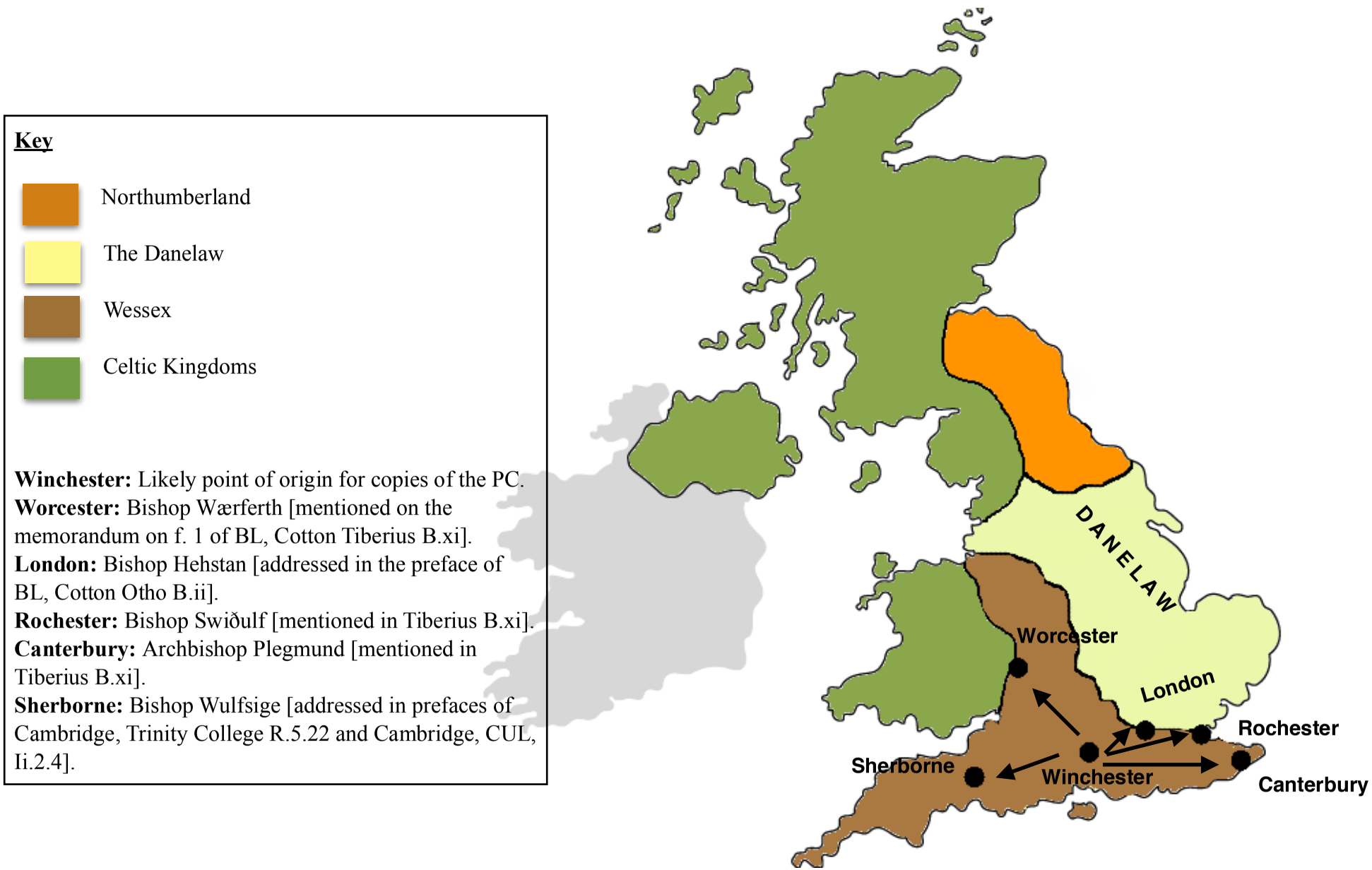
century manuscript copy addresses Bishop Hehstan of London,[55] whilst Bishop Wulfsige of Sherborne is addressed in the prefaces to two later manuscripts, ranging in date from the tenth to eleventh centuries.[56] Palaeographical information from Tiberius and Hatton, together with the memorandum in Tiberius, suggests central copying of each version of the book in Winchester by a team of organised scribes working across the manuscripts.[57] The picture that emerges is one of central dissemination of manuscripts from Winchester, with known copies, as shown in **Map 1**, sent across the country from a single, scribal hub.

The translated book is accordingly sent not just "suð & norð", but west to the West-Saxon stronghold of Sherborne in Wessex,[58] north-west to the heartland of English Mercia in Worcester, north-east to the see of London, and east to Rochester and Canterbury in the former Kentish kingdom. Spreading out like a web across the country, the destinations of the *Pastoral Care,* as is implicit in the prose and verse prefaces, traverse all the (West-Saxon) areas of England. Given the king's explicit statements about the circulation of the translated book to "ælcum biscepstole in minum rice", each individual codex would have signalled the existence of other copies circulating in the network. The book, and the idea of the book constructed in the preface, thus sets out from within a very clear sense of the shape of the West-Saxon kingdom and its close association with the Alfredian book. The complex interweaving of symbolic and pragmatic imagery linking land and book in the translation further reinforces this notion of bibliographic diffusion. One can see this, for instance, in the epilogue to the text, in which the "halga[n] bec" [**App. §1.3/11a**] flowing as a living stream over the landscape, are, as we noted earlier, redolent with both scriptural significance and topical, topographical connotations.

If the episcopal sees were an obvious destination for copies of the work that was to launch Alfred's revival of learning, they were also politically strategic locations. Besides Sherborne and Worcester in the west of the kingdom, the other extant destinations, Canterbury (the archbishopric), Rochester and London, were areas with a particular concentration around

[55] London, British Library, Cotton Otho B. ii and Otho B. x.
[56] These are Cambridge, Trinity College, R.5.22, ff. 72-158, dated to the tenth or eleventh century, and Cambridge, University Library, Ii 2.4, dated to the third quarter of the eleventh century.
[57] See the discussion of the codicology and palaeography of the *Pastoral Care* manuscripts in Neil R. Ker, ed., *The Pastoral Care: King Alfred's Translation of St. Gregory's Regula Pastoralis, MS. Hatton 20 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, MS. Cotton Tiberius B. xi in the British Museum, MS. Anhang 19 in the Landesbibliothek at Kassel,* EEMF 6 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1956), 21-22. For further (brief) comment on the crossover of scribal hands, see Timothy Graham, "The Opening of King Alfred's Preface to the Old English *Pastoral Care*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20", *OEN* 38.1 (2004): 43.
[58] For discussion of Sherborne, see S. Matthews, "Archbishop Plegmund and the Court of King Alfred 890-923", *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* 74 (1996-7): 99.

Map 1: Known Distribution of the Ninth-Century Translation of the *Pastoral Care*



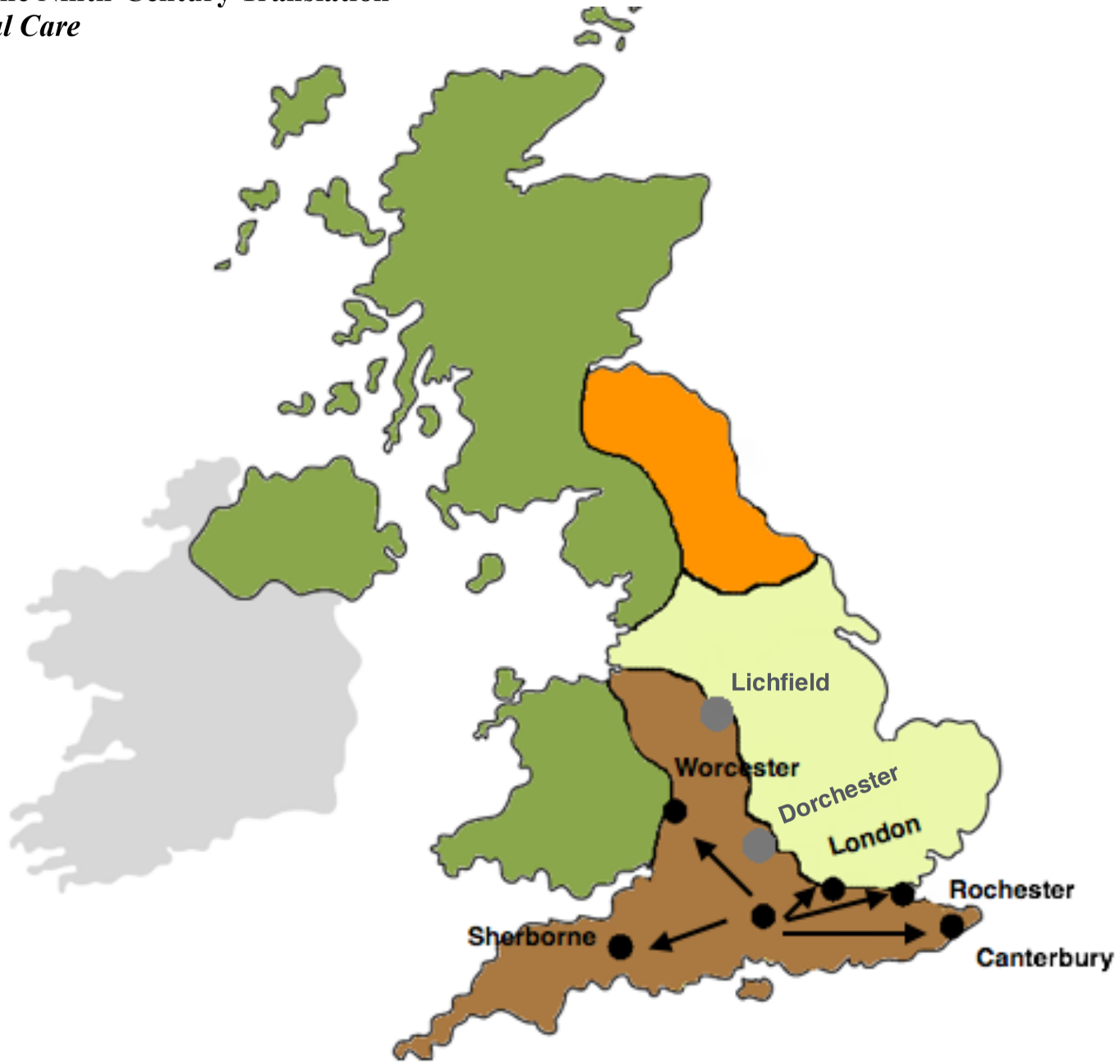
Alfred's vulnerable eastern border and, in the case of London and Rochester, the threshold of the Danelaw. Viking incursions into Kent and the near-taking of Rochester in 885 reflect considerable political turmoil in the region only a few years before the transmission of the *Pastoral Care.*[59] As Julia Barrow has observed, churches and ecclesiastical centres were key political locations in the reign, often occupying land that was strategically important to the West-Saxon dynasty.[60] If Alfred's assertion that the *Pastoral Care* was sent to every bishopric came to pass, we may posit further recipient centres at Lichfield whose incumbent, Wulfred, is attested in charters witnessed by Alfred, Wærferth of Worcester and Wulfsige of Sherborne,[61] and, possibly, Dorchester, a see evacuated from Viking Leicester, whose bishop Ealhheard appears as a witness in two of the same charters associated with Wærferth, Wulfsige and Wulfred,[62] and who is mentioned in the Chronicle entry for 896 as one of the king's best thegns.[63] If there were, now lost, copies sent to these centres, the distribution map of the *Pastoral Care* would show heavy weighting towards the north and south east of the kingdom, with a clear line running along the border of the Danelaw in English Mercia, London and Kent [**Map 2**].

The probability that the translated book was sent to some of the most vulnerable locations in Alfred's kingdom is important. In addition to announcing control over a revival of English literacy, a scheme, which, as successive scholars have noted, had a pragmatic element insofar as it was designed to train up the next generation of court officials,[64] the preface and the material destinations for the *Pastoral Care* reveal a concerted attempt to exert influence over the boundaries of the kingdom, and to give rhetorical shape to "eall Angelcynn". Specifying the precise location of each translated book, which is not to be removed from each church that receives it, the preface, together with the material evidence for transmission, shapes a tangible and rhetorical network for bibliographic transmission, using the book to leverage royal prestige and patronage over the explicitly stated boundaries of the kingdom.

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[59] Stevenson, ed. *Asser's Life,* 49-50. See also Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, 86-7.
[60] Julia Barrow, "Survival and Mutation: Ecclesiastical Institutions in the Danelaw in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries", in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,* ed. Dawn Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 158.
[61] All citations of Anglo-Saxon charters, except where otherwise stated, are cited by Sawyer number (S), and are taken from *The Electronic Sawyer* https://www.esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk. For the Alfredian charters discussed above, see S 217 and 218 (with Alfred and Wærferth); S 219 and 220 (with Wærferth) and S 346 (with Alfred, Wærferth and Wulfsige).
[62] S 220 and S 346.
[63] Janet Bately, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition: MS A* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986), 59-60.
[64] Keynes, "Royal Government", 231.

Map 2: Conjectured Distribution of the Ninth-Century Translation of the *Pastoral Care*



The textual content of the translations, as each preface makes clear, can only be understood within the Alfredian redefinition of the book, which places Winchester and the king at the centre of a network of authoritative control. Following Richard Abels' analysis of Alfred's military strategies, one might even draw comparisons between the king's shaping of military networks and his cultural activities.[65] Alfred's construction of fortified *burhs* for defensive purposes seems to have been based on a similar organization of centre and periphery, which, as Abels notes, utilized a network of strategic locations controlled by the king from his Wessex heartlands.[66] This system, moreover, was carefully outlined in the document known as the "Burghal Hidage", an account which describes the shape and space of the kingdom in a manner reminiscent of the king's territorial preoccupations in the prefaces.[67] The spread of the *Pastoral Care,* with its configuration of cultural-political nodal points, might be said to have been designed on a similar basis,[68] articulated, like the *burhs,* through documentation relating the West-Saxon landscape to political (and textual) models of centralized control.

§2.3) The Literary Book and the Land-Book

These observations about the political and administrative resonances of the book-programme lead us to a further, and perhaps more surprising, set of ideas about the Alfredian book. As we observed in the introduction to this thesis, the Anglo-Saxon *boc* encompassed a much broader range of meanings than the literary codex alone. One such powerful connotation in the period centred around an understanding of the book as a "land-book" or charter. Careful reflection on Alfred's rhetoric in his prefaces reveals this association between the literary book and the land-book to be a further aspect of the king's bibliographic imagination, and, one, moreover, with crucial political (and socio-economic) resonances.

The "Land-Book" in Alfred's Reign

Before assessing these associations in the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies,* we might first note the importance of the charter in Alfred's reign. As Simon Keynes has argued, the king's translations must be viewed amidst the promotion of a broader series of written documents in

[65] Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998), 219-20.
[66] See Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 201-4. For a rich (and more recent) discussion of the *burhs*, see also Abels, "Reflections on Alfred the Great as a Military Leader", in *The Medieval Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honor of Bernard S. Bachrach,* ed. Gregory I. Halfond (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 58-61.
[67] Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great,* 193-4.
[68] For some further comments on the centralised organisation of book-production in the reign, see Anne Lawrence, "Alfred, His Heirs and the Traditions of Manuscript Production in Tenth-Century England", *Reading Medieval Studies* 13 (1988): 38-44.

the period, ranging from the king's law-codes and writs, to records communicating the administration of the newly reconfigured political and military landscape.[69] We have already noted the potential overlaps between contemporary documents such as the "Burghal Hidage" and the rhetoric of the king's books. Though Alfred issued relatively few charters compared to other Anglo-Saxon kings,[70] the diploma appears to have taken on an increasing importance in the late ninth century, when charter production was becoming more organised,[71] and the "land-book" was being invoked in an increasingly practical way, alongside or instead of oral agreement.[72]

The Viking incursions that had such profound consequences for the borders and boundaries of the kingdom were also, as the prefaces to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies* indicate, experienced at micro-level on the ground. As Barrow has shown, there was rapid turnover in land-holding in the ninth century, especially in fragile border zones and at ecclesiastical centres.[73] Alfred sought to manage such areas through the strategic disposition of "book-land" to his thegns, especially where these land-holdings had defensive importance.[74] Given the ecclesiastical destinations of the *Pastoral Care,* it is instructive to note that the king faced accusations of appropriating Church lands in the period, offering them, "by book" to favoured aristocratic followers.[75] Disputes over land, predicated on royal redistribution of territory and the demonstration of ownership through "land-books" appears to have become a key political issue during the reign. In one case of 896, the same Bishop Wærferth who received the Hatton copy of the *Pastoral Care* was compelled to produce some "aldan bocum" ("old land-books") to prove his rights over a disputed piece of woodland which had been stolen from him at Woodchester.[76]

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[69] Keynes, "Royal Government", 230-4.
[70] Following the list of charters by reign in *The Electronic Sawyer,* only 17 charters linked to Alfred survive. This might be contrasted with the 42 diplomatic survivals associated with Alfred's father, Æthelwulf, and the 29 charters from Edward the Elder's reign. For further discussion, see also Keynes, "Power of the Written Word", 191-2.
[71] Simon Keynes, "The West-Saxon Charters of King Æthelwulf, and his Sons", *EHR* 109 no. 434 (1994): 1135-49.
[72] Susan Kelly, "Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word", in *The Uses of Literacy,* ed. McKitterick, 46-7.
[73] Barrow, "Survival and Mutation", 156-61.
[74] Abels, *Alfred the Great,* 38-40. For a broader discussion of the relationship between bookland and military service, see Abels, "Bookland and Fyrd Service in Late Saxon England", *Warfare in the Dark Ages,* ed. John France and Kelly DeVries (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 347-71.
[75] For further discussion, see Robin Fleming, "Monastic Lands and England's Defence in the Viking Age", *EHR* 100, no. 395 (1985): 250.
[76] S 1441. For discussion, see Hooke, *Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England,* 90.

The idea of the book as bearing witness to ownership and providing proof of tenurial status adds a further dimension to the conceptual tie between land and book expressed in the prefaces. Importantly, this link also had a material basis in the way Alfred's manuscripts were produced. As Neil R. Ker notes, extant copies of the *Pastoral Care* were written, at least in part, by scribes familiar with drafting diplomas, and who may have been inexperienced with producing manuscript books.[77] This overlap between the literary codex and the land-book is mirrored, as we shall see, in the content, as well as the context, of the king's translations.

The Rhetoric of the *Pastoral Care* and the Language of the "Land-Book"

A further key development in Anglo-Saxon diplomatic in Alfred's reign lies in the increasing use of the vernacular. Contemporary "land-books", which used a largely fixed structure and formula throughout the period, were traditionally Latin documents, designed to solemnise the terms on which a piece of land was held and to set out penalties for its seizure or mismanagement.[78] The ninth century, as Susan Kelly notes, saw a rise in the use of Old English in contemporary charters, especially in descriptions of estate boundaries.[79] This shaping and scoping of land in the "land-book" gave rise to a series of narrative strategies for describing the landscape, a rhetorical, as well as descriptive, process that has come to the attention of literary scholars as well as historians.[80]

The use of the ninth-century "land-book" for outlining the shape and structure of the landscape allows us to make illuminating comparisons between these documents and the thematic content of the *Pastoral Care*. Davis has observed how the preface's focus on royal command, "Alfred kyning hateð gretan" ("King Alfred sends words of greeting …") [**App. §1.1/1**], might be compared to contemporary writs, in which one finds similar vocabulary for greeting and commanding.[81] The rhetorical logic of the preface, however, might more accurately be compared to the formulaic structure of a "land-book". In one representative example of the Alfredian charter, in which the king grants 10 hides of land to one Æthelhelm (S 348), one sees how Alfred, first, greets the recipient of the land; second, outlines the terms of the gift; third, outlines the precise boundaries of the estate, and, finally, warns that the grant

[77] Ker, ed., *The Pastoral Care,* 19.
[78] For a useful overview of the diploma, its definition(s) and status, see Keynes, *Diplomas of King Æthelred,* 31-3.
[79] Kelly, "Anglo-Saxon Lay Society", 46-52.
[80] See, for instance, Sarah Foot, "Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record, or Story?", in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West,* ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 46-65.
[81] Davis, "National Writing in the Ninth Century", 626.

should be upheld: "huic nostre donationi perpetua maneat" ("this our gift [must] remain in place in perpetuity").[82] One can see a similar impetus in the *Pastoral Care,* from the greeting of each bishop, to the description of the boundaries of the kingdom "behionan Humbre" (etc.), and the "disposition" of the gift "to ælcum biscepstole". The final lines of the preface, in which each bishop is urged not to remove or displace the gifts of book and *æstel,* is likewise similar in form to the anathema clause found in S 348 and in other land-books, where, as in the diploma, the book is to remain in place: "nan mon ðone æstel from ðære bec ne do, ne ða boc from ðæm mynstre" ("no one shall take the *æstel* from the book, nor the book from the church") [**App. §1.1/52-3**].

More detailed textual comparisons may be made between the "land-book" and Alfred's books through attention to the precise rhetorical strategies used in the diplomas and the *Pastoral Care*. As Scott Thompson Smith has observed, the textual description of land in Anglo-Saxon diplomas proceeds by delineating the edges of an estate, often advancing a linear sequence of landmarks from one point to the next, until a verbal circuit of the territory has been completed.[83] More generally, the land-books' evocation of space operates through a scoping out of the landscape, using "transitional conjunctions and adverbs" in order to orientate the reader in relation to well-known features of the territory.[84] In an undated Alfredian charter granting land to one Deormod at Berkshire, the bounds proceed from a watercourse or "lacu" west of a hidden river-crossing, and along a series of marshes and ditches until "utan Temese" ("at the boundary with the Thames").[85] Later Anglo-Saxon charters, which are comparable to the structure of Alfred's diplomatic corpus, employ a similar breadth of spatial terminology: "beheonan of þan landan" ("on this side of the land");[86] "besuðan dyrnan leage" ("south of a hidden meadow");[87] "innan burhwara 7 utan burhwara" ("within the town walls and outside the town walls").[88]

A similar type of boundarial scoping can be seen to be at work in the *PC* prose preface. Sketching out the literate, rather than literally geographical, borders of his kingdom, Alfred's rhetoric is yet dependent on language familiar from charters. The descriptions of book-culture

[82] S 348.
[83] Scott Thompson Smith, "Marking Boundaries: Charters and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle", in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* ed. Alice Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 170-2.
[84] Smith, "Marking Boundaries", 172.
[85] S 355.
[86] S 930.
[87] S 910.
[88] S 1215.

either side of the Humber and Thames are indexed not only to the shape of the kingdom, but are articulated through a careful patterning of spatial prepositions, mapping literate ability and wisdom both "behionan" and "begiondan Humbre" and "innanbordes … utanbordes" ("within … and outside the border") [**App. §1.1/5; 8**] of the kingdom. Scoping out the territory through a series of spatial dialectics, including "giond" [**App. §1.1/2; 3; 21**; **29; 44**] "besuðan" [**App. §1.1/13**]; "on lond(e)" [**App. §1.1/9; 32**], Alfred's articulation of Anglo-Saxon space is predicated on evoking the language of the "land-book" to describe the past and future importance of literary books and learning. In the complex imaginative world of the preface, the translated book itself is figured like a territorial gift, not only describing or mediating land directly to its recipients, but bound up with a symbolic reconfiguration of the landscape, blending the rhetoric of the land-book with the authoritative power of the Christian *Hierdeboc*.

Book-Land and Literary Construction in the *Soliloquies*

The complex interplay between these different types of "book" in the landscape is drawn out even more clearly in the preface to the *Soliloquies.* This preface, as we have seen, situates itself within the boundary-zone of a forest or woodland, an area with both symbolic and political meaning for an Anglo-Saxon audience. The powerful extended metaphor of the Alfredian book as a structure made from the "timber" of patristic books locates the king's project both within the Christian bibliographic tradition and within a more localised set of ideas about land and book. These latter ideas emerge in the preface's direct invocation of land ownership, predicated, explicitly, on the granting of "bocland".

If the literary "book-house" and its situation within the "field" of Alfredian learning appears as the focus of the preface, the king's text is yet strikingly detailed about the legal and administrative context for this "space". The second section of the preface, if sometimes overlooked in favour of the text's metaphorical opening, extends the conceit by noting how the house and its land might be "leased" or even inherited by an imagined owner. Alfred first describes how the literary "structure" might be granted to someone as a temporary home, from which he may hunt, fowl and fish according to "his hlafordes læne" ("[land] leased to him by his lord") [**App. §1.4/18**]. This owner is then granted a more permanent habitation, earning "bocland and æce yrfe þurh his hlafordes miltse" ("bookland and a perpetual inheritance through his lord's kindness") [**App. §1.4/21**]. Evoking the king's personal authority to reward his nobles and clerics with landholdings "by book", the preface goes into considerable detail about the "booking" of the king's imagined land. Insofar as this portrait of land-ownership

proceeds through both temporary and permanent levels of occupation, Alfred's text even manages to echo a contemporary legal distinction between "loan-land" and "book-land", categories of ownership associated with different types of land governance in the period.[89]

As in the *Pastoral Care,* one can detect lexical and stylistic parallels between the literary book and the land-book in the *Soliloquies'* account. The description of the thegn's prospective "huntigan, and fuglian, and fiscian" ("hunting, fowling, and fishing") [**App. §1.4/19-20**] in his new home recalls similar stipulations about land-use and the legal freedoms attached to these activities in the diplomatic tradition, including in one charter granted by Alfred's father Æthelwulf, where similar occupations are listed.[90] Just as in the charters, one finds the terrestrial home granted to the "thegn" indexed to a yet more significant dwelling: the "ecan ham" of "eternal life" [**App. §1.4/15**], where a good tenant might receive a permanent reward for loyal service.[91] The invocation of the heavenly home, though seeming to lift the preface's entire bookish superstructure out of its localised framework, recalls in turn the cosmological emphasis of Anglo-Saxon charter anathemas, where the sanction for disrupting the royal grant of "book-land" is, like that in an Alfredian charter of 882, to be "deleatur de libris viventium" ("deleted from the [divine] book of life").[92]

In this way, the complex imagery of the preface comes full circle. As the Alfredian "book" is constructed through a series of bibliographic "timbers", it becomes implicated in the legal framework associated with the contemporary "land-book". The translated book, metaphorically situated in a forest of reading material, is figured as both the object and subject of legal "booking", which, in turn, is contingent on inscription (or deletion) from the "book of life". Part of the sophistication of the king's rhetoric here lies in his ability to sustain both the literal and metaphoric resonances of his book imagery, shifting from one to the other in an impressively nuanced treatment of these linked themes. Representing one of the last translations of the reign, the *Soliloquies* offers a three-dimensional representation of the Alfredian "book": framed through biblical and patristic tradition; fused with the political and administrative resonances of the "land-book", and centred within the regenerated "homeland" of Anglo-Saxon cultural space.

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[89] For this point, see also Valerie Heuchan, "God's Co-Workers and Powerful Tools: A Study of the Sources of Alfred's Building Metaphor in his Old English Translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*", *N&Q* 54, no. 1 (2007): 3-4.
[90] S 316.
[91] Heuchan, "God's Co-Workers", 3-4.
[92] S 345.

Conclusion

The foregoing reassessment of the place of the book in Alfredian thought indicates the complexity and sophistication of the king's bibliographic imagery. Modern scholarly interest in "textual" culture and the rhetoric of "translation" belies the way Alfred used the book to focalise and frame his literary and political activities. The book, as the prefaces to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies* show, offered the king not only a way of displaying his material wealth and royal wisdom, but a means of communicating pre-existing ideas about spiritual order; moral right and political control. From the "book" as a symbol of the Created world, to the significance of the codex to the foundation of "English" Christianity, Alfred evokes a potent network of scriptural and patristic ideas about books. He does so, moreover, within an acutely political framework, couching his *bec* in language strongly reminiscent of writs, land-books and other instruments of administrative control. In this, the Alfredian book emerges as itself a key idea of the book programme, rooting the newly reshaped landscape of the *Angelcynn* within a wider network of cultural and spiritual spaces, from Rome to Winchester, and from Winchester to the "ecan ham".

§3) Alfred's Books: Books, Bodies and Material Culture

The importance of the "boc" and its multivalent connotations in Alfredian rhetoric points us towards closer scrutiny of the way the book was portrayed in the programme. If the imagery of the prefaces provides a particularly rich source of ideas about books and book-culture, the theme of the codex yet has wider resonance throughout the translations, and in the biography of the king by Asser. The portrayal of the book found in these sources enables us to draw out a rather different perspective on the contemporary significance of books, based, not only on ethnological and geo-political concerns, but on the king's personal relationship with the codex. These representations, as we shall see, offer some key ideas about Alfred's mental and material engagement with the book; his vision of its role in the acquisition of wisdom, and his ideas about the significance of the codex in fostering Christian belief.

§3.1) The Book and the Body in Asser's *Vita Ælfredi*

A particularly important source for these ideas comes in the *Vita Ælfredi,* the biography of the king written by Asser. Asser's *Life*, though written in Latin rather than Old English, and composed some time before the transmission of the *Pastoral Care,* offers a detailed account of

Alfred's literary interests.[93] The biography, which devotes lengthy passages to the description of the king's education and learning, has frequently been interpreted as an elaborate allegory of royal literacy, encoding a flattering, rather than factual, portrait of Alfred's ability as a scholar and translator.[94] Notwithstanding this, the *Vita* offers a rhetorically complex focus on the king's books, in which books, bodies and the material significance of the codex are paramount. The book, in the *Life,* is not only that imbued with the political and socio-economic imagery of the prefaces, but has a richly intimate relationship with the person of the king, whose life is marked through a series of episodes involving an affective, transformative experience with books.

Corpus and Codex in Asser's Portrayal of the King

Some initial comments on the complexity of this imagery in the *Vita* may be advanced through scrutiny of selected chapters from Asser's biography. Interspersed with accounts of Alfred's governance of the West-Saxon kingdom and his military encounters with the Vikings, one finds lengthy digressions on Alfredian learning (Chapters 22-25; 76; 87-89). These digressions encode a meticulous focus on Alfred's ownership of books and his thirst for knowledge. They also centre around a repeated set of tropes, in which material and corporeal imagery is used to figure the king's quest for learning.

One facet of this imagery occurs in the way Asser describes Alfred's book-learning in distinctly material, earthy terms. Alfred is said, in the *Life,* to be "omni venatoria arte industrius venator incessabiliter laborat" ("an enthusiastic huntsman [who] strives continually in every branch of hunting") [**App. §1.5.1/8-9**], pursuing books in the same way as he pursues the tracks of prey. This trope, evocative of the "spore" motif in the *Pastoral Care,* occurs twice in the *Life,* both times relating Alfred's interests in books to "omnem venandi artem" ("all manner of hunting") [**App. §1.5.2/2-3**] such as the king enjoys in the company of his "falconarios et accipitrarios canicularios" ("falconers, hawk-trainers and dog-keepers") [**App. §1.5.2/3**].[95] In

[93] All references to the *Vita* are taken from Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life*. Selected chapters from this work have been reproduced as appendices **§1.5.1)-§1-5.3).** Where these chapters are cited in the discussion, line numbers from the appendices are provided.
[94] See especially Malcolm Godden, "Stories from the Court of King Alfred", in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature in Honour of Hugh Magennis,* ed. Stuart McWilliams (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), 124-32. For a further discussion of the nature of Alfredian "literacy", see Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, "Listening to the Scenes of Reading: King Alfred's Talking Prefaces", in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D.H. Green,* ed. Mark Chinca and Christopher Young (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 19-24.
[95] For a discussion of the aristocratic resonances of the hunting motif in Asser, see Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 78.

one particularly evocative passage, this earthy imagery of the natural world extends to Alfred himself. Describing the way the king seeks after learning, Asser portrays the king as "apis prudentissima … super multiplices ac diversos herbarum, holerum, fructicum flosculos descendit" ("[a] clever bee … [which] lights upon the many and various flowers of grasses, plants and shrubs") [**App. §1.5.2/35-7**] in his search for wisdom.[96] The bodies of beasts and bees recur in Asser beside the verdant imagery so familiar from the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies.*[97] In this, book-learning is repeatedly compared to the physicality of aristocratic activity, whether in the robust effort of chasing bibliographic quarry or in the sedate pastime of literary "flower"-picking.[98]

Embedded alongside these images of the material world, however, one also finds a repeated focus on the literal corporeality of Alfred's encounters with books. Asser's first discussion of the king's learning, in which Alfred's mother offers him "quendam Saxonicum poematicae artis librum, quem in manu habebat" ("a certain book of English poetry which she held in her hand") [**App. §1.5.1/12-3**] is centred on an encounter with a codex that is both visual and tactile. Asser explains how Alfred was first "illectus" ("attracted") [**App. §1.5.1/15**] by the "pulchritudine principalis litterae illius libri" ("the beauty of the initial letter in the book") [**App. §1.5.1/15**], an attraction which impels him to take the book from her hand, "ille statim tollens librum de manu sua" [**App. §1.5.1/18**], and then manually return it back to her, "matri retulit" [**App. §1.5.1/19**], when his reading has been accomplished. Elsewhere in the *Life,* Asser notes how the king enjoys "Saxonicos libros recitare" ("reading aloud from books in English") [**App. §1.5.2/5**], and "intentus utrisque auribus audisset" ("listening intently [to books] with both ears") [**App. §1.5.3/6**]. These sensory motifs of seeing, touching and listening are augmented, throughout the biography, by a recurrent focus on the way Alfred kept books "in sinu suo die noctuque" ("about his person both day and night") [**App. §1.5.1/21**].

Seeking to interpret these motifs in the *Life,* commentators such as Seth Lerer have argued that Asser paints a portrait of royal learning predicated on a movement from Alfred's

[96] The trope of the "clever bee", as Keynes and Lapidge note, is derived from Aldhelm's *De virginitate*: Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great,* 258-9. For further discussion of this motif, see Augustine Casiday, "St. Aldhelm's Bees (*De uirginitate prosa* cc. IV-VI): Some Observations on a Literary Tradition", *ASE* 33 (2004): 1-22.

[97] For further discussion of the way Alfred uses "concrete" imagery for his books drawn from the material world, see Nicole Guenther Discenza, *The King's English: Strategies of Translation in the Old English Boethius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 101-5.

[98] For discussion of Alfredian imagery of flowers and blossoms, see Dorothy Whitelock, "The Prose of Alfred's Reign", in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature,* ed. Eric G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), 71.

unsophisticated, quasi-illiterate, encounters with books, towards a literate and spiritual form of reading.[99] Lerer argues that the early part of the *Vita,* in which Alfred betrays a fascination with Saxon books, is indicative of an unduly sensual engagement with learning, epitomised by the way the king is said to have been "illectus" ("seduced") by the "beautiful letters" of the Saxon manuscript.[100] This, for Lerer, is indicative of a vernacular and "maternal" tradition of book culture, which must be transcended through the pursuit of the Latin "liberal arts".[101] This transcendence is achieved through the tutelage of Asser himself, who effects Alfred's engagement with a Latinate and "paternal" mode of reading.[102] Through this process, Lerer suggests, the king turns away from his material and corporeal attachment to books in order to achieve a fully devotional understanding of scripture.[103]

Notwithstanding this, we might observe Asser's repeated (and sustained) insistence on the place of the book in the material world of the court. The scene with Alfred's mother's book, in which the codex is passed from hand to hand in the fostering of literate ambition, is not overtly jettisoned in Asser's portrayal of "spiritual" reading, but rather is echoed in the final portrayal of royal "literacy", in which Alfred's "enchiridion" or "hand-book" is kept "ad manum ... die noctuque" ("to hand [both] day and night") [**App. §1.5.3/39**] in much the same way as the prayerbook of his youth. Prayers and offices learned and collected "in uno libro … in sinu suo" ("in a single book … [which] he kept by him") [**App. §1.5.1/21**] prior to Alfred's education, appear to be those (expanded and added to by Asser) which the king continues to keep and carry "in sinum suum sedulo" ("on his person constantly") [**App. §1.5.3/7**] by the end of the *Vita*. Evocations of the book in relation to Alfred's body and physical senses, from the stimulation of his sight by the initial letter in the Saxon volume to the comparison of the king's inspiration to acquire teachers through "mentis oculos" ("the eyes of his mind") [**App. §1.5.2/38**], recur throughout the biography, foregrounding a sustained and repeated emphasis on the relationship between books and the person of the king himself.

[99] Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, 62-77.
[100] Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 64-70.
[101] Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 63.
[102] Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 63; 70-8.
[103] Lerer, *Literacy and Power,* 75-6. For some further, more recent, comments on Alfred's "devotional" reading, see Scott DeGregorio, "Affective Spirituality: Theory and Practice in Bede and Alfred the Great", *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005): 133-6.

Ignorance, Illness and Suffering

The rich series of tropes that Asser uses in his description of the king's relationship with books point to a particular fascination with the interplay between books and bodies. This theme, though downplayed by scholars in favour of the spiritual significance of Alfredian "literacy", may yet be scrutinized as part of a more thoroughgoing theme. One subtle, but insistent, component of Asser's imagery of book and body occurs in his repeated comments about the king's corporeal health and sickness. Despite offering an ostensible focus on Alfred's learning, the biographer embeds his narrative of royal book-culture within a series of observations about bodily illness and physical and mental suffering.

Immediately following the episode with Alfred's mother's book in Chapter 23, Asser observes how the king, though stimulated by books, is yet beset by pain and anxiety. Alfred, though diligent in learning "psalmos … et orationis" ("psalms and prayers") [**App. §1.5.1/20-1**], has not yet been able to master the "liberalem … artem" ("liberal arts") [**App. §1.5.1/23**] of serious study. The king is beset by "dispendia crebris querelis" ('repeated complaints and sighing") [**App. §1.5.1/26-7**] about this lack of learning, a "desiderio" ("craving") [**App. §1.5.1/23**] which causes him considerable anguish. Asser immediately juxtaposes this inner suffering with a description of Alfred's bodily health, portrayed here as an endurance of "omnibus istius insulae medicis incognitis infirmitatibus" ("all kinds of illnesses unknown to the physicians of this island") [**App. §1.5.1/29-30**]. This invocation of corporeal suffering is repeated in successive descriptions of the king's quest for book-learning, including in the "cotidianas corporis infirmitates" ("continual bodily infirmities") [**App. §1.5.2/2**] Asser notes to accompany Alfred's "hunting" after books in Chapter 76. It also recurs in the description of "perturbationem" ("distress") [**App. §1.5.2/22**], which Asser invokes later on in the chapter, when Alfred's considerable political achievements are said to be no substitute for his lack of books and teachers.

In building up this theme in the *Life,* Asser effects a subtle interplay between Alfred's bodily afflictions and his metaphorical "sighing" after knowledge. Descriptions of the king's illnesses are surrounded by a repeated emphasis on the painful burden of his inner and outer suffering, states accompanied by "desiderio" ("yearning") [**App. 1.5.1/23; 34**]; "dispendia crebris querelis" and "querelaretur et … suspirio" ("moaning and … sighing") [**App. §1.5.2/23-4**]. Evoking these ideas in tandem in Chapter 76, Asser notes how the king's suffering was experienced both "intrinsecus et extrinsecus" ("inwardly and outwardly") [**App. §1.5.2/21-2**], causing him to "cotiadiana et nocturna anxius tristitia" ("cry out in anguish both

day and night") [**App. §1.5.2/22**]. The greatest of these afflictions, however, is said to be his lack of divine learning, a longing for knowledge of books experienced "intimis cordis sui" ("from the depths of [the king's] heart") [**App. §1.5.1/27**]. Mental and emotional states in the king's attitude to book-learning are here equated with Alfred's bodily health, from his generalised "bodily infirmities", to the sighing and pain he experiences in his mind and heart.

The depiction of Alfred's illnesses in the *Life* indicates a complex of ideas about corporeal suffering, mental pain and the lack of books and teachers. Recent work on Alfredian illness by David Pratt has shown how Asser offers both a literal portrait of the king's medical afflictions and situates these within a wider moral framework designed to emphasise Alfred's spiritual contrition and mental humility.[104] Pratt notes how sin in Alfred's personal life is indexed to his physical suffering, and, by extension, to the military and political suffering of the kingdom in the ninth century.[105] These are transcended, in the *Life*, by careful self-discipline and prayer, key themes of the books the king himself translated.[106] To this we might add that Asser also draws out a particularly strong connection between ignorance and illness in the *Life,*[107] relating mental and intellectual "lack" to the king's wracked body and mind. This deficit is one felt corporeally and spiritually, and is overcome, not through mental effort alone, but through a holistic reappraisal of bodily, intellectual and affective states.

Given the interplay between Alfred's heart, mind and body in the biography, we might also perhaps invoke vernacular models of psychological and psychosomatic experience to explain Asser's portrait. As Leslie Lockett and others have shown, the Anglo-Saxons understood the mind as a place physically located in the chest or heart, a "cardiocentric" model for thought and emotion which views the mind or heart as subject to literal processes of contraction and expansion during heightened affective states.[108] The blurring of the king's mental and physical suffering in Asser, in which inner turmoil is figured as a quasi-literal process of sighing and pain, may conceivably have been influenced by these ideas. One might

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[104] David Pratt, "The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great", *ASE* 30 (2001): 39-90. See also some further comments in David Pratt, *The Political Thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)*,* 176-8.
[105] Pratt, "Illnesses of King Alfred", 85-6. For some broader comments on bodily and mental discipline in ninth-century political ideology, see Janet L. Nelson, "England and the Continent in the Ninth Century: IV, Bodies and Minds", *TRHS* 15 (2005): 1-27.
[106] Pratt, "Illnesses of King Alfred", 88-90.
[107] For Pratt's (rather different) discussion of this connection, see Pratt, "Illnesses of King Alfred", 63-4.
[108] Leslie Lockett, "700-1050: Embodiment, Metaphor and the Mind in Old English Narrative", in *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English,* ed. David Herman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 43-59. See also Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 54-109.

note here the biographer's emphasis on the king's sighing and crying out to relieve mental tension, and his repeated focus on Alfred's heart as the seat of his afflictions. However these tropes are to be interpreted, Asser draws out a powerful connection between mind and body, predicated, in this case, on Alfred's painful lack of books and knowledge.

In the final section describing the impact of the king's *Enchiridion* on his spiritual and devotional understanding, one finds a reiteration of all these ideas. In Chapter 89 of the *Life,* the biographer offers a description of Alfred's first "reading" of a book of Holy Scripture. Using striking imagery, Asser compares the way the king makes a beginning in books to the way the thief beside Christ on the Cross earnestly turned his "corporalibus oculis" ("fleshly eyes") [**App. §1.5.3/31-2**] towards Christian belief. Though "totus confixus clavis" ("completely pinned down with nails") [**App. §1.5.3/32**] the thief nevertheless began to learn "Christianae fidei rudimenta in gabulo" ("the rudiments of Christian faith from the gallows") [**App. §1.5.3/33-4**]. In the same way, and despite the considerable "bodily infirmities" the king himself is said to suffer, Alfred too turns eagerly to an understanding of "sanctae … scripturae" ("Holy Scripture") [**App. §1.5.3/35**]. This, as the *Life* goes on to note, is in spite of the way the king "erat … ille multis tribulationum clavisi confossus" ("has been transfixed by the nails of many tribulations") throughout his turbulent reign.[109]

Satiety, Solace and The "Comfort" of Books

In setting up the "problem" of Alfredian illness beside the king's inability to gain access to book-learning, the biography fashions a rhetorically sophisticated framework for the narrative of Alfred's education. Books and bodies weave together across several different registers, from the materiality of bees and beasts as figures for Alfred's pursuit of learning, to the king's own corporeal relationship to books he either owns or desires. If, for Lerer, the literary *lacuna* experienced by the king is filled by Asser's conversion of Alfred to a spiritual and intellectual form of reading, the materiality of Alfredian books is yet strongly emphasized throughout the *Life.* This interplay between codex and corpus, moreover, is extended into the biographical account of Alfred's (quasi-miraculous) first steps in reading and translation.

This passage, which occurs before Asser's final comparison of royal learning to the "fleshly" inspiration of the thief on the Cross, contains a lengthy description of Alfred's first reading in scripture. Setting the scene for this episode in the royal chamber, Asser recalls how the king one day "subito ostendens libellum, quem in sinum suum sedulo portabat" ("suddenly

[109] Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life,* 76; Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, 101.

showed [him] a little book which he constantly carried on his person") [**App. §1.5.3/6-7**]. Seeking to expand his book, Alfred asks the bishop to copy out a further passage into his "libello" ("little book") [**App. §1.5.3/13**], a circumstance that leads the biographer to rejoice over the "sapientiae devotionem in regio corde" ("enthusiasm for … learning in the king's heart") [**App. §1.5.3/12**]. Taking up the book which Alfred has carried about with him from his youth, Asser goes into considerable detail about the copying and codification of this volume. First, the biographer details the lack of "locum vacuum in [the king's first] libello" ("empty space in … the little book") [**App. §1.5.3/13**]. Then, he notes the necessity of finding "aliqua foliuncula" ("another sheet of parchment") [**App. §1.5.3/17**] for the new passages. Finally, Asser describes how he "festinus quaternionem promptum paravi" ("quickly prepared a quire") [**App. §1.5.3/20**] on which to copy new text. This process, he notes, is repeated until, "quaternio … refertus succrevit" ("the quire grew full") [**App. §1.5.3/23-4**].

The evocative materiality of Asser's description here offers a powerful, and sustained, focus on the Alfredian book. Rather than emphasising Alfred's spiritual interest in Holy Scripture alone, Asser focuses on the tangible shape of the codex, which is physically expanded in accordance with Alfred's desire for new reading material. At the end of this passage, the biographer turns back to a trope he has used much earlier in the *Life,* that of the "apis fertilissima" (the "busy bee") [**App. 1.5.3/25**]. Where previously this was evoked to describe the king's tiring search for books and teachers, the metaphor here casts Alfred as a productive gatherer, who, after "longe lateque gronnios interrogando discurrens" ("wandering far and wide over the marshes in his quest") [**App. §1.5.3/25-6**], "multimodos divinae scripturae flosculos … congregavit, quis praecordii sui cellulas densatim replevit" ("assembles many various flowers of Holy Scripture, with which he crams full the cells of his heart") [**App. §1.5.3/26-7**]. These "flosculos" are assembled "in corpore unius libelli" ("in the body of one little book") [**App. §1.5.3/36-7**], a codex which Alfred himself then keeps "ad manum … die noctuque" ("to hand … both day and night") [**App. §1.5.3/39**], as he did the prayerbook of his youth.

In the dense imagery of books, bees and the king's body, one finds Asser's narrative of royal learning come full circle. The frustrated quest described earlier in the *Life,* where plants, flowers and bees were the correlatives of an exhausting hunt, are reinscribed, and resolved, in the physical process of producing Alfred's new "enchiridion" ("hand-book"). The "crebis querelis et intimis cordis sui suspiriis fieri" that afflicted the king before his beginning with books is here transmuted into the image of a satiated body, both that of the book and of Alfred

himself, whose heart, like that of the busy bee, is "cellulas … replevit". The cramming of book-lore into the cells of the king's heart might perhaps be compared here, as Eric Jager has observed, to the medieval memory trope of the "book of the heart", a metaphor for the internal inscription of scripture in the mind or soul.[110] In Asser, however, this internal repletion is predicated on prior descriptions of mental and emotional suffering "from the depths of [Alfred's] heart". The interplay between the material and mental; the corporeal and cognitive, are drawn together both figuratively and literally in the biographer's rich and subtle portrait.[111] Deriving goodness from books like the "honey" made by industrious bees,[112] the king finds in his "enchiridion" an aid for his mental and bodily afflictions, an object which soothes both emotional anguish and is perpetually carried alongside the physical body of the king.[113]

In the highly intimate portrayal of Alfred and his books, which he both consults for spiritual growth and engages with visually, aurally and corporeally, something of a symbiotic relationship between books and bodies in invoked. Books, as we noted earlier in our discussion, were often figured as human bodies in the medieval period, an association predicated, first, on the material composition of manuscripts from the skin and flesh of living creatures,[114] and, more allusively, on the way the study of books was thought to impact on the physical structure of the mind itself.[115] These ideas will be drawn out more fully later on in our discussion. For now it is enough to observe how the *Life* offers a complex and poignant image of a book - composed of haphazardly added quires and bulging at the seams - that Alfred, mindful of his own imperfect body and spiritual suffering, clings to for spiritual and bodily "solatium" ("comfort") [**App. §1.5.3/40**].[116]

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[110] Jager, "The Book of the Heart", 11. See also Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 1-43.
[111] See also Tiffany Beechy, "Consumption, Purgation, Poetry, Divinity: Incarnational Poetics and the Indo-European Tradition", *MP* 114, no. 2 (2016): 149-69.
[112] For further discussion, see Casiday, "St. Aldhelm's Bees", 2-6.
[113] For discussion of this relationship, albeit in the context of the book as "text", see Scott DeGregorio, "Texts, *topoi* and the Self: A Reading of Alfredian Spirituality", *EME* 13, no. 1 (2005): 79-96.
[114] There is considerable scholarly discussion of this trope. For a theoretical overview of the relationship between books and bodies, see especially Thomas Pettitt, "Books and Bodies: Bound and Unbound", *Orbis Litterarum* 64, no. 2 (2009): 109-11.
[115] For discussion of this latter idea, see Mary Carruthers, "Reading with Attitude, Remembering the Book", *The Book and the Body,* ed. Dolores Warwick Frese and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 6.
[116] The portrayal of the "enchiridion" as a "comfort" to the king might be paralleled, in the vernacular corpus, with Alfred's description of Boethius's *Consolation* as a "froferboc" ("book of comfort"). See Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* 286, l. 48.

§3.2) Wealth and Wisdom: Alfred's Epistemology of the Book

If the biography emphasizes the emotional and spiritual "solatium" of the king through contact with his books, it also outlines the role of the codex in stimulating mental and intellectual activity. As we have seen, Asser's *Life* offers a particular focus on the visual and material appeal of books, from the "enticing" initial in the book of Saxon poetry to the analogy between Alfred's inclination towards learning and the turning of the "fleshly eyes" of the thief on the Cross towards Holy Scripture. Corporeal and mental "vision", in one striking passage, are said to come together in pursuit of learning, as the king directs his "mentis oculos" ("eyes of the mind") [**App. §1.5.2/38**], in search of teachers and resources he is lacking at home.

Mind, Matter and Spiritual 'Vision' in Alfred's Epistemology of the Book

The figure of the "mentis oculum", which occurs in the biography and in Alfred's vernacular translations, is a particularly important one in Alfredian literature. This trope casts mental illumination in terms of physical vision, equating the literal perception of the bodily eye with the way the mind comes to "see" or know abstract concepts. Bodily and mental sight, recur, as we noted earlier, in Asser, where the biographer effects a slippage between physical perception and mental illumination in the search for book-learning. Elsewhere in the corpus, the vernacular equivalent of this concept, the "eagan modes" or "modes eagan", is cited on multiple occasions.[117] As it appears in the preface to the *Soliloquies,* one finds an even closer analogy between eyes and books: the "book-house" made from the books of the Fathers is figured as that which can both be inhabited and "mines modes eagan … ongelihte" ("enlighten the eyes of my mind") [**App. §1.4/15**] through study and reflection.

The richly corporeal imagery found in the biography accordingly has a wider significance throughout the translations. The "eye of mind" trope, in both Asser and the *Soliloquies*, is used to figure the mental illumination that one gains through books. Alfred appears to have derived this metaphor from his sources in Gregory and Augustine, who use the trope to relate spiritual understanding to physical vision. These writers, as several recent commentators have noted, draw on Neoplatonic ideas about the relationship between body and mind to show how sensory vision is a necessary precursor to spiritual illumination.[118] Alfred's

[117] For discussion (and tabulation) of these instances, see Miranda Wilcox, "Alfred's Epistemological Metaphors: *eagan modes* and *scip modes*", *ASE* 35 (2006): 179-217.
[118] For some general background to the Platonic theory of vision and its interpretation in the patristic and early medieval period, see David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), 3-6; 87-90.

debt to these concepts is palpable throughout his translations, from the intense visual (and mental) engagement with the "wlitegostan" (lit. "best-looking"; "comliest") [**App. §1.4/3**] trees in the *Soliloquies* to Asser's affecting image of the mind's eye being allured by the fair appearance of bibliographic "herbarum, holerum, fructicum" ("flowers, plants and shrubs") [**App. §1.5.2/37**]. Notwithstanding this, as Margaret Miles has shown, Augustine, Gregory and other patristic writers draw on the trope to denote the way an individual must progress "inwards and upwards" from corporeal sight, setting aside the bodily in order to a attain a higher form of mental illumination.[119]

In recent scholarly discussion of Alfred's translations, the precise meaning of these ideas in a ninth-century context has come under fresh scrutiny. In a thoroughgoing assessment of the "eye of mind" trope in the corpus, Miranda Wilcox has shown how the king firmly de-emphasizes the Neoplatonic context of this theme, stressing not transcendence but rather a symbiotic relationship between physical and spiritual "sight".[120] Noting the king's alteration of the trope to include lengthy discussions of vision and optics, Wilcox observes how Alfred's portrayal of eye and mind is not simply figurative, but functions as an "embodied metaphor", in which corporeal sight is both the precondition of, and irreducible from, attaining mental illumination.[121] Following our reading of Asser in the previous section, we might recall the intense Alfredian interest in the interplay between mind, body and book, in which physical and affective states are entwined. Physical and mental "vision" in Alfred are likewise part of a holistic experience, in which sense and intellect; body and mind, are inseparable.

Though Wilcox focuses on the broader significance of Alfred's visual metaphors, the king's use of the trope has important implications for the representation of the book. Being visually stimulated by books was a key theme of the *Life,* but appears throughout Alfred's own corpus. In the *Soliloquies,* "Agustinus" is asked to "asmæaganne" certain books which "Reason" wishes him to know, a verb which carries not only the sense of "reading" and "understanding", but literally of "investigating" or "looking into".[122] Elsewhere in the corpus, one finds similar themes of physical vision being used in conjunction with the book, from the way one may "eac on bocum sceawigean" ("also look into books") in the *Orosius*,[123] to a passage in the Old English Bede, where a sick thegn receives a death-bed vision of a codex and

[119] Margaret Miles, "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's *De trinitate* and *Confessions*", *Journal of Religion* 63, no. 2 (1983): 125-42.
[120] Wilcox, "Alfred's Epistemological Metaphors", 201-9.
[121] Wilcox, "Alfred's Epistemological Metaphors", 205-9.
[122] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al, DOE,* "a-smēagan".
[123] Janet Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius* EETS s.s. 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32.

"ða boc sceawade" ("looked on the book") prior to his closer perusal of it.[124] Visual examination, predicated on the verb "sceawian" ("to look at; observe; behold; see"), is what occurs here before any deeper reading or interpretation is possible.[125]

These portrayals of eyes and books in Alfredian texts yet carry further significance. Given the importance the king places on visual sight, what is seen through the body and looked on in material books forms the basis for all that can be known. In one particularly intriguing passage in the *Soliloquies*, Agustinus recalls how he has "gesegen on hælgum bocum ma þonne ic areccam mage" ("seen in holy books more than I can understand"),[126] a circumstance which leads him to reflect on the way his "bodily eyes" provide more accessible information than "the eyes of the mind". These, we are told, will remain comparatively dim until Doomsday, when the worthy will be treated to a fully spiritual glimpse of God.[127] This statement reflects a considerable modification of Alfred's Augustinian source, in which transcendence from physical to divine sight is the goal for all men on earth. This, as David Pratt has argued, forms the centrepiece of Alfredian epistemology, which portrays spiritual knowledge as that which can only be gained in conjunction with the physical senses.[128] What is seen and known through the body can accordingly not be transcended to reach the Neoplatonic heights of Augustinian or Gregorian rumination, but rather is grounded in the physical senses, and, we might add, on the material sight of books.

The nature of this link between mental, visual and bibliographic ideas is drawn out to denote the interplay between books and inner experience. One gains the sense, at times, that the king understands books as not only that which one "looks into" in conjunction with the "eye of the mind", but as themselves having the capacity to shape the individual. In the verse preface to the *Pastoral Care,* for example, Gregory is described as "gleawmod" ("illuminated in mind") [**App. §1.2/6b**], on the basis of the way he has "ryhtspell monig … gindwod" ("explored many true texts") [**App. §1.2/5b-6**]. The author Boethius*,* in the Alfredian preface to the *Consolation,* is portrayed as "beorn boca gleaw" ("a man illuminated by books"), by virtue of his (literal) reading and inner understanding.[129] The vernacular term "gleaw", like "sceawian" and "asmeagan", may here mean both "wise; sagacious" or, in terminology for

[124] Miller, ed., *Old English Bede,* vol. 2, 438-9, l. 24.
[125] Bosworth-Toller, "sceawian", http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/026645 [Accessed 15 December 2019].
[126] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 94, ll. 21-2.
[127] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 94, ll. 18-22.
[128] Pratt, *Political Thought,* 317-27.
[129] Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* vol. 1, 385, l. 52a.

corporeal optics, "sharp [of eye]".[130] In these tropes, which reverse the imagery of looking *into* books, one finds the wise reader becoming themselves illuminated by volumes, which, in Gregory's case, are kept stored in the mind in "searoðonca hord" ("a hoard of clever thoughts") [**App. §1.2/7b**]. These tropes of illumination, which closely link mind and book, carry the further suggestion that the mind is itself shaped by what it encounters and reads.

Closer scrutiny of these additional, Alfredian ideas about mind and books is beyond the scope of our discussion here. We might, however, draw parallels, again, with the vernacular model of mental and cardiocentric experience, in which thoughts, sense impressions and emotions are stored in the "hord" of one's inner being.[131] This, as Elan Justice Pavlinich has argued, is reflected in Alfred's allusions to the "inneweard mod" ("inner mind"),[132] a description which recurs throughout the translations in conjunction with the king's "eye of mind" imagery. The mind, in these instances, is figured as itself a corporeal location, which, being stimulated by the bodily senses, is imprinted on in the process of acquiring knowledge.[133] As we noted earlier, one finds similar ideas in patristic theology, wherein memory texts were figured by monastic authors as being literally incorporated into the body once assimilated and learned.[134] Alfred's epistemology, informed by the vernacular models of emotion, cognition and sensation we encountered earlier, also hinges on the belief that spiritual knowledge is indelibly bound to physical processes.

In one especially striking passage of the *Pastoral Care,* these tropes of eyes, mind and books cohere. The ruler, who has earlier been urged to order his life through following the commands in books,[135] is also enjoined to train "ðæs modes eagan" ("the eyes of his mind") so as to do good works.[136] Describing the interplay between thought and actions, the passage notes how the ruler "smeageað … & ðeahtigað on hiera modes rinde monig god weorc" ("looks into and considers in the bark of his mind many good works"),[137] whilst "on ðam piðan oðer gehyded" ("in the pith [of his mind] other [thoughts] are hidden").[138] Alfred's unusual imagery

[130] Bosworth-Toller, "gleaw", bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/017191 [Accessed 15 December 2019].
[131] For further discussion of this theme, see Britt Mize, "Manipulations of the Mind-as-Container Motif in *Beowulf, Homiletic Fragment II* and Alfred's Metrical Epilogue to the *Pastoral Care*", *JEGP* 107, no. 1 (2008): 47-53.
[132] Elan Justice Pavlinich, "Into the Embodied *inneweard mod* of the Old English Boethius", *Neophilologus* 100, no. 4 (2016): 649-62.
[133] Pavlinich, "Into the Embodied *inneweard mod*", 651-61.
[134] Carruthers, "Reading with Attitude", 14-5.
[135] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 45, ll. 9-10.
[136] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 57, l. 11.
[137] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 55, ll. 21-2.
[138] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 55, ll. 22-3.

of "bark" (or "rind") and "pith" here has been analysed by Benjamin A. Saltzman, who notes how the king uses these terms to develop a (non-Gregorian) model of the mind as moving between several "layers" of mental and bodily space.[139] One might add, through lexical analysis of these terms, how Anglo-Saxon glossaries render "rinda" as both "librorum" ("bark") and "codicibus", referents which, though clearly carrying a verdurous significance, cannot help but recall bibliographic themes.[140]

The Book as a Ground for Knowledge and Understanding

Some further comments on these ideas may be advanced through closer scrutiny of the way Alfred positions the book in his translations. Two of Alfred's most complex philosophical texts, the *Boethius* and the *Soliloquies,* offer a particularly intriguing portrayal of the acquisition of knowledge through books. The *Boethius,* as we have seen, inserts several references to "seeing" or "looking" in books as a means for "Mod" to acquire additional understanding. Throughout both these translations, and in the *Pastoral Care*, Alfred modifies his source text by adding a proliferation of references to other books, to which his textual protagonists make repeated allusion. Such works, though sometimes mentioned in the originals, are consistently lexically flagged, in Alfred, as books, "þu leornodest on Ptolomeus bocum" ("you learned in Ptolomy's books");[141] "hit awriten is on Salomonnes bocum" ("it is written in [King] Solomon's books").[142] Nicole Guenther Discenza has described these instances as indicating "a … note of awe appropriate to a people for whom books [were] precious",[143] positing a certain self-consciousness about book-culture in Alfred's vernacular texts. Discenza also argues that such citations may have been designed to help legitimize ideas unfamiliar to an Anglo-Saxon audience, and which require explicit authority "in books" to make them culturally acceptable.[144]

This citation of books in the dialogues yet shows what we might describe as a focus on the frame of each book as a "boc". [145] One interesting articulation of these ideas occurs in the *Soliloquies,* where the ending of the second (Alfredian) book of the text and the opening of the third is bridged by an intriguingly meta-bibliographical discussion. Towards the conclusion of

[139] Benjamin A. Saltzman, "The Mind, Perception and the Reflexivity of Forgetting in Alfred's *Pastoral Care*", *ASE* 42 (2013): 147-82.
[140] For these glosses, see Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses,* 14, l. 467; 16, l. 566; 175, l. 16.
[141] Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* vol. 1, 279, l. 19.
[142] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 243, l. 11.
[143] Discenza, *King's English,* 61.
[144] Discenza, *King's English,* 63.
[145] For further discussion, see Discenza, *King's English,* 62-4.

Book II, "Reason" urges "Agustinus" to break off their discourse in order that he might consolidate his learning through consultation of another volume, "þonne scealt þu hyt secan on þære bec þe we hatað *de videndo deo*" ("you must seek [this knowledge] in the book which we call *The Sight of God*").[146] Operating rather like the insertions in the *Boethius* and the *Pastoral Care,* this citation has the effect of highlighting to the Anglo-Saxon reader another form of written authority. More unusually, however, the book reference is embedded in the dialogue itself, communicated using the pretext that the protagonist himself will go away and consult another book.

This conceit spans the frame of the Alfredian translation, and continues into Book III. At the opening of this constituent "boc", we discover that "Agustinus" has not in fact done the required reading, leading "Reason" to reiterate his request that his pupil go away to look through another volume: "Ne sæde ic þe ær þæt þu hyt sceolt secan on þære bec … leorna þa boc, þonne findst þu hyt þær" ("Didn't I say to you before that you must seek [this] in the [other] book … learn that book, then you will find it there").[147] Threatened with the termination of the discussion (and the continuation of the book of *Soliloquies*), "Agustinus" quickly replies, "me ne onhagað nu þa boc ealle to asmæaganne ac ic wolde þæt þu me [sædest] …" ("I do not care now to study all that book, but tell me now [about a related matter]").[148] Bridging the material shape of the translated book, this discourse about books shows the protagonists themselves negotiating the sources of their debate. Playful citation of books is thus incorporated into the structure of the dialogue itself, shaping and framing the learning of both "Reason" and "Agustinus" and the reader of the manuscript book.

At times these meta-bibliographical citations go further. In both the Alfredian dialogues, each of the protagonists portray their progress through the argument in terms of the physical space of a book. In the *Boethius,* Lady Philosophy repeatedly offers "Mod" a recap of their discussion, summarising their dialogue not merely as a conversation, but as itself a component of the book: "swa swa ær sæddon in þisse ilcan bec" ("just as we said earlier in this same book");[149] "[as] ic þe sæde on þære forman bec …" ("as I told you in the previous book").[150] At times this moves into a specific citation of the framework of the Alfredian (and Boethian) book, as in Chapter XXXVII, when "Philosophy" asks "Mod" to recall "þam

[146] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 92, ll. 4-5.
[147] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 92, ll. 18-19.
[148] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 92, ll. 20-1.
[149] Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* vol. 1, 329, ll. 338-9.
[150] Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* vol. 1, 331, l. 37.

foresprecenan … þe ic þe ær tealde on þære þriddan bec" ("the aforementioned [matter] which I told you about in the third book").[151] A similar idea is found in the *Soliloquies,* where the frame of the book is cited at the opening and closing of the constituent volumes of the discourse, "Her onginð seo gadorung þære blostmena þære æftran bec" ("Here begins the gathering of the blossoms of the second book");[152] "Her endiað þa blostman þære æftran bec" ("Here ends the blossoms of the second book").[153] One even finds the protagonists conferring amongst themselves about how best to continue their discussion, "uton ændian þas boc nu" ("let us end this book now");[154] "uton fon on oðre boc forwearde" ("let us carry [the conversation] forward into another book").[155]

Though this theme might be conceptualised as a playful acknowledgement of the reader's experience of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript, or, indeed, the constituent Latin books Alfred is seeking to render in translation, the idea seems rather pointed. To a far greater extent than in the Latin sources, the Alfredian debates are self-consciously portrayed as themselves a bibliographic structure, within which the protagonists form and shape their discussion. In this, the participants show a keen awareness both of how the "book" shapes their discourse and how their emerging "book" intersects with other books. For the protagonists, moreover, there is apparently no prior moment of discourse or learning "outside" the frame of the book. The moment of discourse (and intellectual development) is, in both texts, portrayed as simultaneous with the appearance of the patristic (or medieval) codex.[156] Insofar as the "book" shapes both the material, Alfredian translation and the "conversation" of both protagonists, one gains the idea that the book, rather than any form of learning or knowledge outside of the written word, is what makes wisdom possible. Seeing and looking in books stimulates a thirst for wisdom which is then inscribed immediately back into the frame of a manuscript volume. Overwhelmingly, the dialogues encode an understanding of the book as the perceptual frame for thought, an essential discursive (and material) space which cannot be transcended in the quest for spiritual knowledge.

[151] Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* vol. 1, 347-8, ll. 63-4.
[152] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 83, l. 14.
[153] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 92, l. 13.
[154] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 80, l. 24.
[155] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 83, l. 17.
[156] For some further thoughts about this notion of "textual materialism" in the shaping of meaning, see Daniel Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription* (London: Continuum, 2010), 183-93.

Meaning and Materialism: The Book as an Article of Faith

To draw together these comments on the Alfredian philosophy of books and learning, we may now consider the broader implications of these portrayals of the book. The centrality of books to Alfred's ideas about knowledge and learning offer, on the one hand, a clear and positive message about the power and importance of contemporary book-culture. On the other, as the king's material re-interpretation of the Neoplatonic theory of knowledge indicates, bodies and books prescribe the earthly limit for human thought. As the passage describing Agustinus's "sight" of books in the *Soliloquies* suggests, any mental illumination gained from books is contingent and incomplete, pointing the way to spiritual truth, but falling just short of the *visio Dei.* Rooted in corporeal experience and material objects, the sentient subject is debarred from even a transcendent glimpse of the divine.

Such an "embodied" philosophy of mental and corporeal experience through books carries with it some further implications for the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. If one may not leave the sensory and material realm to gain inner understanding, the material supports that mediate knowledge become particularly important. As David Pratt has argued in his analysis of the *Soliloquies,* Alfred's arguments about the non-transcendence of earthly experience to the spiritual realm force him to give especial weight to "testimony" that helps explain, if not fully illuminate, "higher" spiritual truths.[157] If one may not move "inwards and upwards" to attain wisdom in the spirit, one must rely on analogies or secondary manifestations of that which cannot yet be directly "seen" or known. Testimony, as Pratt observes, forms a recurrent theme in the text, predicated both on what is seen with the bodily eye and believed in the mind, and on the evidential persuasion of written material.[158]

A striking, and oft-cited, instance of this comes in an Alfredian modification to Book I of the *Soliloquies*. Here, "Reason" is seeking to explain to "Mod" how he can grasp the divine in his "mind's eye" if denied a true glimpse of the divine on earth. "Reason" asks his interlocutor to suppose "gyf ðines hlafordes ærendgewrit and hys insegel to ðe cymð, hwæðer þu mæge cweðan þæt ðu hine be ðam ongytan ne mægæ, ne hys willan þæron gecnawan …" ("if your lord's letter and seal came to you, would you say that you would not understand him by that or recognize his will therein?").[159] Invoking the way one gains sight of an "ærendgewrit" and thus knows the existence of another person, "Mod" is asked to imagine the

[157] Pratt, *Political Thought,* 327-32.
[158] Pratt, *Political Thought,* 328-9; 336-7.
[159] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 62, ll. 22-4.

process of faith as like receiving a written communication. Though the sender is absent, and the temporal lord elsewhere, it is still evident to the recipient that he exists and has news for him. As both Pratt and Lockett have observed, this passage provides a key insight into the Alfredian philosophy of faith and knowledge.[160] We might note here, as well, that what is being communicated to "Mod" is an "ærendgewrit", the same term Alfred uses for his "speaking book" in the verse preface to the *Pastoral Care*.

A further important passage from the *Soliloquies* augments these ideas. This occurs towards the end of Book III, when Alfred, deviating from his Augustinian source, includes a short episode centred on the gospel account of Dives and Lazarus. This account, taken from *Luke 16*, recounts the story of the rich Dives and the pauper Lazarus. In life, the wealthy Dives refuses to come to the aid of Lazarus, and is accordingly damned in hell for his parsimony. Seeking to atone for his sin, Dives petitions Abraham to let him make a visitation to Lazarus, who, having died virtuous, has gone to heaven. Denied this opportunity by the patriarch, Dives asks if he might instead send Lazarus down to earth to warn his equally hard-hearted brethren about the sins they are committing. Abraham then makes this reply:

> *Ða cwæð Habraham: nese, næse; hi habbað haligra fedra bec myd heom a on eorðan. Leorniæn þa on, and gelyfan þam. Gyf hy him [ne] gelyfað, ðonne ne gelyfað hi na Lazare, þeah he cume to hiom*.[161]
>
> *Then Abraham said: No, no. They have the books of the holy fathers with them always on earth. Let them learn from them and believe them. If they will not believe [the books], then they will never believe in Lazarus, even if he were to visit them.*

In this response, Abraham again refuses Dives' request, not because it is too late for the rich man to do good works, but because this would compromise the process of free will and faith. Making a striking departure from his gospel source, Alfred cites not "Mosen et prophetas" ("Moses and the prophets") as those who are to be listened to by people on earth (*Luke 16:31*), but rather "haligra feddra bec" ("the books of the holy fathers"). Humankind, unable to see the body of Lazarus in person, must instead found their faith in the divine through the testimony of the Fathers. This process of learning ("leorniæn þa on") and faith ("gelyfan þam") through books is accordingly the basis for Christian belief before one can come to know God in death.

[160] See especially Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies,* 341-5.
[161] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 95, ll. 18-21.

This passage, perhaps more clearly than anywhere else in the Alfredian corpus, indicates the crucial significance of the book. In the absence of divine visitation on earth to augment love of God and right conduct, humans must instead cultivate faith through the testimony they have been given. This testimony, codified in the holy books of the Fathers (and the scriptures), is the ground on which belief is formed. It requires, moreover, a special kind of trust in God, founded on a willingness to accept what cannot be directly experienced, but rather is seen, heard or read in books. Books and written material accordingly provide "ungelygena gewittnesse" ("reliable testimony") to that which cannot be physically or intellectually grasped in life.[162] Belief in books, predicated on their material and mental assimilation into human discourse, is the only way, in the Alfredian *schema,* through which one may develop a (partial) understanding of the divine.

§3.3) The Materiality of Alfredian Book-Culture

By way of concluding our discussion of the material and corporeal significance of Alfred's books, we may turn to consider the evidence of the king's books themselves. If Asser and the translations outline the crucial role of books in the attainment of spiritual "solatium" and mental "illumination", one might profitably scrutinise whether Alfred's own codices shed further light on these ideas. Though relatively few Alfredian manuscripts have survived from the ninth century, those that have contain some intriguing evidence for the way the king intended his readers to engage, both mentally and physically, with the shape of his books. More famously, King Alfred's *ædificia,* such as the *æstels* noted to accompany the *Pastoral Care*, offer a further indication of the way books, bodies and royal beneficence cohere in the Alfredian ideology of wealth and wisdom.

The Layout and Visual Appearance of Alfred's Books

Our emphasis on the bibliographic, rather than the purely "textual" or "literate" resonances of the Alfredian programme have enabled us, thus far, to draw out a fresh perspective on the king's project. Representations of books and book-culture, as we have seen, suffuse the translations and the biography, playing a key role in the king's ideology of learning. Somewhat regrettable, then, is the survival of only two ninth-century witnesses to the book programme,[163]

[162] Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 94, l. 23.
[163] These are two copies of the *Pastoral Care*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20, and the (very fragmentary) London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.xi (with Kassel, Gesamthochschulbibliothek 4º MS. Theol. 131). Both are dated 890 x 897.

which is largely represented by tenth and eleventh-century copies of Alfred's books.[164] The paucity of these survivals highlight the limitations of modern scholarly analysis of Alfred's programme, which must be predicated on later manuscript survivals and antiquarian transcripts.

Where Alfred's books have survived, moreover, one is struck by their plain and simple appearance. As Pratt notes, manuscripts such as the Hatton 20 copy of the *Pastoral Care* are, at first glance, relatively unimpressive,[165] written in the small, spiky characters of vernacular minuscule and largely devoid of illumination. A sample from the Hatton 20 manuscript provides a clear sense of the visual appearance of the king's manuscripts [**Figure 5**]. This, the beginning of Alfred's prose preface, strikes the viewer as a remarkably modest opening for the king's programme. Written on low-grade parchment, the text is rendered in small characters, set out on closely-spaced lines. Though some attempt has been made at a display script at the top of the folio, this denotes only the location to which the book is to be sent, and does not extend to the text of Alfred's greeting. Multiple commentators have noted how this unfussy, functional style "befits [the] particular intellectual purpose" of the king's books.[166] Despite Alfred's noted appreciation of such lavish eighth and early ninth-century manuscripts as the Book of Nunnaminster and the Codex Aureus, his own codices are distinctly spartan, even unappealing, in their layout and visual appearance.[167]

In the suggestion that Alfred's books were kept deliberately plain, however, one might yet see a more ideological motivation at work. Pratt has suggested that Alfred's manuscripts were designed using a distinctly Latinate layout, perhaps to evoke the appearance of Latin schoolbooks.[168] Such an appearance might be interpreted as offering a clear signal of the king's intellectual influences and ambitions. We might observe here that, whilst lavishly adorned codices send a message of wealth and patronage, the king's much simpler manuscripts might be read as encoding an equally powerful message. In their plain, densely-written appearance, one finds a rather austere portrait of royal book-learning. This visually demanding layout might

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[164] The *Pastoral Care* survives in Cambridge, University Library, Ii. 2.4 (s. xi$^{3/4}$); Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 12 (s. x.^{2}); Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 5.22, ff. 72-158 (s.x/xi) and London, British Library, Cotton Otho B. ii (with London, British Library, Cotton Otho B.x, fols. 61, 63, 64) (s. x.^{2} or x/xi). The Old English *Boethius* survives in London, British Library, Cotton Otho A. vi, fols. 1-129 (s. x med); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 180 (s. xi/xii) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 86, endleaf (s. x.^{1} or x^{med}). The *Soliloquies* is preserved only in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii, fols. 2-173 (s. xi^{med}).
[165] Pratt, *Political Thought,* 182-5.
[166] Webster, "Art of Alfred and His Times", 48.
[167] Michelle P. Brown, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 66.
[168] Pratt, *Political Thought,* 185.

have been interpreted, perhaps by design, as a somewhat intimidating educative prospect for Alfred's poorly-educated audience.

That Alfred's "plain" books were yet carefully planned and designed is indicated by one especially striking part of the manuscript. The *Pastoral Care,* as we have seen, is book-ended by the king's prefaces and verse epilogue, with the latter, if often neglected by scholars, offering a particularly important set of images and ideas about books. At the end of Hatton 20 the verse epilogue follows the conclusion of the main text, with only a very subtle visual line-break to signal its opening [**Figure 6**]. Continuing onto folio 98v, however, the scribe of the manuscript has rendered the last lines of the epilogue in a particularly memorable way, gradually reducing the line-length of the poem until it tapers to a point three-quarters of the way down the manuscript page [**Figure 7**]. This layout, as Peter Lucas has observed, is markedly unusual in a vernacular context, and might be explained by scribal knowledge of Carolingian or Latin codices.[169] As it appears in the manuscript, however, one may note a clear interplay between the contents of the epilogue and its visual appearance.

Beginning with the words "herdon//ðurh halga(n) bec", the scribe of the manuscript deviates from the narrow margins used elsewhere in the manuscript to frame the text of the poem as an inverted triangle, with the widest lines at the top and the shortest (of the split word "weor/ðe") at the bottom. The passage concerned is that explaining how the "living waters" of "holy books" are channelled through teachers and saints into the minds of men. As the text explains how the purifying contents of books "flows" and "runs" according to the way readers make use of it, so too does the shape of the poem alter on the manuscript page. One may note here the line-break on the word "to-rinnan" ("run [in rills]"), four lines down from the top margin, and, again, a similar break on the word "to-floweð" ("flows"), five lines down. Here, the text appears to "flow" from one line to another as the "water" of the poem is seemingly channelled, ever more narrowly, down the folio. Just as the "living" water of "holy books" is invoked in the poem, so too is it directed through the Alfredian book itself. This continues until the verse epilogue comes to a close, when the final words of the poem peter to a trickle on the words "lifes drync//forloren weorðe" ("[that he may avoid] losing the drink of life"). Being implored not to waste even a "drop" of the book's spiritual content, the viewer of the

[169] Peter Lucas, "The *Metrical Epilogue* to the Alfredian *Pastoral Care*: A Postscript from Junius", *ASE* 24 (1995): 46-9.

manuscript is left with a powerful visual symbol of this - in the form of a punctus - at the close of the epilogue.

The Imagery and Decoration of the Book Programme

If the king's manuscripts are traditionally portrayed as devoid of visual appeal, our scrutiny of the layout and material effects produced by the Hatton 20 copy of the *Pastoral Care* might point to something of a re-evaluation of Alfred's books. This is true also, to some extent, of the decoration of the king's volumes. Though lacking the frontispieces associated with later Anglo-Saxon kings, Alfred's manuscripts are yet not totally without iconographic elements. Some of these, as we shall see, tie in closely to the themes and motifs found in Alfredian rhetoric, suggesting a literal and material relationship between the king's textual representations of books and his manuscripts themselves.

With Hatton 20 as the only substantial witness to the ninth-century appearance of Alfredian manuscripts, commentary on the decoration of Alfred's programme is limited. Notwithstanding this, the codex is one with some interesting decorative elements. Illuminated initials appear (for instance) on ff. 6v, 28r, 34v, 39v and 57v of the manuscript, rendered using intricate knotwork and entwined animals. If nowhere near as elaborate as books such as the Mercian prayerbook Alfred was captivated by as a child, the style and colour of these decorations has been linked to the influence of late eighth and early ninth-century manuscripts from the high-point of Mercian illumination. Michelle P. Brown has shown the strong influence of the Southumbrian or "Tiberius" group of manuscripts on the appearance of Alfredian codices, especially in these decorated initials.[170] By evoking the style and appearance of these famous books, the king may have been attempting to align his programme with the bibliographic glories of this lost "spore" of previous book production.

To bolster these suggestions, we may yet note some elements of the manuscript with rather more intriguing iconographic resonances. In addition to the entwined animals so familiar from the Type I insular style, one also finds other motifs. On folio 34v of the manuscript, a historiated initial beginning Chapter XXIV of the text has been portrayed as a human face [**Figure 8**]. Though rendered in simple outline, the figure has been subtly illuminated, with details such as red cheeks and a brown beard. Shown with cropped, curled hair and an ornamental head-band, the figure has a distinctly male, aristocratic appearance. The man's facial features have also been clearly outlined, with the eyes and nose especially prominent.

[170] Brown, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,* 66.

Incorporated beside an account of the way "sint to manianne weras" ("men are to be admonished") by the ruler in a different way to women (and children),[171] the image of the thegn might be interpreted as an illustrative, as well as decorative, engagement with the text. Insofar as Gregory's discourse here is concerned with the way a leader must instruct his people according to the various types of (material and bodily) temptations they face, one might even draw a link between Alfred's corporeal imagery in the book-programme and the embodied letter in the manuscript book.

An even clearer indication of this interplay between manuscript text and imagery occurs on folio 39v of the Hatton codex. Set within another initial, one finds a further historiated "face", this time more abstract than the earlier design [**Figure 9**]. Given neither a firm outline nor clearly distinguishable accoutrements, the face is yet visually striking, with a pursed mouth, prominent nose and red-embellished cheeks. Most intriguing of all are the figure's large eyes, which appear to be looking at the text which runs across the manuscript page to the right. This text is that beginning Chapter XXXII, in which "ða ofermodan & ða upahafenan on hira mode" ("the proud-minded and the arrogant in mind") are to be admonished by the ruler in a different way to "ða earmheortan & ða wacmodan" ("the faint-hearted and the humble-minded").[172] Drawing attention to this key piece of instruction for the ruler, the initial's "eyes" direct the reader of the manuscript to a crucial moral idea about avoiding pride and arrogance. They do so, moreover, in a way which draws a link between the "eyes" looking at the book and the way these unbalanced types of "mind" are to (figuratively) look and reflect upon themselves through the spiritual teaching of the ruler.

Given Alfred's insistent rhetorical focus on the link between mind, eye and book in the trope of the "eagan modes", one might see the initial as a material reflection of Alfred's ideas about self-knowledge and reflection. The different types of "mod" and "heort" in the text are literally "eyed" by the book-letter, and, by extension, the reader. Blending Alfred's "embodied" imagery with a material "embodiment" of these themes, the material presentation of Hatton 20 closely aligns with, and underscores, the king's arguments about the sensory and affective properties of books.

[171] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 179, l. 14.
[172] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 209, ll. 1-3.

Alfredian *Ædificia*: The *Æstel* as Book-Mark or Book-Pointer

For the most, part, however, and given the non-survival of most original Alfredian manuscripts, the king's books allow only a glimpse at the rich reciprocity of manuscript book and bibliographic rhetoric in Alfred's book-programme. By far the greater amount of scholarly attention has been directed to the collection of royal objects known as *ædificia,* described by Asser as those treasures "pretiosiora nova sua machinatione facere" ("wonderful and precious which the king made to his own design") [**App. §1.5.2/5**]. Most famous, amongst these, are the king's *æstels,* those gifts described in the *Pastoral Care* as accompanying each book to its episcopal location. Though debate has raged over what these objects were for, and which of the surviving objects may properly be interpreted as *æstels,*[173] the link between treasure and books ("maðma & boca") has been noted as one indelibly important to the book-programme.

The most famous surviving *æstel,* the Alfred Jewel, offers some particularly important evidence for the relationship between book, treasure and Alfredian metaphor. This object, now in the Ashmolean Museum, is a small rock crystal, on which is a design in cloisonné enamel [**Figure 10**]. The treasure is enclosed in a gold setting, which loops around the oval-shaped Jewel and is mounted onto a thick socket in the form of a beast-head. This socket flares, through the mouth of the beast, into a thin circular opening, seemingly designed for a lost cylindrical fitting. On the face of the enamel is the three-quarter length figure of a man with prominent black eyes. This figure holds two foliate objects in either hand. Foliate motifs are also found, in gold etching, on the reverse of the Jewel. Encircling the side of the object in gold filigree is a short piece of text. This bears the statement, "Ælfred mec heht gewyrcan" ("Alfred ordered me to be made"), a quasi-personified inscription which provides strong evidence for the king's involvement in the Jewel's production.

Alfred's *æstels,* as they are invoked in the king's preface*,* are given a clear monetary value but no explanation of their function. The lost fitting of the Jewel has been posited as some kind of pointer, a gift which aristocratic readers might have found useful in beginning their studies with books. The term *æstel,* as Egil Bakka notes, is glossed in Ælfric's tenth-century *Grammar* as "indicatorium" ("indicator", or "pointer"), a connection which would strongly mitigate for an interpretation of the Alfred Jewel as a book-pointer.[174] Scholarly work on the iconography of the Jewel has, moreover, drawn parallels between the appearance of the central figure of the *æstel* and the depiction of the Five Senses on the Fuller Brooch, a late

[173] For an overview of this debate, see Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great,* 204-6.
[174] Egil Bakka, "The Alfred Jewel and Sight", *AntJ* 46 (1966): 279.

ninth-century disc brooch in the Trewhiddle Style.[175] The prominent eyes of the figure on the Alfred Jewel have led to consensus that this represents a personification of "Sight", an apt image given the likely use of the object.[176] Given Alfred's insistent rhetoric on corporeal vision and the attainment of knowledge in the "mind's eye", we might note, with David Pratt, how this imagery has further links to the king's textual metaphors for spiritual insight.[177] Any user of the *æstel* would train their eyes on the manuscript page in tandem with the personification of "Sight". They would also, as we have noted above, trace the king's imagery of mental optics with the book-pointer, perhaps meeting, along the way, the initial faces with large eyes in the decoration of Hatton 20.

This intricate interplay between metaphor and material object is encountered elsewhere on the Alfred Jewel. The figure of "Sight", whilst acting as a personification of physical and mental vision, also holds rod-like flowers. This is mirrored, on the reverse of the Jewel, by the depiction of a cruciform tree with multiple branches, from which spring budded flowers [**Figure 11**]. The imagery of flowers and trees, if rich with eschatological significance, is yet, as we have seen, another facet of Alfredian book-metaphor. The "book-blossoms" of the *Soliloquies* and the flowers and plants gathered by the "busy bee" into Alfred's heart are but one manifestation of this theme in the textual corpus. As we saw earlier in the discussion, the figurative "trees" of books, from which Alfred constructs the "book-house" of the Fathers in the preface to the *Soliloquies,* draw a further link between the literal and figurative *boc* and the natural world.

In an important assessment of all these themes, Charles D. Wright has argued, furthermore, that contemporaries drew on biblical apocrypha to make a figurative link between "Sight", the personification of vision, and "flowers", such as those carried by the figure on the Alfred Jewel.[178] This, as Wright notes, would help explain the otherwise unusual juxtaposition of these motifs on the Jewel.[179] Insofar as these tropes are drawn together, in the vernacular programme, by the scrutiny of books through "modes eagan" and the "blostmena þære bec", we may posit, furthermore, the "boc" as a key idea linking these motifs together on the Alfredian book-pointer. The multiple iconographic layers of the Jewel strongly echo the

[175] See especially Bakka, "Alfred Jewel", 281-2.
[176] For further discussion, see D.R. Howlett, "The Iconography of the Alfred Jewel", *Oxoniensia* 39 (1974): 44-52.
[177] Pratt, *Political Thought,* 187-91.
[178] Charles D. Wright, "Why Sight Holds Flowers: An Apocryphal Source for the Iconography of the Alfred Jewel and Fuller Brooch", in *Text, Image, Interpretation,* ed. Minnis and Roberts, 169-87.
[179] Wright, "Why Sight Holds Flowers", 177-83.

entwined tropes and motifs found throughout Alfred's programme. In a further twist to this already complex, interwoven, set of themes, we might note the reappearance of a "speaking" persona connected with a book: here not the verse preface to the *Pastoral Care,* but the book-pointer itself, which would "voice" its encounter with the Alfredian book even as it moved across the pages of Hatton 20.

Conclusion

If the interplay between "wealth and wisdom" in Alfred's programme has long attracted scholarly attention, we may argue, following the readings advanced above, that the book also had an important role to play in this *schema*. The materiality of the book and the king's body in Asser offers a set of ideas about royal book-culture in which corporeal experience and the "corpore unius libelli" are set out in a symbiotic relationship with Alfred's mental and physical tribulations. The book-programme itself, drawing on "embodied" imagery and tropes of seeing and looking in books, figures the sensory information derived through the body and from books as essential to the epistemological processes of the human subject. In Alfred's transformation of the Neoplatonic framework, the testimony of books as articles of faith becomes paramount. Finally, in Alfred's manuscripts and the portable *ædificia* he designed to go along with them, one sees a punning invocation of all these ideas. Book and body; codex and corpus are rendered inseparable in the king's playful, and deliberately visual, programme of books.

§4) *Æ*thelstan's Books: Inscription and Iconography

The rich and complex portrayals of books found in Alfred's reign are predicated, as we have seen, on the king's careful configuration of the codex through his prefaces, translations and material productions. Alfred's output, as many scholars have observed, is unparalleled by any Anglo-Saxon ruler before or since. One intriguing counterpart to Alfredian book-culture yet comes in the reign of Alfred's grandson Æthelstan. Æthelstan, as we observed at the beginning of the chapter, is noted to have donated several lavish codices and to have commissioned manuscript images to adorn the frontispieces of his books. These activities reflect an involvement with book-culture very different to that of Alfred, and are characterised by most scholars as predicated on demonstrative gift-giving and patronage rather than a more thoroughgoing engagement with books. At the same time, as we shall explore in this section, Æthelstan's books foreground some significant representations of the codex in both texts and images. These portrayals, moreover, indicate a clear shift in West-Saxon ideas about the devotional, commemorative and political importance of books in relation to the royal role.

§4.1) Donation, Devotion and Intercession in Royal Books

If Æthelstan's collection and donation of manuscripts has been noted as one method by which the king demonstrated his piety and largesse, the material and symbolic aspects of gift-giving were yet rooted in a much more complex set of images and ideals about the royal codex. One aspect of this, seen from within the extant manuscripts donated by the king, is the way in which each book offers a clear image of the devotional and symbolic significance of Æthelstan's donations. The book is not only that which is given to ecclesiastical recipients, but also encodes, through inscriptions and manuscript images, a specific vision of the codex being offered. Such inscriptions and iconography, as we shall explore in this section, reflect a detailed focus on the devotional and spiritual relationship between the king and his books.

Meditation and Devotional Reading in Royal Books

Some insights into these depictions of the codex from within Æthelstan's volumes may be gained through close examination of the inscriptions added to each of the manuscripts donated by the king. Almost without exception, the books Æthelstan bequeathed to various institutions were first given a short explanatory text detailing the nature of the gift. These inscriptions, often found on the flyleaves or opening pages of the king's manuscripts, have been noted for what they reveal about the royal "performance of kingship" in the giving of prestigious books.[180] These inscriptions, collected and represented in **Appendices §1.6)** and **§1.7)**, yet offer a sophisticated view of the king's piety, devotion and spiritual engagement with his books.

To begin our analysis, we might profitably choose a single example from amongst the king's gifts to gain a sense of these themes in action. An especially intriguing manuscript in this regard is London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.ii, an early ninth-century gospel-book originally made in Lobbes, Belgium. This codex was itself a royal gift to Æthelstan, transmitted to England from the Ottonian court in the early tenth century. Later in the reign, the manuscript was, in turn, offered by the king to the community at Christ Church, Canterbury. This donation was the occasion for the inclusion of two inscriptions in the codex, one in verse (folio 15r) and one in prose (folio 15v). Both of these inscriptions set out the nature of the royal gift, naming the giver and the recipient(s) and making provision for the safekeeping of the manuscript. As

[180] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 82.

Simon Keynes has observed, these written records foreground "a celebration of the king and his munificence", reminding the recipients about the wealth and largesse of the royal donor.[181]

Notwithstanding the practical purpose of the inscriptions and the way they reflect on the material offering of the codex, one finds, in addition, some rather more careful descriptions of the book. Æthelstan is described, in the opening lines of the prose inscription, as making his gift "deuota mente" ("with a devout mind") [**App. §1.7.1/3**], and, in the verse text, as being "pius" ("pious") [**App. §1.6/1**] in his benefaction. Such images of royal piety are not only indexed to the king's donation, but are placed in a very specific relationship to the Canterbury community and their projected reception of the book. Christ Church, as the prose inscription states, is to use the book as a spiritually edifying object, "honoris exemplumque cernentibus perpetue sibi demonstret" ("may it in perpetuity provide an example of glory for those looking at it") [**App. §1.7.1/10-11**]. Further, the community is to respond to the gift by "curiosis affectibus perenniter agnoscant" ("regard[ing] the donation with diligent feelings") [**App. §1.7.1/6-7**]. Such language, which invokes the book not merely as a royal gift but as a spiritually affective object, situates the codex within a rich set of ideas about the sacred relationship between the king, the recipient community and the book. In the invocation of Æthelstan's devotional mindset and the "diligent feelings" of the community, one finds, moreover, the donation of the book being situated within a reciprocal moment of spiritual reflection and inspiration.

If such descriptions might be explained as conventional evocations of royal reverence and religious duty, the Tiberius manuscript yet goes further in its invocation of the book. A particularly revealing piece of evidence in this regard appears in the manuscript's verse inscription. This poem, which begins with the words "rex pius Æðelstan" ("holy king Æthelstan") [**App. §1.6/1**], foregrounds an especially clear statement about the donor's piety and status as a devotional reader of sacred texts. Somewhat unusually, it also goes into careful detail about the material and spiritual importance of the Tiberius codex itself.

Following the invocation of the king and his gift of the book in the opening of the poem, one finds a sustained, and multifaceted description of the royal volume. First, the poem describes how Æthelstan himself adorned the codex before its donation. The king is said to have illuminated the codex with "aureolis … titulis gemmigerisque locis" ("golden headings and places set with jewels") [**App. §1.6/9-10**]. Further, he has "scematicis ornerier ora lapillis"

[181] Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 151.

("embellished [the book] by having its covers adorned with patterned jewels") [**App. §1.6/13**]. This rich imagery, though highlighting the king's wealth and patronage, is closely indexed to the king's spiritual state. In so beautifying the manuscript, Æthelstan is said to have been "sacro spiramine fusus" ("filled with the holy spirit") [**App. §1.6/9**] and "joyous" in his dedication of the book to "agiae sophiae" ("sacred learning") [**App. §1.6/12**]. Even more strikingly, the poem speculates on the devotional succour that a reader may obtain from the manuscript. Directly invoking the prospective viewer of the gospels, the poem implores "quisquis … uolumen perspicis" ("whoever you are who look into this book") [**App. §1.6/7-8**] to read the "rutilans … luce" ("shining light") [**App. §1.6/7**] of its holy content. Whoever "sitit" ("thirsts") [**App. §1.6/15**] after the lavishly illuminated codex is to "ueniat cupiens … dulcia mella gerens" ("come, bearing sweet honey") [**App. §1.6/15-6**] and "inueniat latices" ("discover [the] waters") [**App. §1.6/16**] of the holy book. Finally, the monastic community is to carefully guard the book lest they lose its sacred contents, which are said to have been "diuino fonte refertum" ("filled from the sacred fount") [**App. §1.6/19**].

The lush poetic imagery for the book used in Æthelstan's dedication poem paints a rich and affective portrait of his donated codex. The book is not merely offered to the Canterbury community but becomes itself the subject of a detailed, meditative focus. Figures derived from the natural world are marshalled to denote the abundance of the book, which shines with light ("rutilans … luce") and is twice figured as holy water ("fluenta"; "diuino fonte"). Whoever approaches the book is to offer the "sweet honey" ("dulcia mella") of a meditative engagement with its holy content. Even more significantly, one can detect a clear interplay between the king's devotional adornment of the codex and these affective metaphors. The "golden headings and places" Æthelstan has set for the book are echoed in the way it is said to convey spiritual "light" to those who look on it. His opening of it to "sacred learning" is reflected in the codex's portrayal as part of the holy "fluenta" ("streams") [**App. §1.6/15**] of sacred learning. Further, the king's provision of "patterned jewels" for the book's cover are stated to have been designed to make it "auxit ubique micans floribus ut uariis" ("resplendent as if with various flowers") [**App. §1.6/14**].

In this extraordinary inscription, one accordingly finds not merely a dedication of the Tiberius codex, but a rhetorically sophisticated depiction of it. Imagery of the book as "holy water" or "flowers", we might note, recalls the similar figuration of the book in Alfred's prefaces and translations. Æthelstan's "floribus", recalling the "blostmena" of Alfred's books, likewise evoke the powerful, affective imagery for the codex found in earlier royal

representations. In the "dulcia mella" linked to the book in Æthelstan's inscriptions, we find an even stronger echo of the affective imagery for the book explored earlier. This imagery of bees and honey, noted to be such a powerful feature of Aldhelmian metaphor, has an additional significance in the context of Æthelstan's reign. As several scholars have observed, the study of Aldhelm formed a particular focus in early tenth-century scholarship, reflected in the preservation of several Aldhelmian manuscripts connected with the court.[182] Though Æthelstan's personal relationship with this form of devotional engagement with books is not explicitly attested in contemporary evidence, later accounts indicate that the rich bibliographic metaphors found in the "Rex pius Æðelstan" poem did have a special significance for the king. William of Malmesbury, evoking Æthelstan's interest in books, describes the king as "auidis doctrinae mella medullis" ("absorb[ing] into his thirsty veins the honey of instruction") in his youth.[183] We might thus interpret the Aldhelmian metaphor in the inscription as painting a powerful picture of the king deriving spiritual succour from books.

The poem's powerful bibliographic imagery yet seems connected to much broader idea(l)s. Michael Lapidge has argued that contemporary verse connected to Æthelstan shows strong affinities with Carolingian poetic inscriptions, which were often composed for the benefit of royal or imperial recipients.[184] Æthelstan's court, as well as being indebted to the study of Anglo-Saxon authors, was famous for its cosmopolitan nature, attracting scholars and teachers from across Europe.[185] The study of sophisticated Latin verse in the "hermeneutic" style of the Tiberius poem formed a particular focus in the reign, mediated through the elite compositions of foreign visitors to the court such as Israel "the Grammarian".[186] The study of Aldhelm took place in tandem with these wider interests, as is indicated in a manuscript with strong links to the royal court, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.697. In this

[182] For discussion of the study of Aldhelm in the reign, see Michael Wood, "The Making of King Æthelstan's Empire: an English Charlemagne?", in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society,* ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 252-4. A further, in depth, discussion is that by Mechthild Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 332-72.
[183] R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom eds., *William of Malmesbury: Gesta Regum Anglorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), vol. 1, 212-3.
[184] Michael Lapidge, "Some Latin Poems as Evidence for the Reign of Athelstan", *ASE* 9 (1980): 83; 93-7.
[185] The classic scholarly discussion of this phenomenon in the reign is that by J. Armitage Robinson, *The Times of Saint Dunstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 51-71. For more recent analysis, see especially Michael Wood, "'Stand Strong Against the Monsters': Kingship and Learning in the Empire of King Æthelstan", in *Lay Intellectuals,* ed. Wormald and Nelson, 203-8.
[186] For the "hermeneutic" style, see Michael Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature", *ASE* 4 (1975): 67-111. For discussion of Israel "the Grammarian", see Michael Lapidge, "Israel the Grammarian in Anglo-Saxon England", in his *Anglo-Latin Literature 900-1066* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 87-104. For a more recent reading of Israel's texts, see Seppo Heikkinen, "Poet, Scholar, Trickster: Israel the Grammarian and his 'Versus de Arte Metrica'", *Journal of Medieval Latin* 25 (2015): 81-110.

manuscript, one finds Aldhelmian glosses alongside a copy of Prudentius's *Psychomachia* and an acrostic poem dedicated to Æthelstan.[187] This poem, which describes the king's "sacra sophismatis" ("sacred learning"), is laid out to create a visual relationship between these descriptions of royal eminence and the letters of the king's name, which form the first letters of each stanza.[188]

The contemporary focus on Continental scholarship and the visual and affective power of devotional verse had yet wider connotations. Æthelstan's court imported (or had copied) volumes of Carolingian poetry, such as Hrabanus Maurus's *De laude sanctae crucis,* in which a visual and spiritual meditation on the sacred Word forms an important theme.[189] A tenth-century manuscript copy of this poem (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.16.3), written by English and Continental scribes, has long been linked to Æthelstan's court.[190] The presence of this text, originally dedicated to the Carolingian emperor Louis the Pious, might additionally reflect an interest in the imperial patronage of books. Such ninth-century Carolingian volumes, as Paul Dutton and Herbert L. Kessler have explored, were frequently offered to contemporary rulers as a means of instruction in the devotional significance of scripture.[191] In association with the Tiberius inscription, we might note how some volumes, such as the First Bible of Charles the Bald, a codex given to Louis's successor, marshal the inscriptional form as a means of instructing the ruler in an appropriately spiritual and sacerdotal model of kingship.[192] This codex, as Dutton and Kessler also observe, additionally foregrounds a particular preponderance of poetic imagery linking the books of scripture to the "nectar" and food of devotional reading.[193]

Whilst ostensibly setting out the terms of the gift to the Canterbury monastery, the Tiberius poem thus conjures a particularly powerful devotional image of the book. The

[187] For discussion of this important manuscript, see Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 350-1, and Wood, "'Stand Strong Against the Monsters'", 194-6.
[188] For discussion of this text, see Lapidge, "Some Latin Poems", 72-83. See also Gernot R. Wieland, "A New Look at the Poem 'Archalis clamare triumuir", in *Insignis Sophiae Arcator: Medieval Latin Studies in Honor of Michael Herren on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday,* ed. Ross Arthur, Michael Herren and Carin Ruff (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 178-92.
[189] For a broader discussion of Hrabanus, and the relationship between text and image in the Carolingian world, see Rosamond McKitterick, "Text and Image in the Carolingian World", in *The Uses of Literacy,* ed. McKitterick, 297-318.
[190] For a nuanced discussion of this codex and its links to the royal court, see William Schipper, "The Origin of the Trinity College Hrabanus", in *The Cambridge Illuminations,* ed. Panayotova (London: Harvey Miller, 2007), 48-9.
[191] Paul Dutton and Herbert L. Kessler, *The Poetry and Paintings of the First Bible of Charles the Bald* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).
[192] Dutton and Kessler, *Poetry and Paintings,* 7-19; 89-101.
[193] Dutton and Kessler, *Poetry and Paintings,* 67; 108-9; 114-115.

language of the Æthelstanian inscription, carefully filtered through images of books and devotion found in Aldhelm, sets out a reading context for the volume predicated on a representation of its sacred significance. In this, the king acts, through his inscription, as a guide to the donation, urging the imagined user of the book to "eximia dogmata sacre lege" ("read its excellent divine doctrines") [**App. §1.6/8**] and come spiritually prepared to encounter the holy codex, "ueniat … dulcia mella gerens" ("let him come … bearing sweet honey") [**App. §1.6/15-6**]. Such themes, echoed in ninth-century Carolingian royal volumes, see the king adopt a quasi-sacerdotal persona, instructing his subjects in how to derive spiritual benefit from the lavish material gift he has bestowed. In this, the book is portrayed, from within the frame of the manuscript codex, as a sacred, spiritual object, directly related to the king's own piety and devotion. We might stress, in addition, that Æthelstan is not the subject of these instructions, as in the "mirror for princes" tradition, but rather is himself the agent of these spiritual directives, positioning himself as a pious model for devotional reading.

Spirituality and Supplication: The Book as a Symbolic Space

The sophisticated engagement with the book and its devotional significance in the royal inscriptions points to a more subtle ideological context for Æthelstan's donations than is usually acknowledged. Set within the frame of the king's inscriptions, the bibliographic gifts become the instruments through which ideas about royal devotion, spiritual affectivity and divine rulership are communicated. Such ideas emerge even more strongly in the visual "inscriptions" or frontispieces contained within Æthelstan's manuscripts. These, now extant in one surviving manuscript and one antiquarian description, offer some especially striking depictions of king and book. Examination of these codices, as we shall see, augments a discussion of royal piety and book-culture in the early tenth century.

To begin our discussion of these themes, we might first take an overview of perhaps the most important such codex in this regard: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 183. This manuscript reflects one of a series of books donated by Æthelstan to the shrine of St. Cuthbert in Chester-le-Street. Corpus, along with another (now lost) manuscript (London, British Library, Cotton Otho B.ix), was presented to the community in c. 934, possibly around the time the king was engaged in military activities in the north of the kingdom.[194] Unlike Æthelstan's other gifts, this manuscript is neither a gospel-book nor an older codex repurposed

[194] For a contrasting perspective, see, however, Andrew Breeze, "The Battle of Brunanburh and Cambridge, CCC, MS 183", *Northern History* 53, no. 1 (2016): 138-45.

for royal donation, but rather a compilation of material related to the cult of St. Cuthbert and custom-made as an Æthelstanian gift. The codex contains an array of hagiographical and liturgical texts, including Bede's *vitae* of Cuthbert in prose and verse and a tenth-century Office for the saint. This material forms the bulk of the collection, which is bolstered by the inclusion of regnal and episcopal lists and some encyclopaedic texts. Though the manuscript lacks an inscription, it has been provided with an elaborate frontispiece. This frontispiece takes the form of a full-page miniature, apparently showing Æthelstan in the act of donating the book to St. Cuthbert [**Figure 12**].

The manuscript's image of Æthelstan donating the Corpus manuscript has attracted considerable scholarly discussion. For the most part, these analyses have emphasized the status of the scene as a presentation or donation "portrait" of the king. Æthelstan, on the left, is shown beneath a columned archway, clad in aristocratic dress and wearing a crown. He holds, in both hands, a large, open volume. Appearing on the right, Cuthbert holds a small, closed book and makes a gesture of blessing towards the king. He stands before an ecclesiastical structure, which recedes into the background of the image. Æthelstan's book, as Karkov has noted, appears to represent the Corpus manuscript, which he extends, as a humble offering, to the saint.[195] The volume held by Cuthbert might be interpreted as a holy attribute, or, following iconographic traditions for representing narrative space, his acceptance of the gift. Overall, as Sarah Foot has argued, the scene represents "[the king] in the act of giving the book to St. Cuthbert".[196]

The depiction of Æthelstan in the Corpus codex represents the sole surviving manuscript image of the king. At the time of the volume's presentation, however, at least one other such image was in existence. The lost Otho manuscript apparently also contained a royal frontispiece, rendered using similar imagery to that in Corpus. This codex, though destroyed in the conflagration of Cottonian manuscripts in 1731, was the subject of detailed description in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In iconographic descriptions of the image by the antiquarians Humphrey Wanley and Thomas Smith, Æthelstan is said to appear "cum libro in dextra … poplite flexo" ("with a book in his right hand … and on bended knee"),[197] whilst Cuthbert "sedens … et sinistra volumen tenens" ("sitting … holds a book in his left hand").[198] As reconstructed through these antiquarian descriptions, the image apparently showed

[195] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, 55-61.
[196] Foot, *Æthelstan,* 120.
[197] For the full text of Thomas Smith's description, see Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 174 n. 153.
[198] For the full text of Humphrey Wanley's description, see Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 174 n. 153.

Æthelstan, regaled in crown and sceptre, "librum offert S. Cuthberto" ("offer[ing] St. Cuthbert the book").[199] As in the Corpus codex, one finds, for the first time in Anglo-Saxon iconography, the image of a king with a book.

The representation of the book from within these donated manuscripts offers an intriguing counterpart to the Æthelstanian inscriptions. If we have already noted the apparent emphasis on the depiction of the book from within those texts, we find, in the Corpus and Otho frontispieces, a clear indication of the important relationship between king and book. Books were apparently represented, in both these images, on multiple occasions, shown in relation to both Æthelstan and Cuthbert. This presentation, moreover, is shown not merely as a transaction between the king and the temporal community at Chester-le-Street, but rather as one made personally to the saint. In the Corpus image, Æthelstan is shown figuratively stepping out of the arcaded world of the court and into the holy, ecclesiastical space of St. Cuthbert's spiritual home. As Karkov has argued, the seventh and tenth-century components of the scene render the image as one which occurs in abstract space, symbolically "bridged through the gift of the book".[200] Such ideas, from the extant descriptions, seem heightened in Otho, where the prostrate king is said to have kneeled before Cuthbert in the act of donation. In both images, we accordingly find a highly spiritual, devotional context for the donation and reception of the book.

Notwithstanding these observations, we might yet note some important anomalies in the Corpus frontispiece. One might observe, in particular, key differences between the two scenes in Corpus 183 and the Otho codex. Though care must be taken in evaluating the Otho image on the basis of the extant antiquarian descriptions, these records, which largely corroborate one another in their account of the lost frontispiece, flag up some clear contrasts with the surviving image of the king in Corpus. In Otho, Æthelstan is said to get down on "bended knee" to make his offering, while the ruler in Corpus simply inclines his head towards the saint. Whilst Cuthbert stands in Corpus, the saint in the Otho codex is reported to be seated ("sedens") in an attitude of expectation as he awaits the gift of the book. In Otho, moreover, Æthelstan is reported to actively present ("offert") Cuthbert with the book, an iconographic detail which seems more ambiguous in Corpus, where the king does not extend the book to the saint but rather holds it with both hands. If one compares the Corpus and Otho images with other extant presentation scenes, such as that found in the Trinity copy of Hrabanus Maurus's

[199] Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 174 n. 153 and n. 154.
[200] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 59.

De laude sanctae crucis, such differences are brought into greater focus. In this image, Hrabanus is shown, on the far right, genuflecting before St. Gregory, offering his book with an outstretched hand [**Figure 13**]. St. Gregory, in the centre of the scene, appears seated and extends a hand to receive Hrabanus's book. The hands of both figures accordingly meet on the surface of the codex, bridging, as they do so, the columned arcades separating donor and recipient.

If this, more traditional, presentation image is posited as an indication of what the descriptions of Cotton Otho intend, one could not have a clearer contrast with the iconography of Corpus 183. The core components of the presentation scene, with the seated recipient and the moment of giving and receiving the donation, are manifestly not those in the surviving image of Æthelstan. Despite clear affinities with the lost Otho image, it would appear that the Corpus manuscript, though drawing on similar iconographic models, was yet significantly distinct from its companion. If modern scholars tend to be led by what, on the basis of Otho and the historical context for the Cuthbert donations, we ought to be seeing, the reality of the frontispiece is somewhat different. What one finds in the Corpus scene is less a donation "portrait", with the implication of figural representation that the term implies, and more a complex visual reimagining of the king and his book. The manuscript's imagery seems to have been given a deliberate visual twist, designed to say something rather more complex about the relationship between kingship and royal piety.

Some first steps in considering what this different set of ideas might be are found in some alternative interpretations of the Æthelstan image. David Rollason, for instance, has suggested that Æthelstan is not donating but rather "reading" the book he holds before him.[201] This is indicated, Rollason argues, by the way the king inclines his head over the book, which is given iconographic emphasis through its size and Æthelstan's bearing of it, towards his chest, with both hands.[202] Cuthbert's blessing of the king might thus indicate a moment of spiritual affirmation, in which the ruler, engaged in a devotional reading of the Cuthbert codex, is honoured by the saint. We might recall here the Tiberius's inscription's injunction to "look into this book", and so receive the devotional gifts of holy learning. This, alternative, interpretation of the scene enhances a sense of the portrayal of the Æthelstanian codex in highly devotional terms. Rather than being surrounded by tenth-century prelates or being shown donating the

[201] David Rollason, "St. Cuthbert and Wessex: The Evidence of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183", in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to A.D. 1200,* ed. Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 421-2.
[202] Rollason, "St. Cuthbert and Wessex", 421.

book to the temporal shrine, the king is depicted, in Corpus, in a highly figurative, other-worldly space, in which the material dedication of the book is rendered secondary to a moment of pious reflection on (and within) the donated manuscript.

This more reflective, devotional, interpretation of the scene might be augmented by some broader observations about donor imagery. As Corine Schleif has observed, donor images are frequently those placed at the border of a manuscript, "on the threshold" of a given codex.[203] On occasion, as Schleif notes, the curious nature of this space, in which the book is both introduced and given a secondary, reflexive depiction from within the codex itself, can lead to unusual effects.[204] The book, as in the Corpus image, is inscribed within the frame of the manuscript's frontispiece, seemingly collapsing the boundaries between the codex itself and its depiction. Donor images sometimes self-consciously play with these doubling effects, or, as Schleif notes in her analysis, form the occasion for a breaking of iconographic conventions by showing contemporary donors alongside saints or as part of more elaborate spiritual visions.[205] In the way that the Corpus image apparently emphasises the devotional nature of the imagined scene, and in the way Cuthbert is shown in an attitude of affirmation, one might perhaps wish to read the frontispiece as just such a visionary encounter.

This rather different approach to the "donation portrait" might be indicated by some additional information about the connotations of St. Cuthbert in Æthelstan's reign. In the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* a collection of material compiled in the mid-tenth century, one finds a particularly intriguing description of Cuthbert's relationship with royal visions. This compilation, which we shall explore more fully later on, records a story in which St. Cuthbert appeared to Alfred, Æthelstan's grandfather.[206] Alfred is said to have encountered Cuthbert disguised as a pilgrim and to have offered generous hospitality to the saint. For this the king was rewarded with a miraculous vision, in which Cuthbert gave the king advice about how to conquer the Viking threat. The saint, in this vision, is also said to have prophesied the success and prosperity of his dynasty.[207] This story was added to the *Historia* in the eleventh century,

[203] Corine Schleif, "Kneeling on the Threshold: Donors Negotiating Realms Betwixt and Between", in *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces,* ed. Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 195-216.
[204] Corine Schleif, "Gifts and Givers that Keep on Giving: Pictured Presentations in Early Medieval Manuscripts", in *Romance and Rhetoric: Essays in Honour of Dhira B. Mahoney,* ed. Georgiana Donavin and Anita Obermeier (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 52-3.
[205] Schleif, "Kneeling on the Threshold", 213-6.
[206] Ted Johnson South, ed. and trans., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto: A History of St. Cuthbert and a Record of His Patrimony* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), 54-7.
[207] For further discussion of this story, see Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great,* 21-22.

thus precluding a verifiable connection with Æthelstan's court.[208] Notwithstanding this, we may note that the text appearing opposite the royal frontispiece in Corpus, Bede's prose *vita* of St. Cuthbert, shows a similar focus on dreams and visions through which the saint manifested his holiness. The relationship between the West-Saxon royal house and a spiritual encounter with the Northumbrian saint might accordingly underpin the unusual iconography of the scene. Cuthbert's hand of blessing, perhaps evoking the similar benefaction received by Alfred, here becomes a sanctification of the pious, learned king, so deemphasizing any purely transactional encounter around the book.

In the context of the royal frontispiece, however, one may point, once again, to Carolingian precedents for the iconography of bibliographic visions. If we have noted the imperial donation image as a possible influence on the iconography of Otho B.ix, the wider corpus of imperial books points to a much broader set of pictorial traditions. Manuscripts such as the First Bible of Charles the Bald, that presentation volume containing inscriptions and imagery of devotional reading we discussed earlier, contain miniatures showing the king and the book as part of broader holy visions.[209] Moreover, as Paul Dutton notes, one finds, in related Carolingian books, a textual focus on the dream vision as a particularly potent form of royal (or imperial) spirituality.[210] In some visions, such as those recorded by Einhard and Walahfrid Strabo, the visionary appearance of a sacred book before the king is a measure both of royal status and a prognostic reminder of the fate of the kingdom.[211] In other, more admonitory visions such as one recounted by Prudentius of Troyes, "books … in black letters [and] letters of blood" appear, denoting the sins of the nation.[212] These, as Prudentius notes, mitigate for the "salvation of the souls of those [subject to the emperor]" through his careful exercise of power.[213] In this, the sacerdotal ruler is to act as an intercessor on behalf of his subjects, being both invested with divine sanction to rule, and, in turn, bearing a duty to act as God's representative on earth.

Turning back to the Corpus frontispiece, we might note, again, the iconographic

[208] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 29-36; 90-4.
[209] Dutton and Kessler, *Poetry and Paintings,* 71-87. For a broader discussion of this theme in Carolingian iconography, see, for instance, William J. Diebold, "The Ruler Portrait of Charles the Bald in the S. Paolo Bible", *Art Bulletin* 76, no. 1 (1994): 6-18.
[210] Paul Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 23-49; 81-112.
[211] Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming,* 105-9.
[212] Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming,* 107-9. For the text of this vision, see Janet L. Nelson, trans., *The Annals of St-Bertin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 43.
[213] Nelson, trans., *Annals of St-Bertin,* 43.

nuances of the scene. The codex is not simply transferred from king to saint, but is rendered, in the centre of the image, in tandem with Cuthbert's hand of blessing. The visual nature of the scene, as Rollason argues, seems particularly important. The eyes of both pictorial protagonists, though now darkened through the oxidisation of the frontispiece, are prominent. Æthelstan's line of sight, though interpreted by Rollason as "reading" his open book, is in fact directed across to St. Cuthbert, whom he regards with a humble, upturned gaze. That the manuscript's illuminators desired to render Æthelstan's posture accurately here is suggested by the careful ruling of the image, which appears to have been meticulously pre-planned by the designers of the codex. The guidelines for the scene, seen on the recto of the folio [**Figure 14**], are also visible within the frontispiece itself. One such guideline runs horizontally across the centre of the image, bisecting Æthelstan's right eye and moving, on the right, directly through St. Cuthbert's lips [**Figure 12a**]. This ruling may have helped the illuminators of the manuscript ensure that the king's eyeline was kept respectfully below that of the saint. Insofar as the finished frontispiece leaves visible this link between the king's eyes and the saint's lips, we might also posit a connection between Æthelstan's vision of the saint and his "witnessing" of Cuthbert's holy prayers for himself and the community at Chester-le-Street.

The book held by the king in the miniature is not only that literally donated to the saint's shrine at Chester-le-Street, but represents a symbolic concatenation of books: the Corpus donation; Bede's miraculous account of St. Cuthbert and, perhaps, the holy office of the saint. As in Æthelstan's inscriptions, the king and his books function as sacral intermediaries between the secular and the sacred, and, in this case, between different types of holy book. Far from simply conveying the king's pious devotions, the inscriptions and the iconography foreground a nuanced portrayal of the relationship between king and book. This relationship is one predicated, even more so than in Alfred's reign, on the status of the ruler as an intermediary with the divine. The book is not only an accoutrement of learned kingship and royal patronage, but rather an instrument of the sacral connection between the king and God.

§4.2) The Book as Relic in the Æthelstanian Codex

The devotional and affective images of books in Æthelstan's inscriptions and iconography indicate the important role of the codex in the development of an early tenth-century ideology of Christian kingship. Such images, however, are not the only ideas to emerge from the king's corpus of books. One important, and recurrent, focus in Æthelstan's donations is the memorial and commemorative function(s) intended for his volumes. These interests are reflected in the

careful framing of the king's bibliographic gifts, which make repeated allusion to the role of remembrance as the reception context for royal books. Themes of prayer, commemoration and intercession form a repeated focus in the representation of the king's books. Such ideas are furthered, in addition, by the complex interplay between Æthelstan's books and his close interest in relics and ritual. These themes, as we shall see, had a particular significance in the king's deployment of his books, underscoring the complex relationship between Æthelstan's material donations and his careful representation of the codex in texts and images.

Oration and Commemoration

To begin our discussion of these themes, we may note the consistent portrayal of the book in Æthelstan's inscriptions as that which the king hopes will elicit prayers for him and his family. Æthelstan's donation "deuote mente" in the Royal gospel-book, for instance, is indexed to a request that "quisquis hoc legerit omnipotenti pro eo proque suis fundat preces" ("may whoever reads this make prayers to the Almighty for him and for his [friends]") [**App. §1.7.3/3-4**]. Whoever "hos legerit caracteres" ("reads these characters") [**App. §1.7.4/4**] in the inscription added to Claudius B.v is likewise to "omnipotenti pro eo proque suis amicis fundat preces" ("offer prayers to the Almighty for [the king] and his friends") [**App. §1.7.4/5**]. Prayer and commemoration are repeatedly foregrounded throughout the inscriptions, as Æthelstan ties his books to the orations he hopes will be offered in reciprocation for the gifts. This emphasis on commemoration is particularly pointed in Tiberius A.ii, one of the king's latest donations. In this gospel-book, Æthelstan devotes an extended description, in the first person, to the prayers he hopes the community will offer in return for his donation: "vos etenim obsecrando postulo memores ut uestris mei mellifluis oraminibus consonaque uoce fieri prout confide non desistatis" ("I beseech you in prayer that you will not cease to be mindful of me in your mellifluous orations as I trust will take place with harmonious voice") [**App. §1.7.1/11-14**].

The orations described here, though apparently invoking conventional ideas about piety and supplication in association with royal munificence, have a particular resonance insofar as they invoke the gift of the book. In the Claudius B.v. donation, the offering of the codex does not simply form the occasion for reciprocation in prayer, but is itself the ground of these orations, as "whoever reads [the] characters" of the inscription is moved to prayerfully invoke the king's name. In the Tiberius manuscript, the donation is to "honoris exemplumque cernentibus" ("provide an example of glory for those looking at it") [**App. §1.7.1/10-11**] and thus stimulate "mellifluis oraminibus" ("mellifluous prayers") [**App. §1.7.1/13**] for the king.

These prayers, delivered "consonaque uoce" ("with harmonious voice") [**App. §1.7.1/13**], are also cited as the counterpart to Æthelstan's own prayers, which the king personally encodes in the book "obsecrando postulo" ("I beseech you in prayer ...") [**App. §1.7.1/12**]. The first-person voice of the inscription here is carefully tied to the commemorations that the recipients are to engage in after first looking at the material "glory" of the codex and (figuratively) hearing the king's command. This subtle interplay between the rhetorical invocation of the codex in the inscription and its tangible presence in the community conveys powerful ideas about the eschatological purpose of the gift as it is invoked from within the manuscript book.

In association with these ideas, we might note the repeated inscriptional emphasis on naming in the royal manuscripts. Each of the donation texts naturally record Æthelstan's name within his offerings, but do so in a consistently prominent way. In the Otho inscription Æthelstan donates the book, "in nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi" ("in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ") [**App. §1.7.5.2/1**], and asks for prayers "on Godes noman 7 on þæs halgan weres" ("in the name of God and of the holy saint [Cuthbert]") [**App. §1.7.5.2/2-3**]. In other examples of the king's inscriptions, one usually finds a direct invocation of the king's name in relation to his book: "volumen hoc Æthelstan …tribuit" ("This volume Æthelstan … gave") [**App. §1.7.1/1-4**]; "Hunc codicem Æthel[s]tanus … tradidit" ("This codex Æthelstan … gives") [**App. §1.7.4/1**]. Notwithstanding the somewhat awkward syntax that results in the Latin texts, this emphasis on the book, Æthelstan's name, and his gift, is found repeated across the corpus, usually with an emphasis on the prayers that are to be elicited in his favour. We noted earlier how the acrostic form, in which the king's name was encoded, had a particular devotional function in the reign. Here, the prayerful relationship between the king's name and his books is given even greater prominence, allied to the offering of prayers "memores … mei" ("in memory of me") [**App. §1.7.1/12**].

The importance of nominal inscription into the frame of the king's books is indicated, additionally, by some broader evidence from the reign. In addition to the diplomatic exchange of books with foreign rulers, Æthelstan was also keen to inscribe himself into Continental prayerbooks. A diplomatic mission to the court of Otto I in 929 formed the occasion, not only for negotiation about the marriage of Æthelstan's sisters, but for the entry of the king's name into several confraternity books.[214] One of these is a volume now in St. Gall (St. Gallen,

[214] For discussion, see Wood, "Making of King Æthelstan's Empire", 259. See also Veronica Ortenberg, "'The King from Overseas': Why Did Æthelstan Matter in Tenth-Century Continental Affairs?", in *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century,* ed. D.W. Rollason, Conrad Leyser and Hannah Williams (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 232.

Stiftsarchiv, Cod. C 3 B55), where the king is cited along with several other members of his retinue: "Adalsten rex, Uuolfhelmus archiepiscopus, Eluuinus episcopus …" ("King Æthelstan, Archbishop Wulfhelm, Bishop Ælfwine …").[215] Another such inscription appears in a confraternity book attached to Reichenau (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Rh. Hist. 27, p. LXX), which states, "Aethelstaenum regem cum Uuelfelmo archiepiscopo et nostris fidelissimis uiuis ac in pace quiescentibus uestro seruitio in Christi nomine commendamus" ("In the name of Christ, we commend King Athelstan to your service, together with Archbishop Wulfhelm and our friends both living and resting in peace").[216] The entry of the king's name and the application for prayers in this latter inscription might be compared to the wording of the Otho inscription, where Æthelstan similarly commends the book, "in nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi" and asks for prayers for himself "on Godes noman".

This focus on naming through the frame of the book inscriptions might yet be noted to have a particular significance for the book. Carolingian and Ottonian confraternity books, as Rosamond McKitterick has observed, were developed in ecclesiastical institutions as a means of gathering the names of those an entire community wished to be remembered before God.[217] These books were to aid a community's orations, both for their own members and those from other institutions. Such codices, as McKitterick notes, helped create devotional links between religious communities which, as the Æthelstan inscriptions show, might range over broad geographical areas.[218] Even more importantly, such books were invested with a special spiritual significance. In drawing together the names, both living and dead, of those to be prayed for on earth, the confraternity books evoke the divine "book" of the elect. This symbolism of the codex relates to a spiritual trope we discussed earlier, the divine *liber vitae* or "book of life" which God produces on Judgement Day. Those inscribed within its pages are those who number amongst the saved, whilst others who perform evil deeds (as repeatedly cited in Anglo-Saxon charters) are to be "delatur" ("deleted") from the holy book. Inscription in a confraternity book was thus not only a means of securing prayers, but of obtaining orations in order to ensure inscription in the spiritual book of the saved.

Æthelstan's appearance in the Ottonian *liber vitae* indicates the importance the king placed on this symbolic use of the codex. Insofar as similar themes emerge in the inscriptions,

[215] For the text of this inscription and discussion, see Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 200.
[216] Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 200.
[217] Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 162-73.
[218] McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 165-71.

we might perhaps posit the royal donations as themselves evoking these special books. In the evocation of the donated books in relation to prayer, the king casts his volumes not only as part of an orational transaction, but also as a symbolic "book of life" in miniature. The portrayal of the memorial nature of the codex in the donated codices thus taps into a much wider set of ideas about commemoration and prayer. The repeated emphasis on naming, cast in a similar lexical form to the confraternity book inscriptions, adds an additional layer of bibliographical meaning to the records of the king's donations. The memorial function of each inscription is here set within a much broader framework of ideas about the commemorative nature of holy books.

In furtherance of these themes, we might now turn back to the image of Æthelstan in the Corpus manuscript. This codex, which is without inscriptions, does not offer us quite as clear a set of ideas about the role of oration and commemoration in relation to the royal codex. Notwithstanding this, as we explored earlier, the intercessory space depicted in this scene offers us a significant "vision" of Æthelstan's prayerful relationship with Cuthbert. Though scholars tend to focus on the frontispiece as a stand-alone indication of royal donation, we might yet seek to deepen our understanding of the manuscript by considering how the iconography of king and book might relate to the broader, textual depictions of the codex found in the volume. One particularly intriguing context for this is the prose *vita* of the saint which begins immediately opposite the frontispiece on folio 1v of the manuscript. This, Bede's account of Cuthbert's life and miracles, is itself a highly significant, memorial text.

As it begins immediately opposite the royal frontispiece, the *vita* begins, not with an discussion of Cuthbert, but with Bede's own reflections on the writing and spiritual significance of his book. This, moreover, is the occasion for an explicit consideration of the memorial nature of the codex. Bede offers his book to Eadfrith and the congregation at Lindisfarne not only to aid their devotions to the saint, but so that they might explicitly honour his memory. Cuthbert, as Bede notes at the beginning of the preface, is that saint "beatae memoriae" ("of blessed memory"), whose good works he wishes "vobis … ad memoriam revocare" ("to recall … to your minds").[219] Having humbly composed the *Life,* and submitted it to Herefrid for correction, Bede yet hopes that "cum eundem libellum … relegentes pia sanctissimi patris memoria vestros animos ad desideria regni" ("when you read this book [you will] in pious recollection of that holy father lift up your souls with ardour in aspiration for the

[219] J.A. Giles, ed. and trans. *The Complete Works of the Venerable Bede: Historical Tracts,* vol. 4 (London: Whittaker, 1863), 202-3.

heavenly kingdom").[220] As it appears opposite the image of Æthelstan and Cuthbert in Corpus 183, the words of this preface add a further layer of significance to the codices depicted in that scene.

More strikingly, Bede's preface goes on to relate his production of the book not only to the memory of Cuthbert but to that of the author himself. The occasion of presenting the book to the community is also the moment for him to implore them to "missas facere" ("offer up masses [for me]") and to remember him for his pious composition of the *Life.*[221] Further, Bede asks that Lindisfarne should "nomen meum inter vestra dignemini" ("enrol my name among your own").[222] The nature of this enrolment is elaborated in the next part of the preface, as Bede directs, more specifically, that "religioso frati vestro Guthfrido … in albo vestrae sanctae congregationis meum nunc quoque nomen apponeret" ("your pious brother Guthfrid ... should even now enrol my name in the white book of your holy congregation").[223] This "albo" ("white book") refers to the community's confraternity book, which Bede now wishes to have his name inscribed within. We may note here how this inscription is carefully indexed to Bede's composition of the "libellum" and his presentation of it to the Lindisfarne community. In so producing a memorial codex for the saint, Bede wishes to be repaid with entry into a yet more prestigious book of memory, the divine *liber vitae*.

This interplay between Bede's donation of the book and his memorialisation in the community's holy book of remembrance seems highly significant in light of Æthelstan's wider uses and descriptions of his books. Insofar as this complex text about commemorative books is that which the king himself donated to Chester-le-Street, one finds a clear correspondence between Bede's account of his bibliographic offering to St. Cuthbert and that made by Æthelstan in the Corpus codex. Æthelstan's image of himself honouring the saint with books in the manuscript's frontispiece resonates strongly with these ideas about the relationship between codex and commemoration in the text facing the scene. As in Bede, the implication is that the king will now himself be remembered by the community. One finds suggestive evidence that this hint was in fact taken by the recipients of the book in a twelfth-century *Liber Vitae* from Durham, the location to which the Chester-le-Street community transferred in 995. As Eric E. Barker has shown, some collections of Anglo-Saxon names on folios 12r and 43v

[220] Giles, ed., *Bede,* vol. 4, 204-5.
[221] Giles, ed., *Bede,* vol. 4, 206-7.
[222] Giles, ed., *Bede,* vol. 4, 206-7.
[223] Giles, ed., *Bede,* vol. 4, 206-7.

of this codex have apparent links to Æthelstan's tenth-century retinue.[224] These, Barker argues, could reflect some of those present at the moment of the king's gift-giving in 934.[225] If they may be so interpreted, one finds a clear associative network between Æthelstan's donations and those in which he and his books were remembered in the *liber vitae* of St. Cuthbert's community.

To round off these observations we might note the proliferating complexity of these ideas as they are set from within the Corpus codex itself. The Æthelstan frontispiece, as we noted earlier, encodes a multivalent, and highly reflexive, meditation on the book from within the frame of the book. In the way the scene's symbolic moment of commemoration and gift-giving is also reflected in Bede's account of his own devotions to Cuthbert in the page opposite (and following on from) the frontispiece, we find, furthermore, an additional stratum of reflexivity. Æthelstan's depicted codex is not only that which he bears, in symbolic space, as he intercedes with the saint, but recalls the Bedan book as it was inscribed and commended to the community at Lindisfarne. It also thereby echoes Bede's own reflections, from within *his* codex, on the mechanisms of memorialisation and remembrance in books. The representation of the book in the Æthelstan miniature thus reflects several layers of commemorative bibliography, from the Corpus manuscript containing both Æthelstan and Bede's offerings of books, to Bede's own codex, which, in its equally powerful rhetoric, allies itself with Lindisfarne's *liber vitae* and the divine "book of life".

The Book as Relic and Monument

The commemorative nature of the king's books and their relationship with the *liber vitae* model of intercession indicates the broader eschatological framework within which Æthelstan positioned his donations. At the same time, as we noted earlier in the discussion, Æthelstan's books derive significance not only from their inscriptional and iconographic invocation of the codex, but through the positioning of these records within the frame of the book itself. This has implications not only for the "liminality" of the book as a space for the king to reflect on his volumes, but for the potent materiality of the codices he offered as gifts. At times, as we shall see in this part of the discussion, the king's manuscript books and his conjurations of them in his donation "records" are carefully entwined in the development of a distinctively Æthelstanian representation of the book.

[224] Eric E. Barker, "Two Lost Documents of King Athelstan", *ASE* 6 (1977): 137-43.
[225] Barker, "Two Lost Documents", 142-3.

We might begin our discussion of these ideas by examining one facet of the king's "commemorative" portrayal of his books we noted in the last part of the analysis. Æthelstan, as we observed earlier on, encodes a particular focus on the royal name in the inscriptions, and, moreover, in his nominal inscription within Continental confraternity books. The interplay between the prayerful "naming" of the king in the frame of the book, and the reciprocal orations he expects from the recipients of the codex, formed one way in which the rhetorically constructed "book" and its material reality are placed into conversation with each other in the inscriptions. We might also note, in this regard, how the material appearance of the codices bolsters this association. At the top of folio 15r in Tiberius A.ii, Æthelstan's name, in contrast with the minuscule used for the "Rex pius Æðelstan" poem, appears in capital script, making a clear connection between the poetic conjuration of the book in relation to the donor [**Figure 15**]. Even more strikingly, large display capitals are used for the entirety of the inscription in the MacDurnan Gospels, where the king's name, set into the centre of the manuscript page, carries an especial prominence [**Figure 16**]. The material appearance of letters, as we noted earlier on, was of particular interest to Æthelstan's court given the revival of interest in Carolingian image-poems and verse *tituli*. In the MacDurnan codex, we might also observe the monumental style of the display capitals used. The commemoration of the king and his gift, encoded in a visually striking layout, seems reminiscent here of the *tituli* used on material monuments in the period. If such a connection is so intended, the inscription's portrayal of the king and his book here becomes itself like a physical memorial, superimposed over the actual memorial space of the manuscript book.[226]

In noting these correspondences, we might turn again to a re-examination of the lexical style of the king's inscriptions. The MacDurnan manuscript, as we noted earlier, makes allusion to "istum textum" ("this gospel-book") [**App. §1.7.2/1**] from within the rhetorical "space" of the donation. To some extent such a description reflects the literal nature of the record, which is, at least in part, a practical means by which Æthelstan indicates his involvement with the codex. We might also note the insistence of each of the king's inscriptions in flagging up this deictic relationship between the inscriptions and the manuscript book. In the Tiberius codex, the prose text opens with an allusion to "uolumen hoc euuangelii" ("*this* gospel-book"; my emphasis) [**App. §1.7.1/1**]. The Royal and Claudius inscriptions open identically, with "hunc codicem" ("*this* codex") [**App. §1.7.3/1**; **App. §1.7.4/1**]. In the two inscriptions found in the

[226] For some additional comments about the "memorial" aspects of inscriptions in a Carolingian context, see Vincent Debiais, "Carolingian Verse Inscriptions and Images: From Aesthetics to Efficiency", *Convivium* 1.2 (2014): 88-101.

Otho manuscript, one finds a similar conjuration of the book, "hoc evvangelium" ("*this* gospel-book") [**App. §1.7.5.1/2-3**]; "þas boc" ("*this* book") [**App. §1.7.5.2/2**]. In his observation of these rhetorical similarities, David Pratt notes how such language announces the "public nature" of the gift.[227] At the same time, we might note how this also renders the book itself an important focal point. In the repeated conjuration of "volumen hoc"; "hunc codicem"; "þas boc", one gains an impression of the codex as itself an important monument, a place of record in which the king and his books are reflexively entwined. The inscriptions are thus not only a reminder of the king's pious donation for those reading each book, but become themselves the ground for this memorialisation. Insofar as some of the king's donations, such as Tiberius A.ii, are thought to have been part of the king's library long before their presentation, we might point to the literal importance of this materiality, forming an associative link between the person of the king, his books and his future remembrance in the prayers of each holy community.

The symbolic evocation of the materiality of each book in the text of the inscriptions is indicated in yet more subtle ways throughout the king's donations. In some of the texts, the gifts are linked to more wide-ranging ideas about the history and symbolism of the donated volumes. We noted earlier how the Tiberius manuscript's inscriptions appear in a book which bears signs of previous royal donation, from Otto I to Æthelstan. In some inscriptions, this previous history of book-ownership is explicitly cited in the inscriptional invocation of the codex itself. Once again, the inscription added to the MacDurnan Gospels is rich in significance here. This text, in recording the king's gift, invokes the past owner of the volume, Mael Brigte, noting how this powerful Irish scholar "per triquadrum … dogmatizatast …" ("propound[ed] this gospel-book throughout the world …") [**App. §1.7.2/1-2**]. This observation, rendered in the monumental display script we discussed just previously, is directly related to Æthelstan's own re-gifting of the book, "… Æthelstanus Anglosaexna rex … Doruernensi metropoli dat per aeuum" ("… but Æthelstan, king of the Anglo-Saxons … gives it for ever to the metropolitan see of Canterbury") [**App. §1.7.2/2-4**]. Laid out in deliberately archaic script, the inscription ties itself to the past history of this codex. Here one accordingly finds a sophisticated interplay between the rhetorical conjuration of the book and the materiality of the codex onto which such letters are inscribed.

[227] Pratt, "Kings and Books", 337.

In making these observations, we might also highlight the broader materiality of Æthelstan's books. The MacDurnan codex is in fact a tiny Insular "pocket gospel-book", a precious manuscript with a striking layout and cycle of illuminations of its own. Aside from the English-made Corpus 183, it is perhaps significant that most of the king's donations reflect such Irish or Continental volumes. In tandem with their luxury status and value as gifts, these books have a distinctive appearance compared to English volumes of a similar date. This repurposing of older, historical gospel-books casts each volume as itself a numinous object, invested with the spiritual power of past decades (or centuries) of sacred book production. The inscription in the MacDurnan manuscript, in conjuring the historical significance of this codex and materially evoking this patina of antiquity through its script, thus seems to carefully imitate and evoke the literal appearance of the book. Elsewhere, as in the Tiberius manuscript, the Caroline script and careful layout of the poem within the frame of this Ottonian codex seems calculated to effect an interplay between the material appearance of the inscription, the depiction of the book in its text, and the manuscript book itself. This rich combination of textual representation and material signification seems likely to have had a powerful impact at the institutions to which Æthelstan directed his gifts.

Such ideas might be advanced by returning to the powerful depiction of the royal codex in the Tiberius verse inscription. As we saw earlier in the discussion, this poem includes a particularly rich set of descriptions detailing how the king himself re-ornamented the book before giving it as a gift. Æthelstan is said to have provided the book with "titulis gemmigerisque locis" ("golden headings and places set with jewels") [**App. §1.6/10**] and "scematicis ornerier ora lapillis" ("covers adorned with patterned jewels") [**App. §1.6/13**]. This adornment, as well as being indexed to the spiritual "flowers" encoded in the book, indicates a sanctification of the codex by embellishing it with precious materials. Though the binding and cover of this manuscript have not survived, the poem offers a powerful image of the king beautifying and adorning his possessions. This focus on precious objects might be paralleled with the king's oft-noted interest in holy relics, which he was said also to refurbish and embellish before donating them to favoured recipients. William of Malmesbury, in his account of Æthelstan's interest in sacred objects, notes how the king owned an array of relics encased in gold and silver, including "particulam sanctae et adorandae crucis cristallo inclusam" ("a small piece of the holy and wonderful Cross enclosed in crystal"),[228] and "portiunculam quoque coronae spineae eodem modo inclusam" ("a small portion of the crown of thorns, enclosed in

[228] Mynors, Thompson and Winterbottom, eds., *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 218-9.

a similar manner").[229] Such holy objects are said by William to have been made as "exquisite presents" to those he favoured. This practice, as modern scholars have noted, forms part of Æthelstan's performative piety, in which sacred objects were distributed alongside holy books.[230]

Setting these themes in context, we might note, with Julia Smith, how objects such as books and relics derived holy power not only from their basic materiality, but from the specific ways in which they were encased and adorned by those who owned or used them.[231] In Æthelstan's adornment of his books, so carefully described in the Tiberius poem, one finds a particularly strong parallel with the way the king treated sacred relics. In the description, moreover, of the king's adornment and encasing of his archaic volumes, one gains a powerful impression of the book as itself a relic, an (often) antique codex carefully beautified with precious ornaments and rhetorically linked to the quasi-sacred person of the king himself.[232] Following Marika Räsänen's discussion of the way material relics gain particular power from their codification in narrative, we might point to the Tiberius poem as carefully cultivating this idea of the "reliquary" codex.[233] In this, the ornamented book is rendered as holy not only through the literal application of the adornments, but through the meticulous description of the bejewelled codex that appears inside the book, in the verse inscription.

These ideas about relics, ritual and the staged materiality of Æthelstan's books cohere in a broader consideration of the Corpus manuscript and its place in the complex series of gifts the king offered to Chester-le-Street. This codex, as we have seen, was designed, along with the lost Otho manuscript, to be presented to the shrine of the Northumbrian saint. It was also, however, part of a much more extensive programme of gift-giving, which extended to several other codices, ornamental objects, plate and vestments. Most of these donations have now been lost or are unidentifiable as part of Æthelstan's programme of giving. Though a contemporary record of the precise nature of these gifts is also lacking, the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* that record of the community we discussed earlier, does outline the full range of these gifts. This text notes, explicitly, that Æthelstan donated the Corpus manuscript, "I sancti Cuthberti vitam

[229] Mynors, Thompson and Winterbottom, eds., *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 220-1.
[230] For discussion of the king's interest in relics, see Foot, *Æthelstan,* 188-203.
[231] Julia Smith, "Rulers and Relics, c.750-c.950: Treasure on Earth, Treasure in Heaven", *P&P* 206, suppl. 5 (2010): 75-6; 82-3.
[232] For evocation of Æthelstan's books as "relics" (albeit in a rather different context), see Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 59 and Breeze, "The Battle of Brunanburh", 138.
[233] Marika Räsänen, "Introduction", in *Relics, Identity and Memory in Medieval Europe,* ed. Marika Räsänen, Gritje Hartmann and Earl Jeffrey Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 1-10.

metrice et prosaice scriptam" ("one life of St. Cuthbert written in verse and in prose").[234] It notes, in addition, the king's gift of precious books and ornaments, including "textum evangeliorum … I missalem, et II evangeliorum textus auro et argento ornatos …" ("one gospel book … one missal; two gospel books ornamented in silver and gold …").[235]

This record of Æthelstan's donations gives us some additional information about the ornamental nature of the royal gifts of books, said to have been adorned with gold and silver. More strikingly, however, it exists in the *Historia* in the form of what is described as a "testamentum" ("will") or "karta" ("charter").[236] This "testamentum" opens with the words, "In Nomine Domine Nostri Iesu Christi. Ego Æthelstanus rex do sancto Cuthberto hunc textum euangeliorum …" ("In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I, King Æthelstan, give to St. Cuthbert this gospel-book …").[237] The *Historia* embeds this "testamentum" within a narrative of what it states occurred during Æthelstan's visit to the shrine in 934. Explaining the king's military activities in the north, the record states that Æthelstan then, "ad oratorium sancti Cuthberti diuertit … regia munera dedit, et inde hoc subscriptum testamentum composuit et ad caput sancti Cuthberti posuit" ("made a diversion to the church of St. Cuthbert … gave royal gifts to him and then composed this signed testament and placed it at St. Cuthbert's head").[238] The "testamentum" in the *Historia* is thus not just a subsequent record of the royal donations, but was itself a form of dedication, placed, with holy objects, into the shrine itself.

The nature of this "testamentum" and its origins, however, has been disputed by scholars. In its language, "hunc textum euangeliorum", it would appear to reflect not a separate charter or "will", but rather a record encoded within the gift of a gospel-book. This discrepancy between the diplomatic and bibliographic form of the record has given many commentators pause for thought about the document's legitimacy, which then seems to reflect a rather confused account of what occurred in 934.[239] Notwithstanding this, we may note how the form of the record, "hunc textum", is strongly reminiscent of Æthelstan's deictic inscriptions. If the *Historia's* "testamentum" reflects a genuine list of royal gifts, we might posit that it was in fact inscribed into another of the king's lavish gospel-books, from which the "testamentum" was copied. We might thus interpret the record as another inscription, taken from a (now lost) royal book donation. This would cast the "testamentum" as a bibliographic inscription in which the

[234] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 64-5.
[235] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 64-5.
[236] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 64-5.
[237] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 64-5.
[238] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 64-5.
[239] Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 177-8.

full range of the king's gifts were inscribed, from "hunc textum" to the other Cuthbertian manuscripts and other precious gifts. So describing the donations, the book inscription would represent, from within, a powerful portrait of the royal bequests, cast in much the same form as the book inscriptions discussed above.

Insofar as it was apparently placed "caput sancti Cuthberti", this inscribed gospel book gains a greater significance. This book was not only to be a portable volume within the community, but to remain in place directly next to the body of the saint in its shrine. The codex, which we may reasonably posit to have been another of the king's historical, materially resonant, gospel-books, was thus to have a close relationship with Cuthbert's material relics. In another, Æthelstanian, twist of reflexivity, this book was to announce from its opening pages that it had so been placed at the saint's "head". Conjuring this placement of the book from within, the codex would also have gone on to detail the extraordinary range of bibliographic and material gifts granted by the king. The complex interplay between the representation of the codex and the material ground of the book are here placed into a dizzying nexus of relationships, pointing to the "testamentum" of the book, to the material frame of this manuscript, and thence further outwards, to the body of the saint and to the other (inscribed) manuscripts included in Æthelstan's bequest.

§4.3) Collection and Control: Politics and Power in Æthelstan's Books

The breadth and subtlety of the ideas about books conveyed in Æthelstan's additions to his donations point to a reassessment of the king's conceptual, as well as material, investment in a devotional and commemorative culture of the book. At the same time, as scholars have repeatedly observed, Æthelstan's gifts of books are tied to a more complex set of contemporary concerns, in which political and dynastic considerations helped shape the royal interest in books and learning. The deployment of books to favoured institutions has been noted by Simon Keynes, amongst others, to reflect Æthelstan's prudent cultivation of important ecclesiastical centres.[240] Insofar as we have observed the representation, as well as the material status of the king's books, to be significant, we might accordingly turn to explore how far such ideas about royal status and political control emerge in Æthelstan's book inscriptions and iconography.

[240] Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 151.

Political Power and Imperial Might in Æthelstan's Books

An initial indication of the political nature of Æthelstan's bibliographic portrayals occurs in the corpus of inscriptions. These, as we have seen, encode a repeated focus on the king's name, tied closely into the prayerful, commemorative purpose of the royal gifts. At the same time, one may note an alignment of king and book which emphasises the powerful status of the king. Whilst being invoked as "rex pius Æðelstan" ("holy king Æthelstan") [**App. §1.6/1**] in the Tiberius poem, and "piisimus rex" ("pious king") [**App. §1.7.5.1/2**] in Otho B.ix Æthelstan's inscriptions yet use markedly political language to describe the royal role. In the MacDurnan Gospels, a relatively early donation, Æthelstan is denoted as "Anglosaexna rex" ("king of the Anglo-Saxons") [**App. §1.7.2/3**]. This seemingly straightforward evocation of the king's status might yet be compared with the royal styles that develop in later inscriptions. By the time of the donations to the shrine of St. Cuthbert, for instance, one finds the king appearing as "Eathelstan Anglorum … rex" ("Æthelstan … king of the English") [**App. §1.7.5.1/1-2**]. These donations, made relatively late in the reign, followed on, as we noted earlier, from Æthelstan's military successes in the north of the kingdom. In so re-fashioning his status through the frame of the book inscription, the king's military and political achievements are directly indexed to his grant of the book.

Such ideas about the relationship between royal status and Æthelstan's books appear with even greater force in a much later inscriptional example. In the prose inscription added to Tiberius A.ii, Æthelstan is given an even more elevated description. In this gospel-book, the donor is "Æthelstan Anglorum basyleos et curagulus totius Bryttannie" ("Æthelstan king of the English and ruler of the whole of Britain") [**App. §1.7.1/1-2**]. Here, Æthelstan is not merely king of the "Anglo-Saxons" or the "English", but rather a ruler with power throughout Britain. The book, as the inscription implies, is ordered to be granted to Canterbury on the basis of the king's might. This assertion of royal domination might also be linked to the inscription's focus on Æthelstan's commands for the book, which, as we saw earlier, encompassed his demand that the codex remain in its location; that the community reciprocate the gift with prayer, and, even more prescriptively, that the book be regarded "curiosis affectibus" ("with diligent feelings") [**App. §1.7.1/6**]. Issued towards the conclusion of the reign, this elaborate book inscription draws upon the king's considerable military achievements to assert his power over the space of the book and the community at Christ Church.

This careful deployment of the royal name in the manuscripts yet has broader significance. Work by Samantha Zacher on praise poetry composed in honour of Æthelstan in

the reign has shown how both vernacular and Latin verse in the period showed a particular preference for pronominal puns, in which the name of the king was embedded in such poems as the *Battle of Brunanburh* and the Iohannes acrostic.[241] On occasion, as Zacher notes, the interplay of languages is used to set up intriguing effects, especially where unusual or archaic terms are used.[242] Latin hermeneutic vocabulary, as we noted earlier, formed a particular scholarly interest in the period, derived from devotional, Aldhelmian literature. As it appears in the inscriptions, however, we can detect some rather more political factors in play. Returning to the Tiberius inscription, we might note the strikingly unusual word "basyleos", derived from a Greek term denoting imperial status. Imperial vocabulary, as Sarah Foot has shown, recurs in several important sources from the reign, including in Anglo-Latin praise poetry such as *Carta dirige gressus,* another text composed after the king's northern victories.[243] Such language, as Foot notes, began to be cultivated, in earnest, after c. 934, when Æthelstan routed an uprising by Constantine of the Scots and so asserted overlordship beyond Northumbria.[244] We may add to these observations by noting a close parallel between the language of the book inscription and that of later charters such as S 401, in which Æthelstan is invoked as "tocius Brittannie basileus" ("ruler of the whole of Britain").[245] In adding such a potent description of royal rule to the inscription, the reader is left in no doubt about the might of the donor, whose books are directly related to his political status and control over his territories and possessions.

The close relationship between the powerful king and his volumes is reflected elsewhere in the corpus of Æthelstanian portrayals. We might recall here the distinctly military garb worn by the king described in the Otho manuscript, where Æthelstan "offers" his book to Cuthbert whilst wearing a crown and carrying a sword. The Corpus codex, whilst much less regal in its depiction of the king in symbolic space, yet denotes royal status through the attribute, not only of a book, but the king's three-pronged crown. Towards the latter part of the reign this distinctively shaped crown was also depicted on Anglo-Saxon coinage, designed to assert the political and economic status of the king. This crown, as several commentators have noted, is highly unusual in an Anglo-Saxon royal context, and is modelled on the style of

[241] Samantha Zacher, "Multilingualism at the Court of King Æthelstan: Latin Praise Poetry and *The Battle of Brunanburh*", in *Conceptualising Multilingualism in England, c. 800-c. 1250,* ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 86-103.
[242] Zacher, "Multilingualism at the Court of King Æthelstan", 90-103.
[243] Sarah Foot, "Where English Becomes British: Rethinking Contexts for *Brunanburh*", in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks,* ed. Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 140-1.
[244] Foot, "Where English Becomes British", 138-41.
[245] S 401.

imperial crowns worn by Carolingian emperors.[246] It was apparently worn, together with a sword, at Æthelstan's coronation in 925, a spectacle in which the royal status of the king was carefully tied to his quasi-sacerdotal persona as a *miles Christi*.[247] Insofar as it appears in connection with the gift of the book, this attribute indicates the nuanced interplay between Æthelstan's pious kingship, his quasi-imperial pretensions and his investment in the book as a tool for the display of status and power.

This complex of ideas about political status, military might and quasi-imperial power might be analysed further by returning to another key part of the king's corpus of books. One especially resonant description of royal status occurs in the poetic addition to Tiberius A.ii, the gospel-book donated to Canterbury. In the midst of the king's evocative, affective language of spiritual engagement with the book, one finds much more political imagery. At the opening of this inscription, "Rex pius Æðelstan" is also "patulo famosus in orbe" ("renowned throughout the wide world") [**App. §1.6/1**]. He is, moreover, "regem terrigenisque ducem" ("leader of [God's] earthly forces") [**App. §1.6/4**]. Such descriptions, reflecting the quasi-imperial language of the prose inscription and the charters, reinforce a view of Æthelstan's gift as a particularly powerful one. Evoking ideas about royal fame and military power, the inscription asserts a direct link between the holiness of the gift and the legitimacy of the king and his earthly activities. These, as the poem notes, are transacted on behalf of God, as Æthelstan, fulfilling his role as a divinely-appointed ruler, sets his "earthly forces" to work.

Several lines later in the poem, one finds an even more pointed invocation of Æthelstan's martial power. Following on from the poetic allusion to the king's army, the poem notes how, "rex ipse feroces uincere bellipotens colla superba terens" ("the king himself, mighty in war [is able] to conquer other fierce kings, treading down their proud necks") [**App. §1.6/5-6**]. This striking description is that which leads directly to the poetic discussion of the visual and meditational power of the book which we analysed earlier. This juxtaposition between the king's subjugation of his enemies ("colla superba terens") and his control over the space over the holy codex ("dulcia mella gerens"), casts the gift in a distinctly political, quasi-propagandistic light.

[246] For discussion see Foot, *Æthelstan,* 217-23. See also Shane Bobrycki, "Breaking and Making Tradition: Æthelstan, 'Abd Al-Rahman III and their Panegyrists", in *Rulers and Elites: Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies in the Ancient and Medieval World,* ed. Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 246-8.
[247] Foot, *Æthelstan,* 221-3.

As we have noted elsewhere in the Æthelstanian corpus, one may yet detect a further layer of complexity underpinning this apparently straightforward context for the book. The language of the inscription here is markedly similar to that found in Carolingian praise-poetry, especially that surrounding the court of Louis the Pious. In a poem composed by Theodulf of Orleans for the emperor, one finds a description of Louis's rule "totem orbem" ("over the whole world").[248] This observation, like that in the Anglo-Saxon poem, is linked by the poet to the king's military prowess. Theodulf goes on to detail these victories, embedding his account within an image of the emperor as a hunter stalking his enemies. He implores, in particular, that "ut premis ipse feras, reprimas sic barbara colle" ("as you yourself pursue wild beasts, so may you subdue barbarian necks").[249] This evocative description, with faint similarities to that in "Rex pius Æðelstan", is yet followed by an even more striking image: "colla superba teras, anates ut turba caporum … colla superba teras" ("may you seize the necks of the proud, as a cast of falcons seizes ducks … may you seize the necks of the proud").[250] Such imagery, with its specific invocation of the "proud necks" of enemies ("colla superba teras"), seems markedly close to that used by the "Rex pius" poet ("colla superba terens").

Analysis of this motif in Carolingian poetry by Eric J. Goldberg has revealed that the image of the "imperial hunter" had a wide cache in such literature.[251] Hunting and military power, built around the specific motif of trampling on "proud necks", occurs, as Goldberg notes, in the writings of Walahfrid Strabo and Hilduin of Saint-Denis, amongst others.[252] The close lexical comparisons between Theodulf of Orleans and the Anglo-Saxon inscription might lead us to posit the hunt as the subtext of the poem's description of Æthelstanian might. In this, therefore, we find a particularly powerful evocation of aristocratic and quasi-imperial power, in which Æthelstan's donation of the book is cast within imagery and ideals derived from Carolingian praise poetry. The king's martial power, as in the Theodulf text, is related to his divinely-granted right to rule, which extends to the frame of this (once) Ottonian manuscript. Granted in the wake of the military victories "totius Bryttannie" in the late 930s, we might also

[248] Dümmler, ed., *Poetae Latini medii aevi Carolini,* vol. 1, 531, l. 6.
[249] Dümmler, ed., *Poetae Latini medii aevi Carolini,* vol. 1, 531, l. 7. For the translation of this passage, and discussion of it in a Carolingian (rather than Anglo-Saxon) context, see Goldberg, "Louis the Pious and the Hunt", 626.
[250] Dümmler, ed., *Poetae Latini medii aevi Carolini,* vol. 1, 531, l. 11-12. See also Goldberg, "Louis the Pious and the Hunt", 626.
[251] Goldberg, "Louis the Pious and the Hunt", 642.
[252] Goldberg, "Louis the Pious and the Hunt", 630; 633.

perhaps cast the Tiberius manuscript as a symbolic spoil of war, which the king deposited to the holy see as a reminder of his power to hunt down his enemies.

Insofar, however, as it is this image of "proud necks" that sets up the inscription's detailed evocation of a viewer "looking into the book" and engaging in a devotional and affective reading of the codex, we might perhaps draw a further, conceptual link between these images. Hunting, flowers and bee-keeping, as we saw in Asser and the Alfredian translations, were closely entwined metaphors for reading and spiritual engagement with books in the period. If Alfred's yearning to chase after books occurred in spite of his military preoccupations, the Æthelstanian inscription subtly enmeshes these ideas, positing book-culture as the triumphant apex of royal achievement in much the same terms as military power. Conquest over enemies becomes part of an associative network in which the king's material refashioning of the volume and his orders about its devotional use are tightly woven together in the assertion of royal control over the space of the book.

Books, Boundaries and Territorial Control

The interwoven ideas about imperial power and military prowess in relation to royal book culture alert us to the political context for Æthelstan's donations. The codex is not only that which reflects the king's piety and his hopes for salvation in the afterlife, but offers a canvas on which, through inscriptions and iconography, the king might portray his power over books. The quasi-imperial invocation of Æthelstan in the frame of his books links his donations, as we have seen, to an ideology of wide-spread power "totius Bryttannie" or "patulo … in orbe". Such geographical and territorial descriptions, which index royal power to spatial and temporal control, also have implications for the Æthelstanian portrayal of the book.

In our earlier discussion of the king's manuscripts, we noted the historically and geographically diverse nature of Æthelstan's gifts. Gospel-books were donated from amongst the king's collections, which ranged across Ottonian, Frankish and Irish books. The archaic and quasi-reliquary nature of Æthelstan's books, we observed, might be read as indicative of the devotional aura attached such manuscripts. At the same time, we might also note the considerable political cache attached to such manuscripts. The king's gifts, though predominantly issued to ecclesiastical institutions, had a prior existence at court, where, like the Tiberius codex, they were displayed after being given to the king by foreign rulers. As Sheila Sharp has noted, the king exchanged books and relics with a considerable range of

Continental kings, often as part of diplomatic exchanges and marriage alliances.[253] On occasion, as Sharp observes, the king could use his tastes for luxury books and holy relics as leverage in his political negotiations, asserting power over coveted possessions in return for political cooperation.[254] Such relics and books, as we have seen, could then be redeployed throughout the kingdom, enabling Æthelstan, in turn, to exert control over his far-flung territories by invoking (through the frame of the book) his recipients' indebtedness to his gifts.

These ideas about the book as signalling boundarial or territorial control have been explicitly discussed in relation to Æthelstan's reign by Catherine E. Karkov. In a close reading of the Corpus manuscript, Karkov has noted how this book does not only encode a devotional portrayal of the king, but represents a compilation of material from across the king's domains.[255] As well as including the Cuthbertian texts, the codex contains a lengthy collection of regnal and episcopal lists. Lists of previous kings linking Æthelstan's rule to a hallowed history of Anglo-Saxon kingship carry an obvious message about royal power and legitimacy. More subtly, as Karkov has argued, one might interpret the episcopal lists, which are organised by see and by kingdom, as reflecting Æthelstanian control over a wide geographical (and ecclesiastical) space.[256] Such a gathering of material reflects the considerable resources of books and records the king kept at court, indicating Æthelstan's power over a vast swathe of historical and geographical knowledge. In so collecting this prodigious list of names, one finds not only a devotional evocation of the *liber vitae,* but an indication of the way Æthelstan attempted to "expand … the map of the England he ruled via texts".[257] Such ideas, as Karkov notes, are reinforced by the encyclopaedic material in the manuscript, which reflects the heightened scholarly milieu at court.[258] These short texts, on abstruse scriptural and monastic themes, indicate royal power over a diversity of learned texts, predicated on the king's ability to summon the most renowned scholars in Europe to the royal court.[259]

Importantly, however, the specific depictions of the book which one finds from within Æthelstan's manuscripts also appear to reflect these themes. The MacDurnan Gospels, as well

[253] Sheila M. Sharp, "England, Europe and the Celtic World: King Athelstan's Foreign Policy", *BJRL* 79, no. 3 (1997): 198-207.
[254] Sharp, "England, Europe and the Celtic World", 98-207.
[255] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 63-72.
[256] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 66-8.
[257] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 68.
[258] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 67-8.
[259] For further discussion of these notes, see Kees Dekker, "Anglo-Saxon Encyclopaedic Notes: Tradition and Function", in *Foundations of Learning: The Transfer of Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. and Kees Dekker (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 279-315.

as citing Mael Brigte's previous ownership of the book, indexes this scholar's use of the book to Æthelstan's new, repurposing of the gift. The inscription, as we saw earlier, explains how the Irish scholar once "istum textum per triquadrum Deo digne dogmatizatast" ("propound[ed] this gospel-book throughout the world, in a manner worthy of God") [**App. §1.7.2/1-2**] but how the Anglo-Saxon ruler now directs the codex to Christ Church. This inscription marshals a powerful image of the king harnessing the global importance of Mael Brigte's book, linking the fame of the scholar to the king's later power to bestow the book to Canterbury. We might note, moreover, how the spatial and geographical might of Mael Brigte is both invoked, and supplanted, by Æthelstan's temporal power to grant the book "per aeuum" ("for ever") [**App. §1.7.2/4**] to his favoured institution. Simon Keynes has noted the phrase "per triquadrum" to be particularly unusual here, drawing on Greek terminology to emphasise the past circulation of the gospel-book.[260] This phrase, which Keynes notes as a prime example of the elaborate, "hermeneutic" style of Latin popular at court, seems designed to place rhetorical stress on the cosmopolitan nature of Æthelstan's books. We might add to these observations by noting the prevalence of this "hermeneutic", Aldhelmian style in contemporary charters, where the king asserted his power over the landscape via the "land-book". In one such diploma from 930, Æthelstan grants land in Gloucester and Worcestershire to a certain abbot Cynath. In the introduction to the charter, royal liberality and munificence ("largiflue liberalitatis munificentia") in issuing the land book is directly linked to the king's power "triquadri orbis" ("throughout the world").[261]

This associative link between the codex book and the land-book in the assertion of cultural and political power is one that we discussed in some depth in relation to Alfredian portrayals. If asserted rather more subtly in Æthelstan's reign, the representation of the book in legal and quasi-administrative "boclic" terms is also, again, important. If we have noted the correspondence between language used for the king's books ("basyleus"; "triquadrum") and that found in his charters ("basileus"; "triquadri"), we might also seek to draw wider correspondences between the manuscript book and the land-book.

Such ideas are drawn out with especial power in the prose inscription to the Tiberius codex, which we noted, above, to be particularly stringent in its commands about the donated gospel-book. Whilst reflecting royal power over the donation, the terminology and language used by the king is distinctly legal in its formulation. The book, as the inscription observes, is

[260] Keynes, "Athelstan's Books", 156-7.
[261] S 404.

that which is to "manens hic maneat" ("remain here in safe custody") [**App. §1.7.1/10**] and provide, "perpetue" ("in perpetuity") [**App. §1.7.1/11**] the community with spiritual succour. In language even more specific about the terms of the gift, the inscription also stipulates that Christ Church is to "custodire studeant" ("take pains to safeguard it") [**App. §1.7.1/7**], "ne quis in aeternum furua fruade deceptus hinc illud arripere conetur" ("anyone, misled by dark deception, should try to steal [the book] from this place") [**App. §1.7.1/8-9**]. Such orders about the ownership of the gift are echoed in the poetic inscription, which also notes that Canterbury must beware "ne quid fraus inimica gerat" ("lest envious deceit perpetrate something [untoward]") [**App. §1.6/18**] against the book. The poem commands, moreover, that "quisquis textum … tollere praesumat finetenus pereat!" ("whosoever dare to take away this book … may he perish utterly!") [**App. §1.6/19-20**].

This use of language from within the frame of the donated volume is heavily reminiscent of the lexis and structure of contemporary charters. Following our discussion of Alfredian charters, we might recall the formulaic nature of these diplomas, which typically proceed by stating the nature of the gift, its location, and a warning, or "anathema" clause regarding the potential subversion of the grant. These ideas are manifestly found, even more literally, in the Æthelstanian inscription. Where Alfred's prefaces made literary allusions to the land-book, with some faint echoes of diplomatic structure, Æthelstan's inscription is directly cast in the form of a charter. The order to "safeguard" the book is directly paralleled in diplomas such as one issued in 925 from the king to one Eadric, in which Æthelstan commands that all should "hoc nostrum decretum custodire" ("guard this our decree").[262] The language of fraud and deception is likewise found in a charter from 933, in which anyone seeking to pervert a grant to Sherborne Minster is rhetorically admonished: "sit autem quod absit aliquis diabolica deceptus fraude …" ("God forbid that a man is so deceived by the fraud of the devil [that he pervert this charter]").[263] The book-inscription in the manuscript is thus itself cast in the form of a book, in this case that politically important "land-book" we noted to be so important earlier in our discussion.

The evocation of the land-book in Æthelstan's book inscriptions is found, more strongly still, in the second, Old English, inscription added to the Otho manuscript. Æthelstan's inscription in this codex, as perhaps befitting a gift to Cuthbert's shrine, goes into especially careful detail about the special nature of his donation. Again, the language and structure used

[262] S 395.
[263] S 422.

is that derived from contemporary land-books. The king first outlines his bestowal of the book, "ic Æthelstan cyning selle þas boc …" ("I Æthelstan give this book …") [**App. §1.7.5.2/1-2**], then details its location in "sco Cudberhte" ("St. Cuthbert's") [**App. §1.7.1.5.2/2**], twice emphasising its new situation in "þisse stowe" ("this place") [**App. §1.7.5.2/4;5**]. In language particularly reminiscent of the royal charter, Æthelstan sets out severe penalties in case the gift is perverted. As in the Tiberius codex, he notes that "hio næfre nan monn of þisse stowe mid nanum facne ne reaflace ne afirre" ("no-one [should] remove it from this foundation by any fraud or robbery") [**App. §1.7.5.2/3-5**]. Even more sternly, however, he orders that if anyone should so do this, "he scyldig wið God 7 wið men 7 dæl neomende Iudases hletes Scariothes" ("he shall incur the wrath both of God and of men, and shall participate in the fate of Judas Iscariot") [**App. §1.7.5.2/7-9**]. This, the inscription goes on to note, will result in eternal damnation, "in ignem aeternum" ("in everlasting fire") [**App. §1.7.5.2/11**] on the Day of Judgement.

Æthelstan's description of the book here, even more so than in the Alfredian prefaces, borrows directly from the language of the land-book. The invocation of Judas, in particular, appears with some regularity in Æthelstanian anathema clauses. In one representative sample from 930, one finds a similarly detailed admonishment to all readers, lest someone "superbe" ("proud") and "inuidia afflatus" ("puffed up with envy") should "compositionis ac confirmationis breuiculam demere aut infringere" ("diminish or weaken the charter and confirmation of the grant").[264] As in the Otho inscription, this individual is to experience the fate of "Iuda proditore" ("Judas the betrayer"), who will "tormentorum flammis periturum" ("perish in flames of torment").[265] With reference to the earlier part of our discussion, we might note here that the problematic Æthelstanian "testamentum" or "karta" also invokes Judas in its textual description of the king's gifts. Echoing the inscription and the charter just cited, this "testamentum" concludes with an injunction that anyone who perverts the gift is to be "dampnetur … cum Iuda traditore … in ignem eternum" ("damned … with the traitor Judas and be thrust 'into everlasting' eternal fire").[266] Turning back to the foregoing description of this "testamentum" we can see just how similar this record appears to the other book-inscriptions employed by the king in his manuscript volumes. This rather bolsters our ideas

[264] S 403.
[265] S 403.
[266] Johnson South, ed., *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto,* 64-5.

about the symbolic representation of the book from within these codices, and the calculated deployment of the "land-book" as a model for the protection of the gifts.

Rather than pointing outwards to another type of gift (the land-grant), we might also observe how these bestowals of books advocate for the disposition of the donation from within the pages of the codex itself. The legal language of the inscriptions, whilst casting the grant of the holy book as the transference of a royal possession, effects a powerful collapsing of boundaries between the documentary "booking" of the gift and the space of the book being granted. The interplay between different "types" of books and their historical and salvific resonances is a theme we noted earlier in relation to the Corpus frontispiece. Here, however, one finds less an emphasis on the sacred interaction between Bedan books, Æthelstanian devotion and "books of life", and more on a distinctly administrative way of denoting the legal possession and transference of a materially and politically important object.

Social Status and Cultural Cache: Controlling the Frame of the Book

We might conclude our discussion of all these themes by returning to some of our previous observations about the portrayal of the book within the book in Æthelstan's corpus. We have noted, thus far, how the devotional and symbolic resonances of the codex in the inscriptions and the Corpus iconography are carefully embedded within ideas about political and military status. This notion of power, in which pious and political themes are enmeshed, illustrates the degree to which the king's codices become the space in and through which an ideology of sacred kingship is established. The juxtaposition and intertwining of these ideas, in which the book is annexed to notions of possession and power, embeds the codex within a potent configuration of royal imagery. At the same time, however, and as is hinted at in the grounding of the Tiberius and Otho donations in the language of the land-book, one finds a yet more reflexive exchange between the royal inscriptions and the donated book, in which the form and function of the book-inscription is closely tied to the materiality of each volume.

In our earlier discussion of these ideas, we noted the material resonance of relics and ritual as they appear in the donation inscriptions and imagery. At the same time, however, such notions of performance and sacred materiality carry a more temporal set of associations. The rich and multifaceted Tiberius poem, once again, might provide us with an appropriate lens through which to view these ideas. This inscription, whilst encoding a devotional portrayal of royal reading and evocations of imperial and military imagery, also yields some broader ideas about the relationship between king and book.

The inscriptional poem, as we have explored in some depth, sets out the king's adornment of the codex as well as his hopes for his readers' devotional engagement with the codex. We might note here, again, how the inscription uses particularly sophisticated poetic language and syntax. Significantly, however, the king's inscription does not only conjure the codex, but (like the quasi-diplomatic inscriptions) positively *orders* a particular viewing of it. The inscription operates through a series of imperatives, urging the user of the manuscript to "look" into the book ("hoc luce uolumen perspiciis") [**App. §1.6/7-8**] and thereby "eximia dogmata sacre lege" ("read its excellent divine doctrines") [**App. §1.6/8**]. It asserts, moreover, that anyone using the codex is to approach the book as themselves a supplicant, "bearing sweet honey" ("dulcia mella gerens") [**App. §1.6/16**]. Only in this way, the verse implies, will anyone thus be able to benefit from the volume's "streams of learning", filled from the "sacred fount" ("diuino fonte") [**App. §1.6/19**].

Using the rhetorical "frame" of the book to describe and depict the codex, Æthelstan deploys his inscription in a markedly prescriptive way. The codex, reshaped and repackaged according to Æthelstan's aesthetic vision for its "golden headings" and "covers adorned with patterned jewels", is here moulded according to the king's highly specific expectations about how a reader will view the manuscript. This interplay between the external and internal description of the manuscript conjures a vision of the codex as that which has been thoroughly scoped out, in advance, by the king for anyone wishing to engage with it. Set into the opening of the codex before the beginning of the gospels, the inscription becomes itself a perceptual frame through which any user of the manuscript understands and experiences the royal book. Using the rhetorical "frame" of the book to describe and depict the codex, Æthelstan deploys the inscription on the material boundaries of the book as a means of controlling his recipients' experience of his donation. The donor and recipient are thus carefully encoded, in "perpetue", in the book itself, asserting, from the borders of the manuscript, a powerful narrative vision of the codex's past and future.

Such ideas about scoping and framing the codex using the book-inscription as a "framing" device might be pushed further with recourse to broader work on the visual in medieval scholarship. Hans Henrik Lohfert Jorgensen, for example, has shown how medieval ritual operated around the careful staging of symbolic activities, whether in the organisation of

holy processions or in the literal space of church architecture.[267] Guiding and shaping sight in relation to the holy formed a key way in which "cultic vision" could be cultivated and staged.[268] At times, as Sarah Stanbury observes, "the gaze, articulated by rich material displays of devotional images ... can emerge as a prize in a contest or a struggle to see",[269] being shaped around "visual privileges" and restrictions consequent on the limits imposed by powerful owners or curators of sacred space or objects.[270] One might detect very similar ideas at work in the Æthelstanian inscription, in which the king both literally frames his books by re-binding them, and prescribes, through his textual "re-framing" of the manuscripts, the limits of an engagement with the book.

As both Jorgansen and Stanbury note, this "cultic vision" is also predicated upon the shaping of desiring subjects, who seek to attain an affective or visual encounter with the divine. We might return here to the potent conclusion of the Tiberius poem, in which such ideas about a desire for holy books are literally encoded. The Aldhelmian image of the "sweet honey", as noted earlier, is one that links the Tiberius poem with the rhetorical portrayal of books at Alfred's court. Contrasting with Alfred's humble transformation into the "busy bee" gathering the honey of holy books into his heart, this metaphor, in Æthelstan's text, is cast as an instruction, commanding those eager to read the book to bring "dulcia mella" as a spiritual offering. This language of desire and exchange is markedly different to that found in the previous reign, evoking not a spontaneous "desiderio" ("longing") for books, but a form of "cupido" ("desire; longing" [or "greed"]) that is carefully cultivated through the poem's luxurious description of the book's golden and bejewelled appearance. Though this desire is largely given a spiritual context, the inscription nevertheless actively seeks to shape the viewer's response to the codex, situating the affective imagery of honey and holy water within a suggestive invocation of a prospective reader's sensual experience of the book ("quisquis amore … hoc luce uolumen perspicis"; "quisquis sitit"). Given the wider historical context of the reign, one gains an impression here of Æthelstan as a bibliographic "taste-maker", one who is both cultivated and who cultivates a desire in others for rare, alluring and precious books.

[267] Hans Henrik Lohfert Jorgensen, "Cultic Vision – Seeing as Ritual: Visual and Liturgical Experience in the Early Christian and Medieval Church", in *The Appearances of Medieval Rituals: The Play of Construction and Modification,* ed. Nils Holger Petersen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 173-97.
[268] Jorgensen, "Cultic Vision", 173-82.
[269] Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 6.
[270] Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire,* 12-14.

Conclusion

The books associated with the reign of Æthelstan, if often discussed by scholars in terms of the king's fondness for gift-giving, emerge, through the corpus of inscriptions and images attached to such codices, as highly powerful, symbolic objects. The king's manuscripts are not only material donations to favoured institutions, but encode, from within, a highly sophisticated portrayal of the book with resonance across several different interpretative levels. Æthelstan's inscriptions and "donation portraits" are not merely records of his munificence, but offer a highly reflexive space in which the book, as a sacred, commemorative and political idea(l), is carefully represented in texts and images. The subtlety of these portrayals, embedded within the frame of the book, can easily be missed as the king's depictions blur the boundaries between text, image and object. One yet finds, throughout these donated books, a nuanced configuration of the codex as it relates to the increasing status of late Anglo-Saxon kingship. These portrayals, drawing on a sophisticated network of bibliographical associations, position the book at the heart of the king's spiritual, dynastic and territorial aspirations.

§5) "Kings and Books" in *Solomon and Saturn I* and *II*

The sophisticated representations of books in the manuscripts linked to the courts of Alfred and Æthelstan indicate a growing reconceptualization of the codex in the ninth and tenth centuries. Books, as we have seen, were invested with moral, material and political significance in both reigns, harnessed both as the medium through which kings could communicate with their subjects and as a conceptual space in which the role of the book itself could be explored. The nature and uses of book culture were accordingly taking on an increasingly topical importance in the period, with implications for discussion and debate beyond the royal court. One context potentially indicative of these broader debates is found in the *Solomon and Saturn* poems, a group of vernacular texts thought to have been composed between the late ninth century and c. 930, though now extant in manuscript copies dating from the early tenth and eleventh centuries.[271] These poems, which offer a sustained meditation on the relationship between kings and books, reflect many of the bibliographic themes associated with Alfredian and Æthelstanian codices. In this, the final section of the chapter, we shall explore the poems' representations of books more closely. We shall do so, in addition, by examining how the

[271] For further discussion of the manuscript context and dating of the poems, see pp. 134-40 below.

poems might be interpreted as self-consciously political, encoding a critical commentary on contemporary developments in elite book-culture.

§5.1) "Eating the Book": Books and Bodies Revisited

Before delving more deeply into a reading of the *Solomon and Saturn* material in its political context, attention must first be given to the complex nature of the poems. This complexity is especially evident in the scholarly discussion surrounding the texts. To a greater degree than perhaps any other grouping of Old English verse, *Solomon and Saturn I* and *II* have been subjected to a very particular set of readings, around which has grown a measure of scholarly consensus about the poems' meaning. This consensus pertains, specifically, to the attitude of the poetic protagonists to books and book-culture. In what follows, we will first recap on this important scholarly work, before advancing some alternative readings of the book and its representation in both poems.

"Saturn Knows the Letter; Solomon the Spirit": The Poems in Scholarly Perspective

By comparison with other surviving Old English poetry, the *Solomon and Saturn* poems have received relatively little attention. Daniel Anlezark's 2009 edition of the poems represents the first modern editorial treatment of the *Solomon and Saturn* material as it appears in its fullest manuscript context.[272] The poems are not concerned with some of the "traditional" themes of vernacular verse, such as heroism or elegiac complaint, but instead present a lengthy discourse between Solomon, the biblical king, and Saturn, a Chaldean prince. This debate, cast by some commentators as a "flyting", presents a series of exchanges between the two protagonists on themes of knowledge, prayer and the value of books. Though the poetic exchanges are often esoteric and present problems of interpretation, most scholars, including Anlezark, view the poems as representing Solomon's Christian instruction of the curious (but often misguided) pagan Saturn.[273]

This understanding of the poems hinges on several key passages, in which books feature heavily in the discourse of both protagonists. At the opening of both *Solomon and Saturn I* and *II,* for instance, we are told how Saturn is himself learned, having explored books from many different lands. This facet of Saturn's learning is drawn out with particular vividness in

[272] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues.* All references to the poems and their translations are taken from this edition. Selected passages have also been presented as **Appendices §1.8.1)-§1.8.7)**, and have been cross-referenced within the discussion.
[273] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 31-9.

Solomon and Saturn II, where sixteen lines are devoted to a description of the varied locations in which the Chaldean has consulted books: "Ind<e>a mere/<E>ast Corsias//Persea rice/Palestinion//Niniuen ceastre/ond Nord Predan …" ("the land of India, the East Cossians, the kingdom of the Persians, Palestine, the city of Ninevah, and the North Parthians …") [**App. §1.8.5/8-10**]. Despite this, however, Saturn remains unsatisfied with his learning, seeking out Solomon to provide him with what he seeks most: an understanding of the "palmtwigoda/Pater Noster" ("the palm-twigged Pater Noster") [**App. §1.8.1/13**].[274] That Saturn has "land eall geondhwearf" ("wandered through all the lands") [**App. §1.8.5/7b**], has been interpreted as a measure of his itinerant quest for far-flung forms of esoteric knowledge. As Kathryn Powell has argued, the eastern locations of Saturn's learning bespeak a pagan interest in books that has yet been found wanting.[275] This must, as Saturn himself notes, be remedied through his petition for Christian book-lore from the wise Solomon.

This view of Saturn's defective, pagan learning is reinforced by the poetic description of Saturn as seemingly hoarding his books from many lands. As the poetic narrator notes, the Chaldean has "boca cæg<a>//<le>ornenga locan" ("the keys of certain books in which learning was locked") [**App. §1.8.5/6b-7a**]. The image of locks and keys carries with it the implication that Saturn does not share or benefit from the rich content of his books, but rather hides them away as precious treasures. Elsewhere in the poems, Saturn betrays a material, monetary view of book-culture, exemplified by the way he implores Solomon to reveal the Pater Noster to him in exchange for earthly wealth. In a passage that reveals the desperate nature of his desire for the Pater Noster, the Chaldean states that, "sille ic þe ealle/sunu Dauides//þeoden I<s>raela/.xxx. punda//smætes goldes/and mine suna twelfe" ("I will give you everything, son of David, prince of Israel, thirty pounds of pure gold and my twelve sons") [**App. §1.8.1/14-16**] in exchange for this prize. Saturn's desire for the book is thus apparently predicated on an acquisitive urge to possess the prayer, which he believes can be readily bought from Solomon if he names a high enough price. For Powell, this underscores the way Saturn shows a

[274] For further discussion of the "palm-twigged" Pater Noster, see Thomas D. Hill, "The 'Palmtwigende' Pater Noster: Horticultural Semantics and the Old English *Solomon and Saturn I*", *MÆ* 74, no. 1 (2005): 1-9. See also, Tiffany Beechy, "The 'Palmtwigende' Pater Noster Revisited: An Associative Network in Old English", *Neophilologus* 99, no. 3 (2015): 301-13.

[275] Kathryn Powell, "Orientalist Fantasy in the Poetic Dialogues of *Solomon and Saturn", ASE* 34 (2005): 130-43. For some further comments on the poems' depictions of eastern traditions, see Daniel Anlezark, "Poisoned Places: The Avernian Tradition in Old English Poetry", *ASE* 36 (2007): 103-26.

"fetishistic" approach to books, seeing them as items to be "possessed and consumed" rather than studied and learned.[276]

A further plank in the argument about Saturn's carnal, materialistic approach to books is found in the contrasting way both protagonists describe books. For Solomon, books are tools for the sapiential ordering of knowledge within the mind, "bec … bodiað geneahhe//weotodne wil<l>an/ðam ðe with hygeð" ("books … abundantly proclaim the ordered mind to the one who thinks at all") [**App. §1.8.6/11-12**]. For Saturn, however, books are powerful, crafty objects, whose wisdom is directly related to an individual's ability to gain access to their "cræft" ("power"). Where Solomon is described, in *Solomon and Saturn II,* as being justly "bremra" ("more famous") [**App. §1.8.5/4b**] than his interlocutor, Saturn is characterised as a "bald breosttoga" ("bold strategist") [**App. §1.8.5/6a**], whose experience with books is rooted in his worldly deployment of his learning. Solomon's spiritual instructions to Saturn, which urge him to appreciate the wisdom and mental succour to be gained from books, are consistently undercut by the Chaldean's literalisation of these internal processes. Responding to Solomon's advice that one should use books to "amyrgað modsefan" ("make merry the mind") [**App. §1.8.6/14a**] against inner despair, Saturn instead describes literal, material disputes using books, "we on geflitum sæton//bocum tobræddon/and on bearm legdon" ("we sat in debate, opened up books and spread them in our laps") [**App. §1.8.7/8b-9**]. These books, the Chaldean notes, seldom facilitate resolution, but rather lead to a material piling up of volumes in worldly debate.

In a crucial series of exchanges, the two directly debate the meaning and power of books, which Solomon declares are valuable for the way they "gestrangað … ond gestaðeliað staðolfæstne geðoht" ("strengthen … and establish resolute thought") [**App. §1.8.6/13**], and which Saturn lauds for the "power" they bring to those "ðe hira geweald hafað" ("who have control of them") [**App. §1.8.6/18b**]. These contrasting positions, in which Solomon stresses the spiritual and mental power of books, and Saturn their worldly importance, underscores the different attitudes of the protagonists towards books.[277] The dialogues, in most scholarly readings, present a clear dialectic between Saturn's defective uses of books and Solomon's bibliographic wisdom. This polarisation of ideas about books might be summarised, using

[276] Powell, "Orientalist Fantasy", 128.
[277] For a further discussion of this in *Solomon and Saturn II,* see Joseph A. Dane, "The Structure of the Old English *Solomon and Saturn II*", *Neophilologus* 64, no. 4 (1980): 592-603.

Karin E. Olsen's pithy phrase, as "Saturn knows the letter, Solomon the spirit".[278] By the end of the dialogues, moreover, we are told that Saturn is finally "forcumen ond forcyðed" ("overcome and rebuked") by Solomon.[279]

Mind, Matter and Materiality: Saturn's "Tasting" of Books

Into the midst of this debate about the contrasting attitudes to books exhibited by the poetic protagonists comes a particularly crucial piece of evidence. On two occasions in the poems, one finds a rather unusual characterization of Saturn's treatment of books. At the opening of *Solomon and Saturn I*, Saturn begins the dialogue with the announcement that he has not only travelled far in search of knowledge, but has "iglanda/eallra hæbbe//boca *onbyrged*" ("*tasted* the books of all the islands") [**App. §1.8.1/2-3a**] (my emphasis). This striking motif appears again in the second poem, where Saturn claims that, "bald bið se ðe onbyregeð/boca cræftes" ("bold is he who tastes the power of books") [**App. §1.8.6/17**]. The verb "(on)byrgan" ("to taste") is the same used in both passages, setting up a particular emphasis on the Saturnian "tasting" of books.[280]

Saturn's "tasting" of books in the first poem occurs as part of a lengthy opening discussion, in which the Chaldean's considerable experience with books is given careful emphasis. Saturn's taste for books of "all the islands" is reinforced by his appetite for "larcræftas … Libia and Greca" ("the sciences of Libya and Greece") [**App. §1.8.1/4**] and "istoriam Indea rices" ("the history of the empire of the Indians") [**App. §1.8.1/5**]. As we saw in the last section, scholars have seized on the idea that, for all this reading matter, Saturn presents himself as still lacking learning, "ic sohte þa git … se palmtwigoda Pater Noster" ("I still sought … the palm-twigged Pater Noster") [**App. §1.8.1/10b-13**]. As a wandering dilettante who has only "consumed" books, Saturn is forced to approach Solomon for spiritual instruction in Christian prayer. These ideas are reinforced in the second poem, when Saturn's endorsement of "tasting" "boca cræftes" ("the craft of books") [**App. §1.8.6/17b**] is immediately modified by Solomon, who emphasizes instead the way holy books offer "hælo hyðe" ("a safe harbour") [**App. §1.8.6/21a**] for those who love them.

[278] Karin E. Olsen, "Shining Words and Heavenly Walls: In Search of Wisdom in *Solomon and Saturn II*", in *Calliope's Classroom: Studies in Didactic Poetry,* ed. Annette Harder, Alasdair A. Macdonald and Gerrit J. Reinink (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 211.
[279] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 78-9.
[280] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "byrgan".

The repeated poetic emphasis on Saturn's appetition for books has added weight to scholarly interpretations of the polarized nature of the protagonists' debate. Jonathan Wilcox, in an influential article about this trope, argues that Saturn's "tasting" of books decisively demonstrates his superficial understanding of book-culture.[281] Saturn's mastication of books, in Wilcox's reading, represents a fruitless "eating" or consumption of bibliographic matter akin to destruction.[282] This, moreover, may be compared to the destructive swallowing of books perpetrated by the Anglo-Saxon "book-moth" in Riddle 47. In that riddle, famously, "moððe word fræt" ("the moth ate words") and so was "ne … wihte þy gleawra, þe he þam wordum swealg" ("no wit the wiser though he swallowed words").[283] In much the same way, Saturn "eats" books, situating all his responses to Solomon within a material and corporeal understanding of book-culture. Solomon, as Wilcox argues, must therefore provide a corrective to Saturn's carnal focus, urging him instead towards a more sapiential and spiritual interpretation of books.[284]

Though scholarly characterisation of Saturn has hinged upon this trope, we might yet see this "eating" of books as providing the key to a rather different interpretation. We might note, *contra* the arguments above, that Saturn does not in fact "eat" ("fræt") or "swallow" ("swealg") words in the same way as the book-moth, but rather "tastes" them. The specific verb "onbyrgan" ("to taste") is not that used in the riddle tradition, but occurs, in rather different circumstances, elsewhere in the Old English corpus. In a homily for Monday in Rogationtide in the Vercelli Homilies, for example, one finds the term used to denote not literal consumption, but rather a more spiritual "tasting" of scripture: "we magon getreowlice onbyrgean þa swetnesse þæs gastlican huniges of ðam godcundum rædingum" ("we may truly taste the sweetness of spiritual honey from divine readings").[285] In another instance, one finds the term being used to gloss the Latin "gustate" in an Old English translation of the Psalms: "onbyrgað 7 geseoð forðam ðe winsum is driht[en] eadwig wer se ðe hopað on hine" ("[O] taste and see that the Lord is sweet; blessed is the man who hopes in him").[286] In both these instances, a

[281] Jonathan Wilcox, "Eating Books: The Consumption of Learning in the Old English Poetic *Solomon and Saturn*", *ANQ* 4, no. 3 (1991): 115-8.
[282] Wilcox, "Eating Books", 117.
[283] Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology*, 323. For a further discussion of the motif of "eating" books in this Riddle, see Wilcox, "Eating Books", 116-7 and Scattergood, "Eating the Book", 121-3.
[284] Wilcox, "Eating Books", 115.
[285] Donald Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts,* EETS o.s. 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 319.
[286] Andrew C. Kimmens, ed., *The Stowe Psalter* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1979), 59.

spiritual engagement with holy books is foregrounded, predicated on "onbyrgan" as a quasi-metaphorical term laden with affective, devotional meaning.[287]

Reanalysis of the two instances in which Saturn "tastes" books in the *Solomon and Saturn* poems might give us further pause for thought. Though, in the first poem, the Chaldean is said to have "tasted" a wide selection of eastern (and therefore non-Christian) books, he is also said to have received instruction "on þam micelan bec" ("in the great book") [**App. §1.8.1/7a**], a reference which most editors of the poem interpret to mean "the Bible".[288] If lacking the Pater Noster, Saturn betrays an awareness that this not just another volume to be "eaten", but one with a particular spiritual importance: "wære modes/oððe mægenþrymmes//elnes" ("[it is] that [which] would be [good] for the mind or virtue, or courage") [**App. §1.8.1/11-12a**]. So too, in the second passage, Saturn acknowledges that "se ðe onbyregeð/boca cræftes" ("he who tastes the power of books") [**App. §1.8.6/17**] is not only materially wealthy, but "symle bið se wisra" ("will always be the wiser") [**App. §1.8.6/18a**]. Insofar as this wisdom is poetically paralleled with the term "geweald" ("power") [**App. §1.8.6/18b**], we might note here an echo of vocabulary for wisely-administered power found throughout King Alfred's corpus of texts.[289] If we see in the portrayal of "tasting" an affective engagement with books like Alfred's apian "cramming of cells" in the *Life,* we might be justified in positing an alternative explanation for Saturn's behaviour in *Solomon and Saturn*. Saturn's purported carnality in his approach to books seems accordingly rather more complex than previous analysis would suggest.

"Burning" after Books: Mental and Affective States in Book-Learning

The more nuanced portrayal of Saturnian book-learning suggested by the "onbyrgan" motif mitigates for a careful re-reading of books as they are portrayed in relation to both protagonists in the poems. If Saturn cannot simply be dismissed as a destroyer or "fetishist" of books, one might productively seek to evaluate how, more precisely, the poems portray books and their role in the debate. One further, if neglected, aspect of the text relevant here is the relationship between books, learning and intellectual or emotive experience. This theme, familiar from our

[287] Subsequent to my analysis, Tiffany Beechy has advanced some similar conclusions in her reading of *Solomon and Saturn.* For these, see Beechy, "Wisdom and the Poetics of Laughter in the Old English Dialogues of *Solomon and Saturn*", *JEGP* 116, no. 2 (2017): 139-40; 144-5.
[288] Patrick P. O'Neill, "On the Date, Provenance and Relationship of the 'Solomon and Saturn' Dialogues", *ASE* 26 (1997): 166-8.
[289] The term "geweald" occurs throughout the *Pastoral Care* and the Old English *Boethius,* and on two occasions in the *Soliloquies.* See, for instance, Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 37, l. 5; 215, l. 13; 355, l. 19; Godden and Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius,* 267, ll. 12-3, and Carnicelli, ed., *Soliloquies,* 83, l. 20.

discussion of Alfredian book-culture, enables us to draw out a further layer of lexical and thematic subtlety in the poems' portrayal of books.

One facet of this in the poems relates to the way both protagonists are said to experience books. In *Solomon and Saturn I,* Saturn exhibits curiosity and desire for books, a state of longing portrayed using powerful, sensory language. The Chaldean observes how he has been "bisi æfter bocum" ("busy in pursuit of books") [**App. §1.8.2/24a**], a quest which has not only been literal, but mental and emotional. He notes, in particular, how his interest in books has entailed an intense physiological response: "nænig monna wat … hu min hige dreogeð … hwylum me bryne stigeð//hige heortan <neah> hearde wealleð" ("no man knows … how my spirit strives … at times a burning rises in me, the spirit near the heart surges severely") [**App. §1.8.2/22b-25**]. Saturn's emotional investment in his learning is portrayed here as both a corporeal and mental process, involving an urgency of spirit and a "bryne" ("burning") sensation, epitomized in the image of blood surging "heortan <neah>". Though Anlezark translates "hige" consistently as "spirit", the *DOE* shows how the term maps onto several different terms for inner experience, including "mind"; "heart" and "soul".[290] Tropes of burning and internal sensation recall, as we explored earlier, the Anglo-Saxon "cardiocentric" model of the mind outlined by Leslie Lockett and others, in which mental and affective states are understood to be inseparably linked.[291] What the poem appears to be describing here is thus an "embodied" encounter with books, predicated on an affective interplay between mental and physical experience.

That Saturn's longing for books is not merely a carnal appetition for "letter" over "spirit" is indicated in the occurrence of similar terms in Solomon's description of the Pater Noster. This prayer, which Solomon describes as "ofer ealle Cristes bec" ("above all Christ's books") [**App. §1.8.2/12b**], is figured in the poem as a personified collection of letters, marshalled to do battle against the devil. We shall explore this trope in more detail later on. For now, however, we might observe how Solomon describes the prayer-book as inflaming the devil's blood, "þæt him dropan stigað" ("so that in him the drops climb") [**App. §1.8.2/7b**], such that, "ofer gleda gripe gifrust weallað" ("it seethes most greedily over the grip of flames") [**App. §1.8.2/11**]. This heating and surging is attributed not to diabolical hell-fire, but to the powerful way in which the canticle "gewritu læreð//stefnum stereð" ("teaches scripture, guides

[290] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "hyge".
[291] Lockett, "Embodiment, Metaphor and the Mind", 43-59; Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies,* 54-109. For further comments on the "hydraulic" model of emotion in this passage, see also Beechy, "Wisdom and the Poetics of Laughter", 148-9.

through voices") [**App. §1.8.2/13b-14a**]. Making use of the same verbs attributed to Saturn's affective eagerness for books ("stigað"; "weallað"), this episode underscores the spiritual and devotional power of the codex.

As the foregoing citations suggest, both protagonists betray an awareness of the affective power of books to alter mental, emotional and spiritual states. Elsewhere in the poems, when Solomon notes how "bec … gestrangað hie ond gestaðeliað/staðolfæstne geðoht//amyrgað modsefan/manna gehwylces of ðreamedlan ðisses lifes" ("books … strengthen and establish resolute thought, make merry the mind of each man against the mental oppressions of this life") [**App. §1.8.6/11-15**], one finds not a rebuke to Saturn, but rather a set of ideas which align with his own. The term "ðreamedlan" ("mental oppressions"),[292] used by Solomon is invoked by Saturn himself several lines later. Recalling how he used to debate with the Philistines, "ðonne we on geflitum sæton//bocum tobræddon/ond on bearm legdon" ("when we sat in debate, we opened up books and spread them in our laps") [**App. §1.8.7/8b-9**], it is precisely the "ðreamedlan" caused by "wyrd ðe warnung" ("fate or foresight") [**App. §1.8.7/5a**] that the debaters hope to solve using their books. The poetic portrayal of books offered here is one which contains similarities, rather than differences, between the two protagonists. These rely, moreover, on a model of affective engagement with the codex that sees both of the protagonists evoke the material and "embodied" role of books in producing mental and spiritual effects.[293]

§5.2) "*Bealwe Bocstafas*": Ambivalence and Ambiguity in Books

The complex portrayal of books and their relationship to mind and body in this revised reading of *Solomon and Saturn* offers us a richer understanding of the role of the book in the poems. Saturnian "consumption" or "fetishism" is belied by the poetic portrayal of the affective and devotional resonances of this embodied engagement with books, an engagement which has strong precedent elsewhere in contemporary literature. Notwithstanding this, as we saw earlier, the poems do seem to indicate a sense of anxiety, even negativity, about the modes of book-learning they describe. Scholarly focus on the putative opposition between Solomon and Saturn might here be turned on its head by positing that what is at stake in the dialogues is not a polarisation of the protagonists themselves but rather a more wide-spread anxiety about books

[292] For a further discussion of "ðreamedlan" in *Solomon and Saturn II,* see Antonina Harbus, "The Situation of Wisdom in *Solomon and Saturn II*", *Studia Neophilologica* 75, no. 2 (2003): 99.
[293] For Saturn's laughter as a further indication of the cardiocentric or hydraulic model in the poems, see Beechy, "Wisdom and the Poetics of Laughter", 148-9.

and book-learning. This, as we shall see, involves closer scrutiny of the similarities, rather than differences, in Solomonic and Saturnian discourse, and, indeed, of the wider ambivalences in the poems' representation of books.

Shapeshifting Letters and Harmful *Bocstafas*

A first step in appreciating the subtleties of the poems' portrayal of books may be taken through a re-evaluation of one of the most striking, and unusual, parts of the poem. *Solomon and Saturn I,* as we have seen, shows Saturn eagerly searching for the Pater Noster, a prayer which he believes will bring him wisdom and mental courage. Solomon readily encourages the Chaldean in this view, elaborating the spiritual power of the prayer throughout the first poem. This discussion builds up to a lengthy rhetorical climax, in which Solomon offers an allegorical reading of the Pater Noster. This allegory casts the individual letters of the prayer as a string of personified warriors or alphabetic characters doing battle against the devil.

If sometimes overshadowed by the lively exchanges about books elsewhere in the poems, the Pater Noster sequence is yet crucial in establishing a framework for the poetic concept of the book. As we saw earlier in the discussion, Solomon himself casts this "prayer" not merely as an oration, but as having "ofer ealle Cristes bec//widmærost word" ("the most widely famed words, above all Christ's books") [**App. §1.8.2/12b-13a**]. These "famed words" are depicted as powerful warriors, fiercely doing battle against the devil: "T. hine teswað and hine on ða tungan sticað … and him ða wongan brieceð" ("T. injures him, and stabs him in the tongue ... and shatters his jaws") [**App. §1.8.3/1-2**]. That these personified letters are imagined as material, written words is indicated, furthermore, by the poems' description of these as "bocstafas" (lit. "book-staves"; "book-letters") [**App. §1.8.3/6a; App. §1.8.4/2a**], a term used not merely to refer to alphabetic characters in general, but to script in a manuscript book. This battle of letters, as Peter Dendle has argued, might therefore be understood as occurring in an "abstract orthographic space", best conceptualised here, we might suggest, as a book.[294]

The battle of the book-letters in Solomon's account has been understood as a means through which Saturn is educated in the allegorical, spiritual power of prayer. Dendle and others have noted the similarities of apotropaic characters in the poems with those in Prudentius' *Psychomachia,* suggesting that Solomon draws on an established Christian tradition of allegory to frame his discourse with Saturn.[295] Given the vivid, material

[294] Peter Dendle, "The Demonological Landscape of the 'Solomon and Saturn' Cycle", *ES* 80, no. 4 (1999): 285.
[295] Dendle, "Demonological Landscape", 281-5. See also Powell, "Orientalist Fantasy", 141-2.

descriptions of the way these letters do battle, we might add that Solomon's descriptions here firmly place him in the same "embodied" tradition of mental and emotional engagement with books as his interlocutor. This is indicated in several passages of the "battle", in which the devil, scarred and wounded by letters such as "R", "bocstafa brego" ("prince of all book-staves") [**App. §1.8.3/6a**], experiences "æt heartan wa, ðonne <he> hangiende helle wisceð" ("woe in his heart, when he, hanging [apart], longs for hell").[296] The materiality of books and book-staves, though cast in metaphorical form, is a key part of Solomon's portrayal of "spiritual" reading.[297] Insofar as medieval scribes were sometimes described as "soldiers" capable of defeating the devil through their dissemination of holy text, we might also find in Solomon's allegory a literal, material set of ideas about textual transmission.[298]

At the same time, however, the Pater Noster sequence is a deeply ambiguous one. After many lines of poetry describing how the devil has been pierced and routed by the book-letters, Solomon turns to acclaiming how the Pater Noster puts "ealra feonda … fleodne" ("all demons to flight"), however crafty they may be. Paradoxically, this leads him to a lengthy description of the powers of these demons, noting how they "stingeð nieten" ("seize cattle"); hide "in wyrmes lic" ("in the body of a serpent"), and "gefeterað/fæges mannes" ("fetter an ill-fated man").[299] Even more worryingly, these multiple demons are said to be able to shape-shift just like the book-staves of the holy prayer. An unfortunate warrior might accordingly find "awriteð … on his wæpne/wællnota heap//bealwe bocstafas" ("a horde of deadly runes, baleful book-staves written on his weapon") [**App. §1.8.4/1-2a**].[300]

Solomon's personification of the letters of the *Pater Noster,* which emerge as reified agents capable of conquering the shape-shifting ambiguities and changing forms, "bleoum bregdað" ("changing colour"), of devilish discourse, is somewhat undermined through juxtaposition with the devil's own ability to fashion misleading writing.[301] This leads to some heavily ironic echoes between the Solomonic conceit of anthropomorphised letters such as the

[296] Anlezark, "Old English Dialogues", 68, ll. 104b-105.
[297] For discussion of the medieval attitude to the materiality of alphabetic forms, see Matthew Boyd Goldie, "Neurobiological Alphabets: Language Origins and the Problem of Universals", *Postmedieval* 3, no. 3 (2012): 277-80.
[298] For further discussion of these tropes in the medieval period, see Carruthers, "Reading with Attitude", 6-7. See also Frederick B. Jonassen, "The Pater Noster Letters in the Poetic *Solomon and Saturn*", *MLR* 83, no. 1 (1988): 1-9.
[299] Anlezark, "Old English Dialogues", 70, l. 152b-158.
[300] For a discussion of this episode as reflecting a "counterspell" against Solomon's quasi-magical Pater Noster, see Marie Nelson, "King Solomon's Magic: The Power of a Written Text", *Oral Tradition* 5, no. 1 (1990): 31-3.
[301] The relationship between letters and Old English descriptions of "devil-like" *bocstafas* has also been discussed elsewhere. See, for instance, Patrick J. Murphy, "'Bocstafas': A Literal Reading of Exeter Book Riddle 57", *PQ* 84, no. 2 (2005): 151.

"bocstafa brego", ("prince of letters") and the "bealwe bocstafas" ("harmful letters")] shaped by the fiend. Constant repetition of the key verb "bregdað" ("to change appearance; weave [language]; move to and fro") between each set of descriptions casts Solomon's ultimate solution to the problem, the need to be wary of misleading forms, "ðeah ðe him se wlite cweme" ("though their appearance is pleasing to him") [**App. §1.8.4/5b**] in a rather ambiguous light. This is rendered all the more ambivalent in light of Saturn's statement, at the very beginning of *Solomon and Saturn I*, that his problems with book-learning have begun during his encounter with "gebregdstafas" [**App. §1.8.1/3b**], letters (or language) found in books which can change or shift their meaning.[302]

Books, Fame and Power

To finalize our comments about this rich representation of book-culture in the *Solomon and Saturn* material, we might return to one key theme of the texts which has formed a particularly strong plank of the scholarly argument about Saturnian carnality and Solomonic wisdom. This pertains to the portrayal of books in relation to worldly fame and "geweald" ("power"), attributes more usually related to Saturn's approach to learning. It is perhaps surprising, then, to observe that all invocations of "brem" ("fame") in the poem occur in connection with Solomon, from his description of books as famous, "bec sindon breme" ("books are famous") [**App. §1.8.6/11a**], to the poetic narrator's characterization of Solomon himself as "bremra" ("more famous") than Saturn. In the midst of Solomon's description of the efficacy of the Pater Noster, moreover, he observes, as we saw earlier, that "hafað se cantic … widmærost word" ("the canticle has the most widely famed words"). These invocations of "fame", as the *DOE* indicates, carry with them the sense of worldly fame or renown, particularly in relation to a heroic individual, king or nation.[303] This notion of earthly fame is linked, in the Pater Noster battle, to the idea that each letter is a personified "warrior" or "prince", a material presence invested with anthropomorphic power over the devil.

As we saw in our reading of the heroic "bocstafas" in the Pater Noster sequence, however, these "book-letters" are bound up with rather more ambiguous portrayals of the way meaning can be manipulated. Solomon devotes some fifty lines of poetry to a description of the book-staves as all-powerful warriors invested with quasi-independent force against the

[302] For further discussion of this *hapax legomenon,* see E.J. Christie, "By Means of a Secret Alphabet: Dangerous Letters and the Semantics of *Gebregdstafas* (*Solomon and Saturn I, line 2b*", *MP* 109, no. 2 (2011): 145-170.
[303] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "brēme".

fiend. This trust, however, is undermined by the way "bealwe bocstafas" can do harm, and, as we have seen, how the devil himself, rather than the "book-staves", acts to shape and twist meaning. The hypostatising thrust of Solomon's descriptions of books thus appears to be undercut from within his own discourse. In giving agency to all letters, especially the "bocstafa brego" ("prince of letters"), Solomon must yet concede that it is other, non-allegorical, actors who wield power over signification. Solomon's reification of books, together with his repeated lauding of their "fame", effects a collapse between subject and object more dangerous than helpful in his "instruction" of Saturn.

If Solomon recognises the ambiguous power of language, his failure to state explicitly that books and "bocstafas" are not independent agents leads him into constant intellectual conflict with Saturn, who recognises that books and other types of written communication only gain meaning through their manipulation by human, divine, or devilish, representatives. If Saturn has been castigated by scholars for his material, worldly understanding of books, these elements of his discourse are in some instances useful to him. Where Solomon the "bremra" imputes "brem" to books, Saturn understands that outside agents, rather than books themselves, shape the discourse surrounding the codex. Described as a "bald breosttoga", Saturn, like Solomon, invokes his personal characteristics in his description of books: "bald bið se ðe onbyregeð/boca cræftes". Here, however, the sense is that the individual *makes himself* bold through his encounters with books, rather than books themselves being "bald". This difference of perspective, sustained throughout each dialogue, gets to the core of what is at stake in the poems. It flags up, moreover, the finely balanced nature of the debate, in which the material and spiritual aspects of book-culture are held in counterbalance with wealth and worldly debate. Grounded in the inconclusive battle of the "book-staves" and Saturn's endless debates about books, the poems reflect a rather equivocal set of ideas about the meaning and value of book-culture.

§5.3) The Books of *Solomon and Saturn* in Political Context

The portrayal of books in the *Solomon and Saturn* material offers a complex portrait of the material and spiritual resonances of the codex, as well as casting light on the ambiguities and limitations of books. Some elements of the poem, as we have seen, touch on themes familiar from our readings of royal representations of books earlier in the chapter. The historical context of the poems has, perhaps unsurprisingly, attracted considerable scholarly interest, and has led to broad agreement that *Solomon and Saturn* was composed either in or between the reigns of

Alfred and Æthelstan. This composition context, as we shall explore in this section, may yet be interpreted as directly relevant to the poetic portrayal of books. Insofar as the poems encode a careful focus on the relationship between kings and books, one might even draw out an element of political commentary in the way the dialogues frame the meaning and uses of book-culture.

The Date and Origin of the Poems

As we noted a little earlier in the discussion, *Solomon and Saturn* have been dated to between the late ninth and early tenth centuries. A more specific date of composition is precluded by the limited nature of the manuscript evidence, which represents two separate, later phases of copying. The earlier of the manuscripts (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422) dates from the early tenth century, and contains a now jumbled assortment of material relating to the *Solomon and Saturn* tradition. A later copy of *Solomon and Saturn I*, now in an early eleventh-century manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41), contains only the first 95 lines of this poem, and indicates a textual recension distinct from that in CCCC 422.

For the majority of scholars, the nature of the evidence points to a late ninth-century origin for the poems. Patrick P. O'Neill notes the preponderance of West-Saxon linguistic forms in these manuscript copies, and the presence of some themes and motifs which compare to those found in the Alfredian tradition.[304] O'Neill has also drawn attention to the likely importation of the Pater Noster (which, as we have seen, forms a key element of the poem), as a sung devotion into England during the late ninth century.[305] Kathryn Powell reaches similar conclusions about the place and time of the poems' origins, stating, in addition, that there are distinct parallels between the ninth-century decline in learning described by Alfred in his preface to the *Pastoral Care* and Saturn's "inability to use his knowledge productively in a social context".[306] Several further parallels have been drawn by commentators between the *Solomon and Saturn* dialogues and King Alfred's preference for the dialogic form.[307] Further, we may observe Alfred's particular interest in "Salomonnes bocum" and the famed wisdom of this biblical king, a circumstance which might lend an especial significance to the appearance of "Solomon" as a protagonist in the poetic tradition.[308]

[304] O'Neill, "Date, Provenance and Relationship", 152-7.
[305] O'Neill, "Date, Provenance and Relationship", 158-64.
[306] Powell, "Orientalist Fantasy", 128.
[307] O'Neill, "Date, Provenance and Relationship", 154. See also Heidi Estes, "Constructing the Old English *Solomon and Saturn* Dialogues", *ES* 95, no. 5 (2014): 483-99.
[308] For an alternative view, see Pratt, *Political Thought,* 158.

Despite this broad consensus, more recent scholarship has advanced another perspective. In Daniel Anlezark's scholarly edition of the poems, one finds a persuasive argument for a later dating. Anlezark draws attention to some unusual vocabulary in *Solomon and Saturn I's* Pater Noster sequence, including the use of the term "prologa" to describe one of the personified letters of the prayer.[309] This, he notes, reflects an interest in Greek vocabulary of the kind current during the proto-Reform period of the early tenth century.[310] Insofar as the texts betray a fascination with languages and alphabets, most notably the runic Pater Noster, one might also see the poems as reflecting scholarly interests in vogue at Æthelstan's court.[311] These, as we saw earlier, and as Anlezark notes, included acrostic poetry, riddles and allegorical texts such as Prudentius's *Psychomachia*.[312] Connections between the Pater Noster sequence and the Irish *lorica* tradition have been used by several scholars to argue for a place of composition in the south-west of England, perhaps at Glastonbury, where St. Dunstan and Æthelwold encouraged the study of both Insular and Carolingian texts.[313] Anlezark even posits Dunstan himself as the author of the *Solomon and Saturn* material.[314] This would mitigate for a *terminus ad quem* for the poems' composition in c. 930, when the "proto-Reform" school at Glastonbury was at its height.[315]

The Poetic Portrait of Kings and Books

The poems' historical and linguistic relationship to late ninth and early tenth-century contexts links, as the foregoing overview of the evidence suggests, to literary trends associated with both King Alfred and Æthelstan. Though it is not possible to localise the poems at either royal court, scholarly discussion has consistently mitigated for an elite, possibly royal, milieu for the poems' composition. As we shall see in the following discussion, close parallels in the ways both Solomon and Saturn engage with books might be drawn with both of the major royal figures from the period. These parallels suggest that the developments in book-culture at court were being carefully scrutinised by contemporaries, positing the poems as a useful context for understanding royal books in an age when this relationship was becoming ever more important.

[309] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 50-1.
[310] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 51.
[311] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 51-2.
[312] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 51-2.
[313] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 54-6.
[314] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 52-4.
[315] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 54.

At the heart of the *Solomon and Saturn* debates, as we have seen, is a set of portrayals of kings with their books. Solomon the "wise" is also "þeoden I<s>raela" ("prince" [or "king"] of Israel" [**App. §1.8.1/15a**], and conducts the debate with Saturn the Chaldean, who is described as "Caldea eorl", a foreign "earl" or prince. The passages we have explored in the foregoing sections of the discussion have shown the particular emphasis the poems give to these portrayals of royal book-culture. If, contrary to some scholarly discussions, we have found the debate between these kings to be not entirely oppositional, the texts offer a rich and complex portrait of the relationship between kings and books, covering themes of seeking and amassing books; gathering scholars for learned debate, and, in a set of tropes particularly significant given our previous readings of Alfredian and Æthelstanian books, the bibliographic relationship between mind and matter.

If scholars have adduced general parallels between the structure and language of the dialogues and texts composed in the ninth and tenth centuries, we might yet posit more thematic similarities in the portrayal of kings and books. The "embodied" imagery of tasting and yearning for books we noted earlier seems reminiscent of Alfredian literature, particularly in Asser's biography of the king. Just as Saturn describes how his burning curiosity for books surges up within his heart, "me bryne stigeð … hige heortan … hearde wealleð" [**App. §1.8.2/24b-25**], so too does Asser recount how Alfred's desire for learning caused him "crebris querelis et intimis cordis sui suspiriis" ("many lamentations and sighs from the inmost depths of his heart") [**App. §1.5.1/26-7**]. Just as Saturn laments that his attempts to penetrate the mysteries of diverse books have left him ignorant about the truth collected in those ancient writings, so too does Asser evoke Alfred's painful lack of books and teaching, "nullam aliam intrinsecus et extrinsecus perturbationem pateretur …eo quod Deus Omnipotens eum expertem diviniae sapientiae … fecisset" ("[Alfred] suffered no greater distress inwardly and outwardly … [than that he did] because Almighty God had created him lacking in divine learning") [**App. §1.5.2/21-5**].

Similarly, we might draw parallels between King Æthelstan's interest in books and the representation of royal books in the *Solomon and Saturn* material. Saturn, as we have seen, goes in quest of books from many different lands, seeking "Creca cræftas" ("the skills of the Greeks") [**App. §1.8.5/17a**] and material from "Cristes <eðel>//Hieryhco, Galilea/Hierusa<lem>" ("Christ's homeland – Jericho, Galilee, Jerusalem" [**App. §1.8.5/22b-23**]. Greek books and the study of "hermeneutic" neologisms, were, as we discussed earlier, a key feature of the Æthelstanian court, which took delight in alphabetic play and word-games

such as that exhibited by the Pater Noster "bocstafas". Further, one might follow Anlezark in noting the poems' repeated invocations of Jerusalem, a holy place which Æthelstan sought to align himself with through the acquisition of (putative) relics from this location.[316] A particularly abstruse passage in *Solomon and Saturn,* in which Saturn describes a book as that which can "uppe bringan//ðæt ðe ðære gyldnan gesiehst/Hierusalem weallas blican" ("carry you up, so that there you will see the golden walls of Jerusalem gleaming") [**App. §1.8.6/6b-8a**], might be read as particularly significant in this context. Images of "tasting" or deriving sweetness from books, as in Alfred, also occur, as we saw earlier, in Æthelstanian inscriptions, such as the evocative "Rex pius Æðelstan" poem in Cotton Tiberius A.ii.

These parallels, though subtle and allusive rather than overt, nevertheless correspond with many of the key ideas and influences known to have been circulating at the courts of both rulers. Solomonic discourse and "yearning" after books familiar from Alfredian literature is found in the portraits of both poetic protagonists in the poems. So too might ideas about "fame" and multicultural scholarship find echo in Æthelstanian book-culture. If not directly linked to either royal court, the poems appear to be at least familiar with the trends and developments linked to both Alfred and Æthelstan's self-presentation as learned kings.

Critical Commentary and Satire in the Portrait of Royal Books

At times, however, and as the foregoing discussion has shown, the portrayal of kings and books in the poems is rendered in distinctly ambiguous terms. Following the alternative reading of the poems advanced above, it would seem that neither of the poetic protagonists wins in their putative battle. If one might wish to see Solomon as the arbiter of Christian wisdom and spirituality, the pagan Saturn, with his books of esoteric learning, is also revealed to be a learned and sensitive seeker of books. Somewhat unusually, given Saturn's poor reputation amongst modern scholars, one can draw perhaps more overt textual parallels between his pursuit of books and that of Alfred than between Alfred and the poetic Solomon. Kings and books, as a theme in the poems, is one hedged round with multiple framing perspectives and counterbalances rather than straightforward winners and losers.

On occasion, moreover, the portrayal of kings and books is shown in rather sharper perspective. Solomon, as we have seen, loudly praises the "fame" of books, whilst being somewhat blind to the way the codex is not a reified "hero", but is rather controlled by those who make and use books, whether for good or ill. If the picture of Saturn's carnality is lessened

[316] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 55-6.

through a reappraisal of the poems, one might yet note a touch of ambivalence in the depictions of his rapacious attitude to the Pater Noster, and in his endless wandering in quest of books. Solomon's pride in the fame of books might at times be read as boastfulness, as the "fame" of books is indexed directly to his status as the "bremra" ("more famous"). Likewise, the sixteen-line itinerary of the locations to which Saturn has journeyed in pursuit of book-lore, whilst perhaps impressive in an Anglo-Saxon royal context, is somewhat undercut by the way he is said, earlier in the poems, to still remain lacking in a form of wisdom much closer to (a Christian) home. The rather hyperbolic portraits of kings and books which these descriptions encode might point us to a rather more pointed, satirical reading of the poems.

Such is suggested, albeit in a small way, by the fragmentary conclusion to the poems, in which Saturn is said to have been defeated, and "hwæðre … on sælum/se ðe of siðe cwom//feorran gefered/næfre ær his ferhð ahlog" ("nevertheless was joyful, he who had come on that journey, travelling from afar – never before had his very soul laughed").[317] The picture of defeat after a long and arduous journey adds a further note of ambiguity to Saturn's seeking after books, especially if it is read in a quasi-Alfredian or Æthelstanian context. Tiffany Beechy has argued that Saturn's joyful laughter at the end of the poem might reflect a "hydraulic" release of mental tension such as is found elsewhere in the vernacular tradition of "embodied" imagery.[318] We might also observe, however, how the root verb "(a)hlyhhan", though sometimes used to describe genuine joy and mirth, is glossed by the *DOE* as also meaning "[to] deride, mock",[319] and can be found in contexts, such as Alfred's translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care,* where contempt or scorn is indicated.[320] Coming at the conclusion to the poem, this laughter appears to extend to the poetic conceit as a whole, framing the (sometimes chaotic) debate between Solomon and Saturn as a rather fruitless, vain exercise in bibliographic disputation. Towards the conclusion to the poem within which this laughter is set, we may note how Saturn's incessant questioning of Solomon sometimes descends into an exchange of ever-more impenetrable maxims and folkloric tales. The reduction of philosophical debate to a

[317] Anlezark, ed., *Old English Dialogues,* 78-9. For a discussion of this fragment, see Daniel Anlezark, "The Stray Ending in the Solomonic Anthology in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422", *MÆ* 80, no. 2 (2011): 201-16.
[318] Beechy, "Wisdom and the Poetics of Laughter", 148-9.
[319] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al., DOE,* "hlyhhan".
[320] Sweet, ed., *Pastoral Care,* 231, l. 7: "We hliehað gligmonna unnyttes cræftes" ("we laugh at the useless art of conjurors".

flyting of old saws might be regarded as a somewhat risible aping of the Alfredian dialogue form, transforming abstruse scholarly debate into a simplistic trading of mottos.

To conclude these suggestions, we might turn back to the material context of the poems in their manuscript transmission. These manuscripts, though not contemporaneous with the composition of the dialogues, are yet at times intriguing. The later of the copies, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41, includes, as noted above, a portion of *Solomon and Saturn I.* It presents this text, however, in a strikingly unusual way, offering it not as a main text, but as a gloss written into the margins of the codex [**Figure 17**]. The text that the poem surrounds is none other than a copy of the Old English Bede, a translation with strong links to Alfred's court. As the poem begins on pages 196-7 of the manuscript, the opening account of Saturn's wandering over many lands surrounds text from Book III, Chapter XXI of the Bede. This chapter contains an account of the nobility of two previous "kings of the English", Oswy of Northumbria and Ecgberht of Kent. These famed seventh-century rulers are so described on account of their support for Wigheard, a pious bishop and supporter of the faith. The text goes on to discuss how these early kings sought to further the incipient religion in England, sponsoring holy men who spread the Word of God through simple preaching and travel in support of Christian belief. A contrast with Saturn, whose wandering and amassing of arcane book-lore is described at this point in the poem, could not be more apparent. Nor, we might add, could the example of these early kings, with their simple sponsorship of scripture, be more different from the high-flying, highly abstract, literary concerns of late ninth and early tenth-century rulers.

In dating the *Solomon and Saturn* poems to the late ninth and early tenth centuries, one might read the portrayal of kings and books as encoding a subtle, sometimes satirical, portrait of both Solomon and Saturn and contemporary developments. Neither king, we might say, comes out of their poetic debate in particularly fine form. Nor, by extension, do the contemporary kings and their books whom these protagonists sometimes resemble receive especially flattering portraits. We shall pick up on some of these ideas again in the first part of the next chapter, when we return, albeit briefly, to examining the importance of the book in the early tenth-century "proto-Reform". For now, we may note the rather ambiguous portrait of royal book-culture offered by the *Solomon and Saturn* poems, and the implications for satire, topical discussion and ambivalence about books that they encode.

§6) Conclusion

In the foregoing reassessment of the relationship between kings and books in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, we have uncovered a rich, if seldom discussed, set of depictions, firmly rooted in the textual and visual symbolism of the book. Books, in the reigns of both Alfred and Æthelstan, emerge not only as a literal, material facet of "textual" production or manuscript donation, but as a conceptual and ideological space through which a range of important ideas could be communicated. The codex, often broadly associated with royal status and the legitimacy of the written word, is yet found depicted in association with a much broader set of concepts, in which social, political and cultural themes cohere.

As our analysis has shown, the representation of books in texts and images from the period provided an important contemporary focus in its own right. The symbolism of the book was not simply annexed as an attribute of royal power, but was carefully interrogated and re-shaped through the cultural productions of both reigns. The Alfredian "boc", we observed, forms a theme of crucial significance in the book-programme, in which allusions to books are repeated and elaborated in each of the king's translations. Books are found associated not only with themes of learning and literacy, but with a range of ideas, from the cultural inheritance of the kingdom to the king's personal anxieties and afflictions. Æthelstan's volumes, if frequently interpreted as a symbolic usage of the book, are likewise repositories for a careful reflection on the codex. Repackaged and represented in inscriptions and iconography, these royal volumes effect a meticulous staging of the book, portrayed in relation both to the pious and political personae of the king and to a range of real and imagined codices.

Across both reigns, moreover, the book is portrayed in relation to a range of highly specific early medieval ideas about the codex. In Alfred's reign, as we saw in the first section of the chapter, the textual representation of the book is carefully linked to an associative network of other types of "boc". One such important codex is the charter or "land-book", which consistently underpins Alfredian rhetoric in the prefaces to the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies*. This rhetoric, embedded in the rich symbolism of the medieval codex, draws together different ideas about books, both literary and administrative, to cement powerful ideas about place and space in relation to book culture. Such ideas, as we found in the third part of the chapter, find strong echo in the Æthelstanian book inscriptions, which draw on the language and structure of contemporary diplomas to ground their portrayals of the manuscript book within a broader framework of bibliographic meaning. Depictions of the "land-book", in both reigns, sometimes also point outwards to other types of book, such as the *liber vitae* or "book

of life" found in scriptural texts and Anglo-Saxon charters. A careful analysis of the book in Alfred's prefaces and Æthelstan's donation records accordingly implicates the codex within a much broader range of cultural and literary connotations. These connotations indicate the rich interplay between literary, administrative and sacred books in the development of a distinctively Anglo-Saxon discourse of the book.

As we saw in both reigns, moreover, the materiality of books is particularly significant. This materiality, usually discussed in terms of the literal shape and appearance of royal manuscripts, is yet found embedded in the *representations* of books attached to Alfredian and Æthelstanian codices. Alfred's translations, and the portrait of the king in Asser, foreground a rich set of ideas about the book and the body, in which the corporeal and cognitive significance of the codex is given careful configuration. These depictions are predicated on an understanding of the irreducible relationship between the intellectual content of books and their material function, as mediated and discussed from within royal books themselves. This interplay between the rhetoric of the codex and the reader's relationship with the book is subject to even greater elaboration in Æthelstan's volumes. Here, as we found earlier, the positioning of each representation of the book from within the repurposed manuscripts effects a powerful slippage between the textual and visual depiction of each book and the materiality of the king's codices. The frame of the book, used to shape and the organise the narrative of the donated book, becomes itself a powerful tool in the construction of a royal bibliographic aesthetic.

Our observations in the chapter underscore the significance of the relationship between kings and books found so frequently in scholarly discussion. Crucially, however, as the foregoing summation suggests, our analysis has allowed us to uncover the nuances of this relationship as it appears in the sources. As we found in the last section of the chapter, the oft-discussed *Solomon and Saturn* poems, which have formed the basis for repeated scholarly analyses of the book and its meaning, might be re-read in light of these subtleties. If often read as encoding a binary opposition between Saturn's ignorance and Solomon's Christian learning, the representation of the book, in these texts, makes greater sense in light of Alfredian and Æthelstanian portrayals. An awareness that books were not only regarded by contemporaries as vehicles for spiritual elevation or Solomonic wisdom allows us to appreciate the finer gradations of the books depicted in relation to both Solomon and Saturn in the poems. Drawing on similar themes to those found in the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan, the poems foreground the codex as a focus for a complex of ideas about material meaning and intellectual disputation.

At the same time, however, one can detect important shifts in the representation of books found between the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Alfred's book programme, in which the king himself was the agent of literary production, differs in several respects from that of Æthelstan, whose volumes are donations rather than original productions. The books of the late ninth century are disseminated and portrayed in support of a broader educational movement, in which Alfred's personal involvement forms the basis for a direct discussion of contemporary book culture and its meaning. By the reign of Æthelstan one finds an entirely different focus, in which antique or historical volumes are refurbished and reframed through the staged persona of the king. Where Alfred's prefaces offer an expansive discussion of the "boc", the inscriptions and iconography of Æthelstan's donation records are the space for a commemorative, and often prescriptive, meditation on the codex. These meditations are frequently terse, monumental and deliberately distancing in tone, calculated to offer an image of the book which emphasises the quasi-sacerdotal, quasi-imperial status of the ruler. As in the famous frontispiece of the king with his books in Corpus 183, the royal codex occupies an exalted space, in which Æthelstan exerts command over a range of books, from the Anglo-Saxon manuscript itself to the divine *liber vitae*. Far from witnessing the ruler disseminating "bec ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien", one finds instead a powerful vision of the royal book, portrayed as a sacred, intercessory space and suspended somewhere between heaven and earth.

These nuances and contrasts in the depiction of royal books are ones we found reflected in the *Solomon and Saturn* poems. In positing the diversity of portrayals in these poems as an indication of the multivalency of the book rather than the opposition of the protagonists, we noted the sophistication of contemporary ideas about the codex. More intriguing, however, is the possibility that the theme of kings and books in these texts casts a direct reflection on the royal codex, pointing to contemporary discussion and debate about books. The likely composition of the *Solomon and Saturn* poems by poets with a close understanding of Alfred and Æthelstan's cultural milieux mitigates for a reading of the texts as a commentary on contemporary developments. At times, this commentary appears ironic or satirical in tone, as the book is portrayed within topical or political debates. Such reflections flag up the potential for the codex to become itself the subject of contemporary argumentation, especially by those with different ideas about the symbolism of the book and its meaning. These ideas were to take on additional importance from the early to mid-tenth century, when secular and ecclesiastical society in England began to change dramatically. It is to this phase of Anglo-Saxon book-culture and book-depiction that we now turn.

Chapter Two

The Representation of the Book in the Benedictine Reform

§1) Introduction

The developing models of book symbolism that we have charted through the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan indicate the potency and power of the literate imagination in late Anglo-Saxon England. The imagery and ideology of the book, however, had far wider reach and influence, moving well beyond the "royal" depictions examined above, and into a plethora of other contexts, both secular and ecclesiastical. The depictions of the ninth and early tenth centuries, though never divorced from the influence of the clerical "helpers" and the *scriptoria* who produced and received books, were yet rooted in a mode of representation that favoured a distinctly royal balance of power. By the middle of the tenth century, the symbolism of books and book culture was turning in a new direction, shaped by changing political circumstances, and by the ambition of an extraordinarily influential group of ecclesiastical leaders.

Our investigation into the representation and role of the book in the late Anglo-Saxon period, accordingly turns, in this chapter, to a scrutiny of the codex in the period known as the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine reform. This movement, though heterogeneous in its origins and development,[1] is one that offers considerable scope for probing the development of the image of the book. Influenced by the Carolingian Reform of the ninth century, the English movement drew inspiration from the works of St. Benedict and the rich tradition of monastic commentary in Continental book-culture.[2] These books, scrutinised in early reformist seminars and schools, formed the basis of the Anglo-Saxon revival of Benedictine observance, implemented at several houses across the south of the kingdom.[3] Influential prelates such as Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester (963-984) and Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury and Archbishop of Canterbury (959-88), gained the support of another "bibliophile king", King Edgar (r. 959-975), in

[1] A traditional, and still valuable, overview of the period is that by David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943-1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941), 16-56. For a more recent overview, together with a critique of the conventional chronology of the reform, see Julia Barrow, "The Chronology of the Benedictine 'Reform'", in *Edgar, King of the English, 959-975: New Interpretations,* ed. Donald Scragg (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 211-223.
[2] For discussion, see especially D.A. Bullough, "The Continental Background of the Reform", in *Tenth-Century Studies,* ed. David Parsons (London: Phillimore, 1975), 20-36.
[3] For an introduction to this complex process, see Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 1-5.

furtherance of their movement.[4] Crucially too, these leaders of the Reform were responsible for commissioning and circulating updated copies of the *Regula;* new glosses of the Psalms, and, most importantly of all, the English consuetudinary known as the *Regularis concordia.*

The trajectory of Reform and the enormity of its impact upon the religious life of Anglo-Saxon houses was one, importantly, which had a significant effect on the conceptualisation and representation of the book. Amidst the circulation of monastic doctrines and liturgy, and the development of new trends in book production, the book was assuming a practical and ideological importance that served to radically re-shape earlier models of bibliographic authority. As we shall see in the first and third sections of the chapter, the English reformers were deeply invested in the construction of a literate monastic identity, drawing on, but repurposing, the social and cultural models of *boclic* power developed in earlier Anglo-Saxon portrayals. Representations of the monastic book, if dimly realised in earlier evidence, emerge in the texts and images of the Reform period with a new power and significance. This, as we shall see, is true both in relation to the monastic *Regula*, and, more intriguingly, in association with new types of liturgical codex, such as the magisterial volume known as the "Benedictional of St. Æthelwold" (London, British Library, MS Add. 49598).

Pressing, too, outlined in more detail in the central part of the analysis, is the Benedictine engagement with the political potential of the book and its imagery. Edgar's involvement with the Reform, recalling the activities of Alfred and Æthelstan, is recorded in several lavish portrayals of the king and his books. These depictions, as several scholars have observed, point to the king's involvement in an explicitly monastic form of book-culture.[5] As the chapter progresses, we shall analyse such portrayals afresh, examining how the powerful portrayals of books developed in earlier reigns were adapted and repurposed in the mid-tenth century. Departing somewhat from the more usual scholarly focus on the literary and liturgical volumes of the Reform, we shall return, in addition, to our earlier observations about the royal diploma or "land-book". The Anglo-Saxon charter, deployed with such symbolic power in earlier reigns, became of key importance in the Reform, albeit, as we shall see, in association with a rather different set of authoritative idea(l)s.

In the final part of the analysis, we shall turn to an exploration of the social and ecclesiastical implications of the Reform in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries. Anglo-

[4] For an overview of Edgar, his reign and his involvement with the Reform, see Simon Keynes, "Edgar, *rex admirabilis*", in *Edgar, King of the English,* Scragg, 3-58.
[5] See, for instance, Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, 84-99.

Saxon book-culture, as Michael Lapidge has observed, is marked in this period by a "shift in focus from the royal household to monasteries and cathedral schools as foyers of learning".[6] By the latter decades of the tenth century, this shift was one with far-reaching consequences for the representation of the book. As the Reform moved into its "second generation" in the final quarter of the tenth century and beyond, books and Benedictine scholarship were undergoing further elaboration and scrutiny, most notably by the reformers' pupils and acolytes, including Wulfstan Cantor, the pupil of Bishop Æthelwold, and Byrhtferth of Ramsey, the biographer of Archbishop Oswald. Through the efforts of these individuals, as we shall see in the chapter's fourth section, the political and theological significance of the Benedictine book was developing in new directions, serving, in turn, to fashion new, and sometimes competing, ideological models for the codex.

§2) Monks, Kings and Books in the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform

The crucial representative role of the book in late Anglo-Saxon sources is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in manuscripts associated with the Benedictine Reform. If scholars have sometimes neglected the portrayal of the book in Anglo-Saxon sources in favour of broader analyses of book production or literary activity, the major manuscripts of the Benedictine Reform are a notable exception. Books, as Catherine E. Karkov has observed, form a recurrent visual theme in English copies of the *Rule* and other monastic codices.[7] Likewise, as David Pratt has shown in a reading of "Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", a contemporary account of the royal sanction given to the movement, one finds "a bookish image of the king" geared towards the authorisation of the Reform.[8] The representation of the book, tied closely into both monastic and royal portraits from the period, forms a core feature of the movement that has stimulated considerable scholarly debate. This section, scrutinising these depictions more closely, will probe these portrayals anew. In this, particular attention will be directed towards the specific role of the book in the English Reform, and towards the interplay between the depictions of monastic, royal and holy books at the height of the movement.

§2.1) Authorship and Authority: Book-Culture in the "Proto-Reform"

To begin our discussion of these ideas, however, we shall first step back from the major monuments of the Reform in order to consider some particularly intriguing evidence. In the

[6] Michael Lapidge, "Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England", in his *Anglo-Latin Literature 900-1066,* 4.
[7] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 84.
[8] David Pratt, "The Voice of the King in 'King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", *ASE* 41 (2012): 164.

two decades between the reigns of Æthelstan and Edgar, one comes across unusual depictions of the book which are related to, yet pre-date, the main phase of the Reform. These portrayals are associated with a period which Mechthild Gretsch has identified as a proto-Reform, an early stage of the movement dated to between c. 939 and c. 954 in which Benedictine books and texts were being carefully scrutinised by an emerging group of clerics.[9] Primarily associated with the monastic school at Glastonbury, this period, headed by Dunstan and Æthelwold, involved close scrutiny of Reform texts, including the *Regula sancti Benedicti,* the Psalter, and materials related to the ninth-century Continental Reform.[10] Earlier Anglo-Saxon authors such as Aldhelm, held by the reformers to reflect the "golden age" of English monasticism in the seventh and eighth centuries, received particularly careful scrutiny.[11] These developments point to the important role of books and learning in shaping and disseminating the Benedictine model of monasticism. They also point to a new set of values and ideas, expressed in both texts and images, about the significance of the Benedictine book.

The Book and the *Biblus*: Monastic Vocabulary for the "Boc"

The "proto-Reform" period, if somewhat overshadowed by later developments in English monasticism, represents a key turning point in tenth-century book-culture. One key facet of the school, as outlined by Gretsch, relates to the reformers' interest in new and unusual vocabulary. Æthelwold has been shown to have synthesised Old English glosses of Aldhelm and the Psalter into a specific lexicon of vocabulary for monastic ideas.[12] More famously, as Michael Lapidge has demonstrated, the early reformers were key proponents of "hermeneutic" Latin, an abstruse literary style influenced by Aldhelm, and characterised by neologisms, archaisms and borrowings from Greek.[13] Glosses and lexical borrowings of Aldhelmian hermeneutic terminology suffuse manuscripts and texts associated with the "proto-Reform", including in a copy of Aldhelm's *De uirginitate* in the "Royal Aldhelm" manuscript (London, British Library, Royal MS 7 D.xxiv), a codex with particular importance later in our discussion.[14]

[9] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 5. See also Gretsch, "Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 57: A Witness to the Early Stages of the Benedictine Reform in England?", *ASE* 32 (2003): 111-46.
[10] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 6-131; 226-332. For an alternative perspective on these developments, see, however, Scott Gwara, "Review of Mechthild Gretsch: *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*", *Studii Medievali* 41, no. 2 (2000): 713-23.
[11] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 132-84; 332-83.
[12] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 185-25.
[13] Lapidge, "Hermeneutic Style", 67-111. For a later repudiation of the term "hermeneutic", see Lapidge, "Poeticism in Pre-Conquest Anglo-Latin Prose", *PBA* 129 (2005): 321-37. See also, however, Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury, eds., *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Latin Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 7-9.
[14] For discussion of this codex, see Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 42-131; 261-31.

Especially significant, given the apparent development of a literary and linguistic "academy" during this period, is the extent to which this elevated style emphasises language concerning the processes of writing and book production. The "hermeneutic" focus on ornate vocabulary is marked, at times, by a particular concentration on deliberately unusual words for literary texts and their production. The Greek-derived verb "caraxare", ("to write") is found in several charters associated with the reigns of Æthelstan and Eadwig, courts at which Æthelwold is known to have served.[15] The glossarial borrowings "sintagma", ("document"),[16] and "singraph", ("decree"), also appear in diplomas from the 930s onwards.[17] These terms reflect a heightened awareness of the special status of writing and texts, drawing on hermeneutic vocabulary to portray the act of textual creation in abstruse, elevated language. Intriguingly, as D.A. Woodman and others have shown, these terms, and their manuscript contexts, show significant overlap with books and land-books produced at the court of Æthelstan.[18] Corpus MS 183, that lavish codex donated by the king to Chester-le-Street, contains an early citation of the term "caraxare".[19] The Corpus manuscript, moreover, was produced in the same scriptorium and by the same scribe as the Royal Aldhelm codex,[20] which, as Gretsch has demonstrated, represents a crucial stage in the early reformers' borrowings of Aldhelmian vocabulary.[21]

Significant, further, is the particular status such "proto-Reform" language accords to the book. One accordingly finds the conventional terminology for the book familiar from the foregoing part of our discussion (Latin "liber"; "codex"; Old English "boc"), being replaced in contemporary texts by a new lexical item: the Grecism "biblos". This term, unprecedented in Anglo-Saxon literature before the tenth century, is ultimately derived from the opening words of St. Matthew's gospel, where the holy status of the evangelist's text is announced.[22] The description of the book as "biblos" appears in several Reform-era productions, including in a poem added to a lavish benedictional owned by Æthelwold, and a Canterbury volume known

[15] S 395, S 567, S 607, S 622, S 658. For some further, literary, uses of this term, see Lapidge, "Hermeneutic Style", 90; 93.
[16] S 673.
[17] S 404, S 409, S 410, S 423, S 460, S 496, S 546, S 567 etc. For some further comments and examples, see Lapidge, "Hermeneutic Style", 79; 80; 88; 89.
[18] D.A. Woodman, "'Æthelstan A' and the Rhetoric of Rule", *ASE* 42 (2013): 217-48.
[19] See Woodman, "'Æthelstan A'", 223-4.
[20] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 360. For further discussion, see Wood, "'Stand Strong Against the Monsters'", 211.
[21] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 132-84.
[22] L. Whitbread, "The Old English Poem Aldhelm", *ES* 57 (1976): 195.

as Frithegod's *Breuiloquium Vitae Wilfredi*.[23] In the context of the "proto-Reform", however, it would appear that Aldhelm's works exerted the primary influence over the reformers' use of the term. The "biblos", invoked repeatedly in the prose *De uirginitate* and in Aldhelm's riddles, reflects the abbot's preferred term for denoting the sanctity of the book.[24] That the "proto-Reform" school was directly influenced by these citations is indicated in several Reform-era manuscripts. One such codex, a corpus of Aldhelmian glosses linked to Æthelwold (Brussels, MS Royal Library 1650), contains several instances in which the "biblos", or its lexical derivatives, have been meticulously glossed as "boc".[25]

The elevated conception of the book as a holy object for which specialist vocabulary must be used is indicated, further, in a poem with links to the Glastonbury school. This poem, which has attracted relatively little scholarly attention, is now preserved in a later tenth-century copy of Aldhelm's *De laudibus uirginitatis* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 326).[26] The poem, which appears just before the opening of Aldhelm's text, offers a series of reflections on Aldhelm's authorial status and the significance of his book. Composed using the traditional structure and metre of vernacular poetry, the piece recaps the importance of Aldhelm's text, and, rather like a scribal colophon, asks the reader for prayers. Terminology for the special status of the book and its author's skill forms a particular focus in the poem. In this, Aldhelm is foregrounded as an "æþele sceop" ("noble poet") [**App. §2.1/3a**]. In one especially evocative description reminiscent of the language used by Alfred in the Old English *Boethius*, the abbot is denoted as "beorn boca gleaw" (lit. "a man illuminated by books") [**App. §2.1/2a**].

The poem's vernacular structure and traditional poetic terminology yet belies more unusual features. Throughout the piece, Latin phrases and half-lines appear, such that the poem often seems to slip seamlessly between languages. The description "beorn boca gleaw", for instance, is metrically and alliteratively completed by the half-line "bonus auctor" ("excellent author") [**App. §2.1/2b**] in the poem's glorification of Aldhelm. Even more unusually, one

[23] Lapidge, "Hermeneutic Style", 79. For further discussion of this text, see Michael Lapidge, "A Frankish Scholar in Tenth-Century England: Frithegod of Canterbury/Fredegaud of Brioude", *ASE* 17 (1988): 45-65.
[24] Aldhelm, *Prosa de uirginitate,* CPL 1332, cap.: 25, pag.: 301, linea: 17; cap.: 29, pag.: 357, linea: 1; cap.: 49, pag.: 659, linea: 4, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=QALDHS124 [Accessed 29 December 2019]; *Ænigmata,* CPL 1335, 35, versus: 5; 81, versus: 9; 100, versus: 70, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=QALDH1335. [Accessed 29 December 2019].
[25] Louis Goossens, ed., *The Old English Glosses of MS Brussels, Royal Library 1650* (Brussels: Paleis der Academien, 1974), 1996.
[26] A notable, early exception to this is Whitbread, "The Old English Poem Aldhelm", 193-7. Whitbread's transcription and translation of the poem has formed the basis for my discussion, and is reproduced as **Appendix §2.1).**

comes across Latin transliterations of Greek vocabulary. In the fifth line of the poem, the *De laudibus uirginitatis* is invoked using the Grecism "biblos" ("book") [**App. §2.1/5b**]. This "hermeneutic" term, familiar from "proto-Reform"-era glosses, casts Aldhelm's text in highly elevated language. Contrasting with more common Anglo-Saxon terminology for books ("boc"; "liber"; "codex"), this Greek term reflects a particularly ornamental invocation of the book using vocabulary borrowed from Aldhelm himself. Given the early reformers' close interest in Aldhelm and their repeated emphasis on the "biblos", one might reasonably posit that the poem emanated from within Benedictine circles.

The appearance of the "biblos" in the poem, in contrast with "proto-Reform" glosses, yet sheds greater light on the contemporary conception of the book. The "biblos", whilst inserted as a lexical echo of Aldhelmian language, is transformed, in the macaronic poem, into a thematic focus. This "book" is not merely glossed with an ornamental term, but develops, as the piece unfolds, into an important "agent" of the poem. The "biblos", significantly, is cast as the first-person "speaker" of the poem, who proclaims how Aldhelm "þus me gesette" ("assembled me [in this fashion]") [**App. §2.1/1a**]. Following the plethora of superlatives accorded to Aldhelm at the opening of the poem, the "biblos" yet takes on a more crucial role. The half-line "Biblos ic nu sceal" ("Now as a book …") [**App. §2.1/5b**] marks a particularly important turning point in the poem, in which the book itself describes how it must spread its author's fame throughout the world. Despite the glory of its compositor and the originary moment of textual creation, it is now the "biblos" which bears the burden of relating its holy contents and persuading its readers "boethia biddan georne" ("[to] pray wholeheartedly for aid") [**App. §2.1/14a**].

In the final sections of the poem, these ideas are given greater emphasis. The book portrays itself as "ponus et pondus" ("[a] laborious and weighty work") [**App. §2.1/6a**] which, having been created by Aldhelm, now has the crucial task of finding dutiful monastic readers. This task is portrayed as a serious duty, which brings with it "geonges … geomres" ("newfound sorrow") [**App. §2.1/7**] as the book must live up to the reputation of its author. As the "biblos" observes, its truthful obedience to Aldhelm's work carries with it the need for readers to respond in kind, fulfilling, in turn, their responsibilities towards the monastic book. In addressing and invoking the reader using the first-person, the "biblos" argues that "ne <sceal> ladigan/*labor quem* tenet//encratea" ("nowhere, moreover, shall restraint provide excuses for [one] whom toil possesses") [**App. §2.1/12-13a**]. This injunction makes clear, in somewhat hortatory language, that this "laborious and weighty" monastic work is to be scrutinised and

promulgated, with praise, by its readers. Just as the "biblos" itself carries the burden of relating its devotional contents, so too must its audience study and obey its precepts. Laid out as an instructive introduction to Aldhelm's text, the tenth-century poem carefully echoes Aldhelm's own language of the book. It does so, moreover, in a way which portrays the monastic book using distinctive, elevated vocabulary.

Sacred Scribes and Christ's Codices: The Early Tenth-Century Iconography of the Book

The prominence accorded to the status of the book in the scholarly and literary activities of the early reform point to the way that books and their meaning, as well as the contents of texts, were being re-evaluated at the Glastonbury school. In scrutinising the basis of monastic culture in both Continental and Anglo-Saxon books, the early reformers seem to have developed a specific set of ideas about the significance of the codex in relation to the sanctity and morality of monastic book-culture. These ideas are echoed in the way that books were being depicted in visual sources connected to the "proto-Reform". In tandem with changing styles of vocabulary and terminology for the book, one also witnesses iconographic shifts, in which ideas about the book and its symbolism were taking on a new importance.

We might begin our discussion of these themes by briefly returning to our discussion of Aldhelm. If Aldhelmian works provided the reformers with a particularly potent set of vocabulary for describing the sacred, monastic book, the Royal Aldhelm codex also contains a rare depiction of Aldhelm himself. On folio 85v of the manuscript one finds, for the first time in Anglo-Saxon art, an image of the eighth-century author in the act of composition [**Figure 18**]. This scene, though now in the middle of the codex, originally formed the frontispiece to the Anglo-Saxon manuscript, appearing on the page facing the opening of the *De uirginitate*. The image comprises a line-drawn sketch of the abbot, who is seated before a writing desk. Aldhelm, on the left, is shown in three-quarter profile, clad in robes which twist round his lower body. His left hand supports a large codex, whilst his right holds a prominent black pen. This scene is particularly significant as it represents the first known image of Aldhelm in Anglo-Saxon England. As J.A. Kiff-Hooper has observed, the scene, in the absence of any iconographic precedent, appears to have been modelled on an evangelist portrait.[27]

Whilst the image remains unfinished, its principal features are readily identifiable. We might note here the particular iconographic emphasis given to the book, which, though

[27] J.A. Kiff-Hooper, "Class Books or Works of Art?: Some Observations on the Tenth-Century Manuscripts of Aldhelm's *De laude Virginitatis*", *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor,* ed. Ian Wood and G.A. Loud (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 16-18.

rendered using only the briefest of outlines, is yet so large as to stretch almost the entire length of Aldhelm's upper body. The elevation of the writing desk such that the book faces outwards to the viewer reflects an unusual variant of evangelistic iconography and serves further to emphasise the author's volume. The abbot's pen, which he holds in the centre of the book, stresses the significance of the moment of bibliographic creation. Somewhat intriguingly, Mechthild Gretsch has argued that this manuscript (emanating from the same scriptorium as Corpus 183) might have been originally intended for presentation, in place of Corpus, at Chester-le-Street.[28] Given the "proto-Reform"-era fascination with the language of writing, documentation and books, we might interpret this image as a further piece of evidence that the specific nature of the holy book was undergoing careful scrutiny in the period. Once fully illuminated, the Aldhelm scene would have offered an iconographically unusual focus on Anglo-Saxon composition and authorship, in which the evangelical book is transmuted into a specifically monastic vision of the authoritative codex.

These new contexts for portraying the book in tenth-century art might be understood further through analysis of perhaps the most significant image connected to the "proto-Reform": that found in St. Dunstan's Classbook (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 4.32). This "Classbook", so termed because it contains a wealth of scholarly texts linked to the Glastonbury school, has been decisively linked to Dunstan and his literary activities.[29] The manuscript, originally a ninth-century Frankish book, shows signs of expansion and adaptation in accordance with Dunstan's interests.[30] Even more significantly, following the work of R.W. Hunt and others, a scribal hand in the manuscript, known to modern scholars as "Hand D", has been identified as that of Dunstan himself.[31] "Hand D" is also that which appears in the Rawlinson codex, a volume which, as we saw in Chapter One, contains both the Æthelstan acrostic and a copy of Aldhelm's *Carmen de uirginitate*.[32]

On folio 1r of the manuscript, and acting as a frontispiece, one finds an unusual, and striking image. Rendered in three-quarter pose is a large figure of Christ, wearing a prominent halo and clad in flowing drapery [**Figure 19**]. In his right hand He holds a *uirga* or rod,

[28] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations,* 364-7.
[29] Mildred Budny, "'St. Dunstan's Classbook' and its Frontispiece: Dunstan's Portrait and Autograph", in *St. Dunstan: Life, Times and Cult,* ed. Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks and Tim Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1992), 105-26. For a broader discussion of Dunstan and his role in the Reform, see also Nicholas Brooks, "The Career of St. Dunstan", in *St Dunstan,* ed. Ramsay, Sparks and Tatton-Brown, 1-23.
[30] Budny, "'St. Dunstan's Classbook'", 118-23.
[31] R.W. Hunt, *St. Dunstan's Classbook from Glastonbury* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1961), v; xiv.
[32] For further discussion of manuscripts associated with Dunstan, see Budny, "'St. Dunstan's Classbook'", 137-8.

inscribed with the scriptural text, "uirga recta est … uirga regni tui" ("The sceptre of your kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness"). In His left appears a long, thin book, bearing the words, "Uenite filii audite me timorem domini docebo uos" ("Come, children, hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord"). In the bottom right corner of the image a kneeling monk covers his face and lies prostrate before Christ. Just above the monk's small body is a verse distich: "Dunstanum memet clemens rogo xpe tuere/Tenarias me non sinas sorbsisse procella" ("I beg you merciful Christ to watch over me, Dunstan/Do not permit the Taenarian storms to overwhelm me"). This distich accordingly identifies the monk as Dunstan himself, who pays obeisance to the majesty and power of Christ.[33]

The line-drawn style of the image, comparable to that in the unfinished Aldhelm scene, yet reflects a new "Winchester school" of early tenth-century Benedictine art.[34] This style, characterised by minimal illumination and meticulously detailed pen-work, appears to have originated, with Dunstan, at the Glastonbury school itself. The reformist focus of the image is immediately apparent from the inscription on Christ's book, which is derived from the opening words of the Benedictine Rule. Dunstan's distich, furthermore, has been conclusively proven by Helmut Gneuss to be derived from a couplet found in Hrabanus Maurus's *De laude sanctae crucis.*[35] This text, promulgated during the ninth-century Frankish Reform, exerted a powerful devotional influence in early tenth-century England.[36] The frontispiece's image of the kneeling monk has likewise been copied from a similar portrayal in illuminations of Hrabanus's text.[37] As Gneuss has argued, this component of the image may even have been directly copied from the Trinity Hrabanus, which, as we discussed in Chapter One, was extant at Æthelstan's court.[38]

The complex fusion of imagery and inscription in the scene points to the emerging representative significance of Benedictine texts and books. Combining citations derived from the bible, Benedict's Rule and Hrabanus's poetry, the Classbook presents a powerful synthesis of Reform texts. Catherine E. Karkov has observed how the image draws together an nexus of

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[33] For a full discussion of this scene, and the translations of the scene's inscriptions, see Budny, "'St. Dunstan's Classbook'", 103-42.
[34] Francis Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 24-5.
[35] Helmut Gneuss, "Dunstan and Hrabanus Maurus zur Hs. Bodleian Auctarium F. 4.32", *Anglia* 96 (1978): 144-5.
[36] For discussion of this text in Anglo-Saxon manuscript context, see William Schipper, "Hrabanus Maurus in Anglo-Saxon England: *In honorem sanctae crucis*", in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald,* ed. Stephen Baxter, Catherine E. Karkov, Janet L. Nelson and David Pelteret (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 283-98.
[37] Gneuss, "Dunstan and Hrabanus Maurus", 141-5.
[38] Gneuss, "Dunstan and Hrabanus Maurus", 144-5. See also John Higgitt, "Glastonbury, Dunstan, Monasticism and Manuscripts", *Art History* 2, no. 3 (1979): 278-9.

sacred quotations, which demonstrate Dunstan's piety and devotional study of the sacred Word.[39] We might also note the emphasis here on the depiction of the book, which, inscribed with Benedict's words, is given visual prominence by the pointing hand of Christ. Insofar as the text of the book is mirrored by the scene's other inscriptions, we might even suggest a self-conscious bibliographic interplay between the miniature's constituent texts. The language of verbal instruction and address receives particular emphasis here, lending the scene a performative quality. Between the words of the book and Dunstan's distich, one finds a type of devotional dialogue, in which the Benedictine words of Christ's book ("Come children, hearken …") prompt a humble response from Dunstan ("I beg you merciful Christ …") for prayers and mercy.

By way of furthering these observations, we might also note the distinctive tone of the scene. Christ's book is not only that which foregrounds the spiritual significance of the Rule, but highlights, in the sheer difference in size between the holy figure and that of the kneeling monk, the notion of obedience before God. Christ's codex appears as part of a dramatic, and rather foreboding vision, in which Benedict's *Rule* becomes the instrument of command about the proper duties of the Christian subject. The Benedictine language of *timor Dei* or "fear of the Lord" inscribed on the book reinforces a sense of the image's awe-inspiring tone.[40] The "rod" or "sceptre" of righteousness, with its regal and quasi-military overtones, lends powerful weight to this new, austere image of the monastic codex.[41] The subservient monk, humbled by the vision of Christ, is here implored to listen to the Rule and reorder his life according to its precepts. In the scene's spare style, and in the imagery of the inscribed book, one finds a distinctively monastic focus on the importance of humility and obedience in Christian book-culture. The "Winchester style" of Benedictine art, rendered using new artistic techniques and drawing on new visual themes, presents a marked emphasis on the duties and obligations which the holy book demands from its readers. These portrayals are predicated on the demonstration of a particular type of bibliographic authority, dependent on a Christian, and specifically Benedictine, vision of the codex and its symbolic importance.

[39] Karkov, *Art of Anglo-Saxon England,* 168-71.
[40] For some further comments on the importance of *timor Dei* in the portrait, see Hunt, *St. Dunstan's Classbook,* vi.
[41] For a contrasting perspective, see Wormald, *English Drawings,* 58. For discussion of the iconography of the "rod" or "sceptre" associated with Christ in contemporary iconography, see Jane Rosenthal, "Three Drawings in an English Pontifical: Anthropomorphic Trinity or Threefold Christ?", *Art Bulletin* 63, no. 4 (1981): 549-57.

§2.2) "When Monks Were the Book": Monastic Authority and Identity

The new models for representing the book in the "proto-Reform" provide an initial indication of the way the codex was being reconceived in relation to Benedictine monastic ideals. Such portrayals, as we have seen, stem from the early reformers' re-evaluation of sacred books, resulting in a corpus of depictions cast in a distinctive language and a new iconographic style. These portrayals, developed in parallel with the, rather different, royal iconography familiar from Chapter One, have important implications for a scholarly reading of the portrayals of the Benedictines and King Edgar developed at the height of the Reform. First, however, we shall continue our analysis of the monastic representations of the book as they evolved into the new Benedictine "golden age" of the 960s and 970s. As the "proto-Reform" broadened in scope in the mid-tenth century, copies of the Rule, the Psalter, and the English consuetudinary known as the *Regularis concordia* were widely distributed across the reformed institutions.[42] The book, as we shall see, formed a particularly important rhetorical and visual focus in manuscripts from this period. If often discussed in relation to the authoritative evolution of the movement, such representations point to a specific set of ideas about the role of the codex within the monastic life. These depictions, as well as offering textual and visual narratives of the Reform, encode a careful focus on the Benedictine book as itself a key marker of Reform history, legitimacy and monastic identity.

"Ænlepige Bec of Boccystan": The Symbolism of the Benedictine Book

We might begin our discussion of these themes by noting the key role of the book in the Benedictine Rule. Benedict's *Regula,* in setting out the humility and obedience expected from each monk, foregrounds the particular status of the book in relation to the monastic life. Books of scripture and "divine authority" are repeatedly cited by the Rule, which addresses, in particular, the role of "in codice ... lectiones" ("[holy] readings from books") in the monastic observance of the daily office.[43] Both the Latin and Old English versions of the *Regula* go into considerable detail about the nature and context of these lections, which, as in Chapter IX of the Rule, are to be read "in codice super analogium";[44] "on þare boc on uppen þan bocscæmele" ("[from] a book placed on the book-stand").[45] The brethren are also enjoined to devote

[42] For some historical background to the introduction and dissemination of Benedictine customs and liturgy, see Jesse D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c. 1000* HBS subsidia VII (London: Boydell Press, 2014), 169-94.
[43] H. Logeman, ed., *The Rule of St. Benet,* EETS o.s. 90 (London: N. Trübner, 1888), 38, ll. 10-11.
[44] Logeman, ed., *The Rule of St. Benet*, 38, l. 10.
[45] Arnold Schröer, ed., *Die Winteney-Version der Regula s. Benedicti* (Halle: Max Neimeyer, 1888), 43, l. 26.

considerable periods of time to *lectio divina,* private reading.[46] Though unable to own anything of their own, "neque codicem, neque tabulas, neque gravium";[47] "ne furðon boc, ne weaxbreda, ne græf" ("neither book, nor writing-tablet, nor pen"),[48] monks must yet spend a good proportion of their free time in the careful study of holy books. The precise organisation of this reading is also specified by the Rule, which notes how "sume boc of þære bibliothecan" ("a certain book [taken] from the book-case [or library]") is to be given to each monk every Lent for detailed study.[49]

The *Regula,* moreover, insists that key texts such as the Psalms must be learned by heart, and so readily recitable in the liturgy and in private devotion. Periods of *lectio divina* are noted, additionally, to encourage each monk to thoroughly ruminate upon their single "book from the book-chest" for the duration of a full liturgical year.[50] In a slight departure from the Latin text, the Old English Rule goes so far as to note the specific occasions on which reformed monks are to follow the prescribed liturgical rubric and when they must recite the Psalms "butan bec" ("without books").[51] As Isabelle Cochelin has shown, books of scripture and the Rule were fundamentally important in monastic observance, forming a key focus in the monastic classroom and shaping the rhythms of the liturgical day.[52] More than this, as Cochelin notes, the Psalms and other texts were to be carefully internalised and constantly reflected upon, whether in the liturgy, during meal-times or in private prayer.[53] A monk's whole mode of thought and experience were thus to be focalised and framed through the holy codex, a process of "seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and understanding the world through the lens of the Book".[54] In the memorable words of Catherine Cubitt, "the monk would be a walking thesaurus of biblical history, expressed in words shared by the whole community".[55]

The centrality of the book to the monastic experience, if reflected in contemporary copies of the Latin and Old English Rule, is yet echoed in some distinctively innovative

[46] Logeman, ed., *The Rule of St. Benet*, 82-3.
[47] Logeman, ed., *The Rule of St. Benet*, 63, l. 17.
[48] Arnold Schröer, ed., *Die angelsächsicschen Prosabearbeitungen der Benediktinerregel* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 56, l. 20. (Cap. XXXIII).
[49] Schröer, ed., *Die angelsächsicschen Prosabearbeitungen,* 74, l. 12-13. (Cap. XLVIII).
[50] Schröer, ed., *Die angelsächsicschen Prosabearbeitungen,* 74, ll. 10-23; 74, ll. 1-11 (Cap. XLVIII).
[51] Schröer, ed., *Die angelsächsicschen Prosabearbeitungen,* 34, l. 1 (Cap. IX); 36, l. 20 (Cap. XII); 38, l. 11 (Cap. XIII).
[52] Isabelle Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book", *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages,* ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 61-9.
[53] Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book", 69-74.
[54] Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book", 69.
[55] Catherine Cubitt, "Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England", *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain,* ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrell (London, Leicester University Press, 2000), 254.

materials connected to the mid-tenth-century Reform. One such context is a miniature now in an early eleventh-century codex (London, British Library, MS Arundel 155, f. 133r) [**Figure 20**]. This miniature, produced at Christ Church, Canterbury, has been identified as a copy of an earlier scene, which probably originated within Æthelwold's milieu at Winchester.[56] Though now set within a lavish Psalter, the image seems more likely to have been promulgated within early to mid-tenth-century copies of the Benedictine Rule. As it appears in the Arundel manuscript, the miniature foregrounds a particularly powerful vision of St. Benedict and the monastic significance of his book.

Set out on folio 133r of the Psalter, the scene reflects a full-page miniature, with elements of both illumination and line-drawing. St. Benedict, on the left, is shown in sumptuous golden robes and holding a crozier. Around his head is a halo inscribed: "S[an]c[tu]s Benedictus pater monachor[um] et dux" ("St. Benedict, father and leader of monks"). On his head is a band which bears the text, "timor Dei" ("fear of God"). Beneath the abbot's feet lies a prostate monk, who wears a girdle inscribed, "zona humilitatis" ("band of humility"), and carries a small book denoted as a "liber psaltarum". On the right of the image, a group of monks, rendered in a line-drawn style, cluster around their monastic leader. The monk in the foreground of the image carries a small "pyx", or container for the holy sacrament. Next to Benedict on the right, another follower holds open a large book, which is partially covered by the saint's open hand. This book is inscribed with the words, "Ausculta o fili precepti" ("Listen, O my sons, to the precepts [of the Master]"). Above the scene, and spanning the two arcades containing Benedict and his monks, is a scroll held by the Hand of God. This scroll is inscribed, "Qui uos audit me audit; obedientes estote prepositi uestro" ("Who hears you hears me; be obedient to your grave").[57]

This extraordinarily complex image, filled with sacred, Benedictine imagery, foregrounds a careful focus on monastic books. Benedict's volume, set prominently in the centre of the scene, bears the opening words of the abbot's Rule as he summons his followers. Beneath the saint's feet, the adoring monk holds a copy of the Psalter, that volume so key in monastic devotions. Whilst not rendered in codex-form, the scroll in the upper register of the scene reflects text taken, on the left, from *Luke 10:16,* and, on the right, from *Hebrews 13:17*.[58]

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[56] Richard Gameson, "English Manuscript Art in the Mid-Eleventh Century: The Decorative Tradition", *AntJ* 71 (1991): 77.
[57] For a more detailed description of this scene and its iconographic and inscriptional complexities, see Robert Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus*: Early Medieval Ruler Theology and the Anglo-Saxon Reform", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22 (1988): 211-19.
[58] Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus*", 211.

This scroll therefore seems representative of two scriptural books. As Richard Gameson has observed, scrolls were increasingly used in late Anglo-Saxon art as an alternative means of representing books, especially where they offered "representational advantages" in bearing lengthy citational inscriptions.[59] As Gameson also notes, scrolls were sometimes used to effect a pleasing visual contrast with the depicted book.[60] In the dynamic textual and visual presentation of the Arundel Benedict scene, we might note the particular relevance of this variation, in which multiple types of holy book are brought together within one portrayal of Benedictine textuality.

Given the key role of the book as set out in the Rule, we might perhaps observe the broader significance of the scene. Benedict's central codex, in calling his followers to obey his instructions, resonates strongly with the portrayal of suppliant worship using the Psalter which is held by the monk kneeling beneath his feet. The performative interaction between the Rule and the monastic book is indicated, further, in the textual echoes between Benedict's inscribed Rule and the scriptural scroll at the top of the miniature. The emphasis on "hearing" the Rule in the inscription on the Master's book ("Ausculta o fili …") finds particular echo in the invocation of speech and listening ("qui uos audit me audit") on the left-hand side of the scroll. One might point here to scholarly work on the performative, quasi-liturgical connotations of such scenes, which, as Jennifer O'Reilly has observed, contain inscriptions redolent with verbs of "Sehens, Schauens und Betrachtens".[61] These ideas, as O'Reilly notes, reflect themes familiar from Benedictine liturgy, in which the sight and experience of God in monastic devotions is emphasised.[62] In the Arundel scene one might accordingly note the way the book becomes part of a broader performance of written and oral text, in which the written word, spoken "text" and auditory responses are all encoded in the representation of the monastic codex.

In light of the Rule's insistence on the monastic internalisation of holy books, the Arundel scene might, further, be read as indicative of the pervasive role of the book in the monastic life. Jean Leclerq's classic analysis of the role of rumination in monastic learning has pointed to the way contemporary inscribed imagery might reflect the monks' own practice of quotation and citation from books.[63] This, in Leclerq's words, reflects the "spontaneous[...]

[59] Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 99.
[60] Gameson, *Role of Art,* 99-103.
[61] Jennifer O'Reilly, "Text und Bild in der angelsächsischen benediktinischen Reform", in *Benediktinische Kunst,* ed. Roberto Cassanelli and Eduardo Lopez-Tello Garcia (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2007), 110.
[62] O'Reilly, "Text und Bild", 110.
[63] Jean Leclerq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God,* 3rd ed. (New York: Fordham, 1982), 75.

recalibration" of material learned from books that individual acolytes were expected to perform in their mental and physical subjugation to holy texts.[64] The Arundel image, with its concatenation of consuetudinary, scriptural and inscriptional text(s), might be said to reflect these ideas, suffusing all elements of pictorial space with markedly bibliographic themes. As in the Classbook scene, one gains a sense here of the multivalent role of the Benedictine book in evoking devotional speech, rumination and response.[65] The whole image accordingly resonates with the performativity of reformed liturgy, in which books form the focal point for worship and from which the whole community derives a devotional and spiritual experience of the codex.

Representing the Monastic Book: Bibliographic Networks and *Catenae*

The devotional and instructional imagery of the Benedictine book found in depictions connected to the tenth-century Reform sets up a powerful set of ideas about the special duties and devotions demanded by the monastic codex. These, developed significantly from those in the "proto-Reform", highlight the important role of the book in the movement's representation of its own activities. If Anglo-Saxon copies of the Rule and the Arundel miniature offer some sense of the key role of the book at the height of the Reform, one yet comes across a much more diverse range of depictions. In the next part of the discussion, we shall explore some of these depictions in more detail, in order to uncover the broader complexity of the codex as it was represented in the tenth-century Reform.

A particularly important theme in this regard relates to the way the Benedictine party viewed the sacred significance of the book in relation to Christian history. As we noted earlier, the early phase of the Reform was marked by a fascination with the books produced by early Anglo-Saxon authors, and, moreover, with the "golden age" of seventh and eighth-century monasticism.[66] The Benedictine mode of observance was held to represent the pinnacle of the religious life, demanding from its followers strict codes of morality and self-sacrifice. These high standards, according to the reformers, had been scandalously abandoned in the century-and-a-half between Aldhelm and Edgar. "Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", a text composed by Æthelwold as the prologue to Old English copies of the Rule, goes into some

[64] Leclerq, *Love of Learning*, 75.
[65] For some similar reading of the significance of this iconography, see O'Reilly, "Text und Bild", 104.
[66] For broader discussion, see especially Simon Coates, "Perceptions of the Anglo-Saxon Past in the Tenth-Century Monastic Reform Movement", *Studies in Church History* 33 (1997): 61-74.

detail about this glorious monastic past.[67] This text, which we shall explore in more depth later on in the discussion, evokes the loss of Benedictine practices throughout the kingdom and details their tenth-century restoration. St. Benedict's Rule in the prologue is cited as that which was once authoritatively established by Augustine and Gregory "on Angelcynnes mynsterum" ("in the monasteries of the Anglo-Saxons").[68] As the image in the Arundel Psalter intimates, Benedict's *Regula* thus represents the proper basis for English monasticism, from which Anglo-Saxon religious must derive their devotions.

The concept of the Rule as part of the bibliographic inheritance of tenth-century monasticism is one which finds specific expression in books linked to the Reform. Some significant evidence in this regard comes in an eleventh-century compilation of texts relating to the movement (London, British Library, MS Tiberius A.iii). This manuscript contains portions of both the Latin and Old English Rule and a text, known as the *Regularis concordia,* developed by Æthelwold and Dunstan as a consuetudinary supplement to the *Regula*.[69] Like the Arundel Psalter, the volume's content has been identified as a later copy of that which once circulated during the mid-tenth-century Reform.[70] Of especial interest in the manuscript are two full-page miniatures. One of these, acting as the frontispiece to the codex's copy of the Rule, shows St. Benedict with a copy of his *Regula* [**Figure 21**]. This frontispiece, with its emphasis on Benedictine bibliography, encodes a particularly powerful representation of the Rule in relation to Anglo-Saxon monasticism.

Laid out on folio 117v, the miniature, though now somewhat faded, represents a lavish depiction of St. Benedict and his monks. Benedict, in the top register of the image, is shown in flowing robes with a golden trim. On his cope he wears a pallium, a signal of his abbatial status. On his head is a band inscribed "Pater". The abbot holds open in his left hand a large book, which rests on a draped lectern. This book, though now rubbed, bears text derived from the Benedictine Rule. To Benedict's right are three acolytes, who stand before their master and raise their hands in gestures of debate. Two of these followers hold books, which are also

[67] For discussion of this text and its authorship, see Dorothy Whitelock, "The Authorship of the Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", in *Philological Essays. Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt,* ed. James L. Rosier (Mouton: The Hague, 1970, 125-36.
[68] "c. 970 x 984. An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", in *Councils & Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church,* vol. 1, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C.N.L. Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 145.
[69] For an overview of the codex, see Helmut Gneuss, "Origin and Provenance of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: The Case of Cotton Tiberius A.iii", in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M.B. Parkes,* ed. P.R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Ashgate: Scolar Press, 1997), 13-48.
[70] For discussion, see Gameson, "English Manuscript Art", 77.

inscribed with (now illegible) passages from the Rule. In the lower register of the scene, a monk on the left kneels before a lectern. On the right, a second monk in a voluminous habit looks up to Benedict and holds a long flowing scroll. This scroll is inscribed with the text, "… libenter excipe et efficaciter comple ut ad eum per oboedientie laborem redeas a quo per in[oboedientie] …" ("… [understand] with willing mind and effectually fulfil [your holy father's admonition]; so that you may return, by the labour of obedience, to Him from whom, by the idleness of disobedience, you had withdrawn …").[71]

Though sometimes described as a presentation "portrait", the iconography of the book in this scene is complex and multivalent. The book of the Rule is depicted three times in the top register of the image, and again, in scroll-form, in the lower tier. The division of the scene, and its books, into different compartments, accords especial prominence to the codex, which is mirrored and echoed across several different registers of the imagery. Benedict's volume in the top centre of the scene is visually paralleled by the codices held by his followers, which might be read as symbols of monastic disputation and debate. Though rendered rather differently, the lowermost monk's scroll provides an echo of the books of the Rule above. As in the Arundel Psalter, the scroll-form adds visual diversity to the depiction of the monastic book. This book-scroll, which bears text taken from the translation of the Old English Rule, also encodes a special focus on the authority and devotional power of the Rule. In this, we may note the language of "oboedientie" and submission to the Rule so central to Benedictine observance.

Importantly, however, we might also observe the special significance of this imagery, which, in being prefaced to the Anglo-Saxon Rule, sets up visual interconnections between books. Benedict's book, whilst accorded a special status on the draped lectern, touches the edges of the first acolyte's codex, which appears almost to flow from the abbot's volume across the manuscript page. This second volume is echoed, in turn, by that of the final monk in the upper register, whose outstretched hand appears to touch the codex carried by the first acolyte. The three books in the top register gradually shift in alignment from left to right, from Benedict's horizontal volume, to the first follower's slightly raised book, to the fully vertical codex held aloft on the far right. This visual placement, in which the books appear to visually progress across the image, seemingly re-enacts the transmission of the Rule from Benedict to

[71] For further, detailed iconographic description of this scene, see Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus*", 206-7.

his followers.[72] Insofar as the final book is that which is held upright and overlaps with the frame of the manuscript image, we might even interpret this volume as that which is held open to the Anglo-Saxon viewer of the manuscript.

The complexity of this iconography yet deepens in the lower portion of the image. Beneath Benedict and his acolytes in the top register, the lowermost monk holds another representation of the Rule. The text of the scroll is that derived, again, from the *Regula*. In this case, unlike the inscribed books in St. Dunstan's Classbook and the Arundel Psalter, these words are not those of Benedict's opening address, but rather those which follow it. Though the text on the books in the top register of the scene is illegible, it seems likely that these codices would once have borne the opening text of the *Regula.* The inscribed scroll held by the lower monk is thus that which follows on, directly, from the books held above. This scroll, providing a powerful iconographic reimagination of the Benedictine book, here visually re-enacts the transmission of the Rule as a flowing "link", which moves from the books of the Rule in the top register to the book-as-scroll in the lower section of the imagery.[73] The subordinate postures of the monks in the lower tier, who inhabit a different register of the pictorial space, might perhaps point to their identity as Anglo-Saxon Benedictines. If this is the case, the scene reflects the direct transmission of the Rule from Benedict, through his followers, to English monks, who become the final link in this bibliographic "chain" of Benedictine books.[74]

Bound By the Yoke of the Rule: One Book and One Rule

The devotional and historical significance of the monastic book as it is presented in contemporary sources sheds light on the way contemporaries developed sophisticated strategies for depicting the Benedictine codex. These strategies are indicated further in one of the most significant books associated with the tenth-century Reform: the *Regularis concordia*. The *Regularis concordia,* a consuetudinary produced c. 970, goes into some detail about the authoritative basis for the Reform movement. A copy of the *Concordia* appears, as we noted above, in the Tiberius codex, wherein it is prefaced by a striking miniature [**Figure 22**].[75] This frontispiece, which we shall return to later on in our analysis, encodes a particularly powerful image of the book-scroll, here rendered not as the Rule but as the Anglo-Saxon consuetudinary.

[72] For discussion of contemporary Benedictine iconography as encoding a particular focus on textual transmission and the demonstration of authority, see Karkov, *Art of Anglo-Saxon England,* 109-11.
[73] Karkov, *Art of Anglo-Saxon England,* 109-10.
[74] For broader discussion of the idea of intertextual *catenae* in Reform-era documents, see Joyce Hill, *Bede and the Benedictine Reform* (Jarrow: St. Paul's Church, 1998), 4-9.
[75] For broader discussion of the manuscript contexts of the *Regularis,* see Joyce Hill, "The 'Regularis Concordia' and its Latin and Old English Reflexes, *RB* 101 (1991): 299-315.

Overall, however, as we shall first observe, the *Regularis concordia* offers a striking vision of the place of the Benedictine book within the English Reform.

Issued relatively late in the movement, the *Regularis concordia* represents an attempt to regularise the monastic houses presided over by the major leaders of the Reform. Though copies of the Rule and other liturgical books had been transmitted to each reformed institution, the movement had, by the 970s, developed such that a diversity of practices were found in each individual foundation. The centrality of the Benedictine book to monastic observance made greater clarity on the shared principles of the movement imperative. The *Regularis,* whilst glorying in the expansion of the movement, accordingly lays out more stringent guidance for Benedictine houses across the kingdom. Noting how "regulari … sancti patris Benedicti norman honestissime suscepta" ("the Rule of the holy Father Benedict had been accepted with the greatest goodwill") [**App. §2.2/1**], the text observes how it is now time to produce a further volume, the *Regularis* itself, to support and guide the interpretation of the *Regula*.[76]

The prologue to the *Regularis concordia* foregrounds an especially vivid description of Benedictine book-culture. As scholars have repeatedly shown, the *Regularis concordia* represents a complex synthesis or "patchwork" of books, derived both from the reformers' Continental exemplars and their English monastic models.[77] Following Dom. Thomas Symons' evaluation of the text, one can detect an assimilation of influences in this document, drawn from Benedict of Aniane, the Roman liturgy, and customs from Fleury and Ghent.[78] Significantly, however, the *Regularis concordia* itself foregrounds this synthesis, explaining how it has fused Gallic and Roman traditions, and "quaeque ex dignis eorum moribus honesta colligentes" ("gathered from their praiseworthy customs much that was good") [**App. §2.2/17-18**]. The authority of this assimilation is indicated in the text's observation that the Anglo-Saxon Church leaders "accitis Florensis beati Benedicti … monachis" ("summoned monks from St. Benedict's monastery at Fleury") [**App. §2.2/16-17**], thus setting up a direct textual link between the English customary and the Continental foundation which housed the abbot's relics.[79]

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[76] All references to this text are taken from Dom Thomas Symons, ed. and trans., *Regularis Concordia Anglicae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque; The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation* (London: Nelson, 1953). Selected passages have been reproduced as **Appendix §2.2).**

[77] Symons, "*Regularis Concordia*: History and Deviation", 44.

[78] Symons, "*Regularis Concordia*: History and Derivation", 45-59.

[79] For discussion of the influence of Fleury on the Anglo-Saxon Reform, see Marco Mostert, "Relations Between Fleury and England', in *England and the Continent,* ed. Rollason, Leyser and Williams, 185-208. See also John Nightingale, "Oswald, Fleury and the Continental Reform", in *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence,* ed. Nicholas Brooks and Catherine Cubitt (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), 23-45.

The consuetudinary notes, further, how this assimilation is just like, "uti apes fauum nectaris diueresis pratorum floribus in uno aluerio" ("[the way] honey is gathered by bees from all manner of wild flowers and collected into one hive") [**App. §2.2/18**]. Such customs, metaphorically gathered by bee-like monks, have, moreover, been specifically synthesised into the *Regularis*: "ita has morum consuetudines … hoc exiguo apposuerunt codicello" ("the said monastic customs … [were] embodied in this small book") [**App. §2.2/18-23**]. This powerful description of bibliographic assembly posits the "codicello" of the *Regularis* as the apotheosis of a complex process of textual tradition and assimilation. Produced through the gathering and assimilation of Benedictine books, the *Regularis* emerges as that which authoritatively derives from the originary "flowers" of sacred monastic texts. This process, recalling the idea of bibliographic interconnection and inheritance in the Tiberius Benedict scene, creates an extremely powerful image of the authority of the English monastic book.

The imagery of bees and books in the *Regularis,* if familiar from Alfredian and Æthelstanian descriptions of book-learning, is here derived directly from Aldhelm. In making clear its affinity to Continental Benedictine monasticism, the style and lexis of the prologue thus also makes an apposite connection with the books of the earlier monastic "golden age". The Aldhelmian imagery of bees gathering honey from books is given pointed emphasis, with the customs of many previous monastic houses being gathered into "uno aluerio" ("one hive"). Here the "hive" is metaphorically the one "codicello" or "little book" that the text notes to have resulted from this process of assimilation. Following Augustine Casiday's analysis of Aldhelmian apian metaphor, we might also note the social connotations of this imagery, wherein the monastic community, in gathering books "like bees", is also comparable to a single, united hive.[80] The Aldhelmian bees offer a particularly vivid visual metaphor for these textual and social processes, figuring the production of the *Regularis* as one involving a cross-pollination of books. The book is not just that which is deployed to propagate and regularise the movement, but is itself figured in language evocative of the legitimising links between Benedictine, Roman and Anglo-Saxon codices.

In drawing attention to the cross-currents between the spiritual and authoritative portrayal of Anglo-Saxon monastic book-culture in the *Regularis,* we might also note some differences with the depictions we discussed earlier. The opening of the *Regularis concordia* notes, somewhat anxiously, how the new houses were "una fide, non tamen uno consuetudinis

[80] Casiday, "St. Aldhelm's Bees", 12-18.

usu" ("united in one faith, though not in one manner of monastic usage") [**App. §2.2/3**]. Even more ominously, the text also hints at the broader consequences of a divided monastic observance, "ne impar ac uarius unius regulae ac unius patriae usus probrose uituperium sanctae conuersationi irrogaret" ("lest differing ways of observing the customs of one Rule and one country should bring their holy conversation into disrepute") [**App. §2.2/8-10**]. This imagery of "one-ness" is reinforced throughout the rhetoric of the *Regularis's* prologue, which, as we have seen, also invokes the ideal of "uno aluerio" ("one hive") and its communal production of one "codicello". This would appear to highlight the particular importance, in the 970s, of the monastic book as a unitary ideal. In the subtle, insinuating rhetoric of the text, "one hive"; "one country" and "one Rule" are all grounded in the *Regularis's* powerful vision of the importance of one, unifying "codicello" to support the movement.

With these readings of the *Regularis* in mind, we might scrutinise more closely the text's frontispiece in the Tiberius codex [**Figure 22**]. This miniature, evoking iconography found elsewhere in the manuscript, presents a striking vision of the monastic book. Divided into two registers, the scene shows, in its upper tier, three prominent figures seated under an arcade. To the far left and right the figures are shown with haloes and wearing monastic robes. The figure in the centre, clad in long robes and a cloak, also wears a crown. All three protagonists carry a long scroll which loops and undulates across the width of the scene. Beneath their feet in the lower register of the image, a tonsured monk wearing a habit bends his neck to look at the scene above. This monk holds a slightly shorter scroll which mirrors that in the top tier of the miniature. Following the traditional iconographic interpretation of the scene, we may identify the two clerics in the upper part of the scene as Dunstan and Æthelwold. The central figure is Edgar, their royal patron. The scroll held between them and visually echoed in the lower part of the scene is the *Regularis concordia.*[81]

This image of the *Regularis concordia* is one with clear iconographic links to the depiction of St. Benedict with books and scrolls found later on in the Tiberius codex, and, more distantly, to the Arundel miniature. We might note here, however, the special insistence on the *Regularis* as a book-scroll, which almost literally links together the leaders of the Reform. If we have observed the utility of the scroll as that which represents liturgical inscription or the "flowing" chain of bibliographic tradition, the motif serves visually, in the frontispiece, to represent the unity and singular authority of the consuetudinary. Dunstan, Æthelwold and

[81] For a further close reading of the Tiberius portrait, see Karkov, *Art of Anglo-Saxon England,* 109-14.

Edgar are joined through the unified form of one book-scroll. This scroll, gathering together the diverse representatives of the movement, assimilates different types of authority into one "codicello" in much the same manner as stated in the *Regularis*. This book-scroll, moreover, is then that transmitted to the Benedictine monks, represented by the near-identical scroll in the lower register. The unity and identity of these scrolls are thus marshalled to denote the unified authority of the Benedictine book.

By way of drawing together these observations, some further, highly evocative, descriptions found in the *Regularis concordia* seem important. A further passage of the *Regularis's* prologue describes how the text has been issued such that, "regularia praecepta tenaci mentis ancora" ("the minds [of monks] [are] anchored firmly on the ordinances of the Rule") [**App. §2.2/8**]. This imagery of anchoring on a single consuetudinary is repeated and varied several lines later in the text, where one finds the idea that monks "uita comite iugo regulae deditos" ("[live] all their life under the yoke of the Rule") [**App. §2.2/28**]. These images of anchoring and yoking form a fitting development of the idea of the "linking chain" that produces one authoritative monastic book. One might argue that a conception of the Benedictine book as an anchor or yoke has particular significance in the Reform-era images of scrolls. The scroll held by the lower-most monk in the Tiberius frontispiece to the *Regularis,* for example, is not simply held aloft by him in acknowledgement of his reception of the text, but twines and unfurls around his body. The exaggerated, twisted pose of the monk echoes the loops of his scroll. This scroll, like that in the manuscript's Benedict scene [**Figure 21**], is shown to snake around the monk's waist and disappear behind the sleeves of his habit. In this, one gains a powerful sense of the literal and spiritual implications of the monk's vocation as it binds him to the Rule. Further, and perhaps more importantly, such book-scrolls strongly emphasise the notion of bibliographic unity and "one-ness" in the reception and communal implementation of a complex monastic tradition.

§2.3) "Monarchic Monasticism"?: Kings and Books Revisited

The depictions explored in the foregoing part of the discussion indicate how the reformers portrayed the book as both the foundational principle of the monastic life and as a unifying symbol of the cohesion of the tenth-century Reform. As the textual and visual portrayals explored so far suggest, this "unity" yet had wider connotations. The portrayal of King Edgar in Tiberius A.iii and the invocation of "unius regulae ac unius patriae" in the *Regularis Concordia* indicate the extent to which broader political themes emerge in reformist depictions

of the codex. In this, the portrayal of bibliographic kingship, so familiar from our analysis in Chapter One, again becomes a theme of key importance. As we shall see in this section, the depiction of royal books in the Reform provides a further, albeit sometimes ambiguous, reflection on the symbolic status of the book in relation to reformed monasticism.

Royal "Co-Authorship" and the Book as Sanction

If the books and manuscript imagery associated with the height of the Reform have been subject to intensive scholarly discussion, one theme in particular has emerged as particularly important: the role of the king in the Reform.[82] The Benedictine movement, if incipient in the 930s and 940s, gained traction only with the ascent of Edgar to the throne in 959.[83] Edgar's sponsorship of the movement is underscored repeatedly in the prologue to the *Regularis Concordia,* where the king is cast as a protector of monasteries and a defender of the Benedictine faith.[84] The portrayals of the book in such sources, if principally indicative of monastic themes, are yet cast within a distinctively political framework, in which royal authority and authorisation emerge as key ideas.

An initial insight into Edgar's role in the movement comes in a visual source that we touched on earlier in our discussion. This is the frontispiece to the Tiberius manuscript of the *Regularis concordia,* which, though post-dating the main phase of the Reform, reflects a copy of a much earlier scene.[85] The Tiberius image, as we noted previously, contains a particularly evocative portrayal of the book as a scroll binding its recipients within the unity of the Rule. In addition, it foregrounds King Edgar's authoritative role within the movement. Divided into two registers, the frontispiece contains, in its lower portion, the image of the monk bound by his scroll discussed earlier. In the upper register of the image, Dunstan and Æthelwold, shown on the far left and right, hold up the *Regularis concordia* expressed as a long, flowing scroll. In the centre of the scene, King Edgar shares in this symbolism, holding up the central section of the scroll. Shown crowned and enthroned, Edgar is afforded direct involvement with the promulgation of the *Concordia*.

If we have previously observed the multifaceted symbolism of the book in this scene, we might also note the particular emphasis accorded to the king. Edgar's status and authority

[82] For an early discussion of Edgar's role in the Reform, see Eric John, "The King and the Monks in the Tenth-Century Reformation", *Orbis Britanniae, and Other Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), 154-80.
[83] For a general overview of the reign and its chronology, see Keynes, "Edgar, *rex admirabilis*", 3-58.
[84] Symons, ed., *Regularis Concordia*, 7.
[85] For discussion, see Gameson, "English Manuscript Art", 77.

are indicated by his frontal enthronement and the central position he takes between the two leaders of the Reform. The king's royal status is indicated by the prominence of his crown, which reaches higher in the scene than the halos worn by Dunstan and Æthelwold. Despite this indication of royal authority, Edgar appears to wear quasi-clerical dress, including a full-length robe and a long cloak. This clothing is notably distinct from the short tunic usually worn in royal iconography, and appears to accord the king a measure of ecclesiastical status beside his monastic counterparts.[86] Edgar's right hand is fastened around the scroll of the *Regularis;* in his left another section of the scroll slips through his fingers as he raises a hand of blessing.[87] Despite the similar gestures made by Dunstan and Æthelwold, these prelates turn to look at Edgar, so emphasising the significance of the king's role. As Catherine E. Karkov has argued, this scene might reflect the collective composition of the *Regularis,* in which Dunstan, Æthelwold and Edgar are accorded equal responsibility for the production and transmission of the text.[88] Insofar as the monk in the lower register looks directly up at the king as he holds aloft the scroll, one finds a particularly suggestive indication of Edgar's power in authorising and promulgating the consuetudinary book.

Such ideas about the specific role of the king in producing and sanctioning Benedictine books are indicated in other contemporary sources. An important text in this regard is "Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", the vernacular prologue to the translation of the Rule. This text, as we noted earlier, contains a particularly evocative description of the Anglo-Saxon monastic past. It also goes into some detail about the king's involvement with the movement, from his early education under Æthelwold, to a childhood promise made by Edgar to restore English monasteries. The piece opens with an account of the way the king sponsored the enrichment and restoration of Benedictine foundations, most notably at Abingdon. More surprisingly, the prologue also records how the king was himself concerned, "smeagan & ahsian be þam gebodum þæs halgan regules" ("to investigate and inquire about the precepts of the holy Rule") [**App. §2.3/22-3**] and how he wished, "witan wolde þæs sylfan regules lare" ("to know the teaching of that same rule") [**App. §2.3/23**].

[86] For further discussion, see Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 245-9.
[87] For an alternative reading of the possible performativity of the scene, see Benjamin Withers, "Interaction of Word and Image in Anglo-Saxon Art II: Scrolls and Codex in the Frontispiece to the *Regularis concordia*", *OEN* 31, no. 1 (1998): 38-40.
[88] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 95. For a somewhat earlier discussion of this idea, see Robert Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus*", 205.

This portrayal of royal interest in Benedictine book culture is augmented, several lines later, by a more explicit description. Æthelwold's evocation of royal piety is bolstered by an account of Edgar's personal involvement in reformist book production. Noting the king's close interest in the Rule, the discussion relates how, "þurh þises wisdoms lust he het þisne regul of lædengereorde on englisc geþeodan" ("out of a wish for this knowledge he commanded this rule to be translated from the Latin speech into the English language") [**App. §2.3/26-7**]. This is such that all men, whether learned or unlearned, can so benefit from the Rule. Intriguingly, as David Pratt has noted, this point in the text sees a sudden syntactic shift, such that the first-person voice of the king is abruptly introduced as he declares: "ic þ[onne] geþeode to micclan gesceade telede" ("I therefore consider translation a very sensible thing") [**App. §2.3/33-4**].[89] This passage, as Pratt notes, portrays Edgar as a "bookish king" in much the same mould as earlier Anglo-Saxon rulers.[90] We might add that this characterisation also imputes to Edgar a degree of authorial responsibility for the translation of the Rule. Here the royal command for the translation ("he *het* þisne regul"; my emphasis), might be compared with King Alfred's similar commands ("hateð gretan"; "cyðan hate") in the *Pastoral Care*. Like the reformers, Edgar is portrayed here as undergoing a process of bibliographic scrutiny and re-evaluation comparable to that which took place in the "proto-Reform". More significantly, however, it is his authority and status as a ruler that then gives sanction to the production of English Benedictine books, depicted, with such power, in the Tiberius frontispiece.

Perhaps the most important indication of these ideas in the Reform yet comes in a manuscript context that we have not yet explored. This is the codex known as the "New Minster Charter" (London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A.viii). This manuscript, dated to c. 966, contains a particularly vivid set of reflections on the importance of the king's books in establishing and authorising the Benedictine movement. Produced c. 966, this lavish, tiny, volume records the foundation of the monastery at the New Minster, Winchester in 964.[91] The "New Minster Charter", announcing this process, also foregrounds the important role of the king in authorising the monks' activities. Whilst ostensibly a diploma, the charter has been laid out as a liturgical book, written in gold letters set within ornamental golden frames. Composed throughout in dense, "hermeneutic" Latin, the text explains how Edgar expelled the clerical

[89] Pratt, "The Voice of the King", 157-62.
[90] Pratt, "The Voice of the King", 148.
[91] S 745. For an edition and translation of the charter, see Alexander R. Rumble, ed., *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester: Documents Relating to the Topography of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman City and its Minsters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 74-97.

community at Winchester and installed, in their place, Benedictine monks, whose devotions and strict monastic observances are outlined by the charter.

On folio 2v of this manuscript, one finds a magnificent frontispiece reflecting this foundational moment of the Reform [**Figure 23**]. Enclosed within an ornate foliate frame, the image shows Edgar in the act of offering his charter to God. The king, shown at the bottom centre of the image, raises his hands up to the heavens. Clad in a sumptuous cloak and wearing a crown, he holds, in his right hand, a small book. To his left stands the Virgin Mary, bearing a palm and cross.[92] To his right is St. Peter, holding his keys and a golden book.[93] In the upper register of the image, a golden mandorla supported by angels contains Christ, who is seated on a throne. His right hand is held aloft in a gesture of blessing; in his left is a small, golden codex. Opposite the scene on the facing page of the manuscript is an elaborate verse inscription: "SIC CELSO RESIDET SOLIO QUI CONDIDIT//ASTRA REX VENERANS EDGAR PRONUS ADORAT EUM" ("Thus he sits on his lofty throne, [he] who created the stars; King Edgar, inclined to veneration, worships him") [**Figure 24**].

This powerful portrayal of Edgar reflects directly on the king's support for the Reform. The image, foregrounding Edgar's relationship with the divine, is carefully focused on the intercessory role of the king in authorising the refoundation of the New Minster. Edgar's small book has been identified as a representation of the charter itself, which, similarly cast as a book in the Vespasian volume, seems designed to reflect the holy symbolism of the codex.[94] Held aloft in Edgar's right hand, the king's small, golden book is comparable to that held by Christ in his mandorla. In looking up to Christ, Edgar's open hand and golden volume might be said, additionally, to appear to mirror the codex and gesture of blessing made by the Lord. Both volumes are comparable, furthermore, to the thin codex held by St. Peter, which, with its golden covers and red binding is iconographically identical to that held by the king. Edgar's book-charter thus appears to gain holy sanction by comparison with both volumes, which, dispersed around the image, imbue the scene with multiple layers of bibliographic significance.

The tripartite symbolism of the book as it is shown in relation to Christ, Peter and Edgar sets the "New Minster Charter" within an authoritative matrix of holy sanction. Insofar as the

[92] For a discussion of the Marian iconography of this scene, see Jane E. Rosenthal, "The Image in the Arenberg Gospels of Christ Beginning to be 'What He Was Not'", in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought in the Early Medieval Period,* ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Pennsylvania University Press, 2011), 238-41.
[93] For a discussion of the iconography of St. Peter in the manuscript, see John Higgitt, "The Iconography of St. Peter in Anglo-Saxon England, and St. Cuthbert's Coffin", in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community,* ed. Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe, 282.
[94] Gameson, *Role of Art,* 6-7*;* 61.

image of Christ enthroned with a book is traditionally one which represents the eschatological power of the divine, we might interpret Christ's book as a "book of life", that divine volume containing the names of the saved that we discussed in Chapter One.[95] Peter's book, given the saint's role as guardian of heaven, might also be read as sharing in the symbolism of the *liber vitae,* Mirroring both these divine volumes, Edgar's charter is bound within several layers of sacred authority. In being cast as itself a holy codex, the Anglo-Saxon charter giving royal sanction to the Reform shares in the symbolic power of the Word of God. More than this, the New Minster volume is that which has "saved" and restored the foundation at Winchester from the perfidy of clerical abuses. Echoing Christ and St. Peter's "books of life", Edgar's codex is thus a powerful instrument of salvation, akin to the volume that Christ himself will open on Judgement Day.

"Christological" Kingship: The Divine Power of the Codex

As a key strand of research into Benedictine iconography has indicated, Edgar's authoritative role in the Reform yet relates to a much broader network of ideas. Analysis of the royal imagery found in the Tiberius codex and the "New Minster Charter" have highlighted the extent to which the reformers, and particularly Bishop Æthelwold at Winchester, sought to capitalise on the sacred symbolism of the royal office. In a recent re-reading of the "New Minster" charter, Adam S. Cohen has suggested that the frontispiece is markedly unusual in its royal iconography.[96] Cohen calls attention to Edgar's pose in the scene, in which the king's head and upper body are twisted and contorted as he raises his arms to the mandorla.[97] In Cohen's reading, this "dancing" posture might correspond to a passage in *2 Samuel 6*, where David is said to have danced before the Ark of the Lord.[98] Anglo-Saxon rulers, such as King Alfred, were often compared to King David in their humility and piety. Here, however, Edgar's posture is couched as a direct reflection of Davidic rulership, with parallels, as Cohen demonstrates, in Carolingian iconography.[99]

Such a reading, if suggestive of the sophistication of Benedictine ideals, also serves to deepen an understanding of the book in the scene. In casting Edgar as a type of David, one gains an even more nuanced sense of the king's authoritative status. This we might note, would

[95] For a discussion of the iconographic role of the *liber vitae* in the portrait, see Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus*", 223-5.
[96] Adam S. Cohen, "King Edgar Leaping and Dancing Before the Lord", in *Imagining the Jew in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture,* ed. Samantha Zacher (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 219-36.
[97] Cohen, "King Edgar Leaping and Dancing", 221-4.
[98] Cohen, "King Edgar Leaping and Dancing", 228-36.
[99] Cohen, "King Edgar Leaping and Dancing", 225-8.

cast Edgar not merely as a suppliant king aiming to share in the symbolism of the "liber vitae", but would foreground him as the author of the Psalms. Given the central importance of the Psalter to the monastic life, this interpretation of the scene would add a further dimension to the Edgarian book, positioning the king himself as the compositor of this key biblical volume. The nexus of books in the New Minster Charter might thus be said not only to reflect the associative authority which Edgar's volume gains by being placed beside those of Christ and Peter, but rather on a powerful collapsing of bibliographic boundaries. The Davidic symbolism of the scene, extending to Edgar's book, might be said to draw out a complex series of connections between the Anglo-Saxon charter, the divine "liber vitae" and Edgar as the symbolic author of the Old Testament book.

This rich set of ideas about the king as a "type" of sacred ruler have been elucidated with particular power by Robert Deshman. As Deshman has shown, Reform-era iconography accords Edgar a symbolic status that far surpasses that of his predecessors.[100] We observed earlier how portrayals such as the frontispiece to the Tiberius manuscript [**Figure 22**] render the king in especially striking terms, affording him both royal and ecclesiastical accoutrements.[101] Deshman, however, has pushed these ideas further, arguing that the Tiberius codex's portrayal of Edgar is directly comparable to that of Benedict in the manuscript's second miniature. Through a close comparison of the iconography of these scenes, Deshman has pointed to the way both these figures are shown frontal and enthroned.[102] Edgar's robe, fastened with a chlamys around his shoulders, bears apparent similarities to the cope worn by the abbot. The long robes worn by both figures gather tightly at the waist and swirl in circles around the knees. Benedict's diadem, furthermore, might be compared with Edgar's crown as a marker of divinely-granted status. This, Deshman argues, "assimilates the king to the ideal abbot, Benedict, and conversely the diadem assimilates Benedict to the temporal ruler, Edgar".[103]

These arguments about the representation of Edgar in Reform-era iconography have exerted considerable influence over scholarly ideas about the reformers' ideology of rulership.[104] We might augment these ideas, however, by calling attention to the specific role of books in these images. If Edgar is to be understood as a type of Benedict, his promulgation

[100] Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus*", 204-40.
[101] For further discussion of Edgar's garments in this scene, see Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Image Making: Portraits of Anglo-Saxon Church Leaders", in *Leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Church,* ed. Alexander R. Rumble (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 119.
[102] Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monarchus*", 205-7.
[103] Deshman, "*Benedictus Monarcha et Monarchus*", 206.
[104] For some further readings, in this case in a broader perspective, see Hoffman, *Buchkunst und Königtum,* 24-36.

of the *Regularis concordia* in the Tiberius frontispiece emerges as a symbolic echo, not merely of the consuetudinary, but of the Rule itself. Just as Benedict promulgates his book of the Rule in the manuscript's second scene, so too does Edgar transmit the English consuetudinary. Whilst Benedict transmits a codex as opposed to a scroll, we might note that the scroll-form appears in the second image to denote the Anglo-Saxon "inheritance" of the Rule by the lowermost monk. We might thus posit a symbolic connection between Edgar's scroll and the book of the *Regula* as it is depicted in the manuscript. Crucially, we might also observe that Edgar's "ruler portrait", though now the first miniature in the Tiberius codex, once followed the Rule (and thus the depiction of St. Benedict) in the original foliation of the manuscript.[105] The scroll of the Rule in the second scene was thus once the iconographic precursor to the scroll held by Edgar and the Reform leaders in that miniature. This adds weight to a reading of Edgar's scroll as not only an indication of his abbatial authority, but as itself a type of the Rule. In this, one finds, as in the New Minster Charter, a multivalent portrayal of the book, in which royal authorship is augmented by the symbolic association between the king and a holy author.

The complexity of the Tiberius manuscript's presentation of royal/sacred bibliography might yet be pushed further with recourse to some wider ideas. Catherine E. Karkov, drawing on the work of Ernst Kantorowicz, has pointed to the symbolic connotations of the manuscript's "ruler portrait".[106] Karkov notes how the scroll carried by Edgar in the scene bisects his body, a feature with parallels in Ottonian iconography.[107] One important context in this regard is that found in the Aachen Gospels (Aachen, Aachener Domschatzkammer Inv-Nr25, f. 16r), wherein Otto III is shown enthroned below the Hand of God [**Figure 25**]. Set within a mandorla reminiscent of those used for Christ, Otto's body is partially obscured by a long, flowing banderole. This banderole has been identified by Kantorowicz as a symbolic manifestation of the veil of the Tabernacle, the material described in the bible as screening the holy place in the Ark of the Covenant.[108] In so "screening" or dividing the ruler's body, one finds a symbolic representation of the king's "two bodies", one earthly and material; the other holy and sacred.[109] This represents a type of "christocentric" kingship, in which the ruler is

[105] For discussion, see Tracey-Anne Cooper, *Monk-Bishops and the English Benedictine Reform Movement* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2015), 20.
[106] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 95-9.
[107] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 95-6. For Karkov's later expansion of this discussion, see Karkov, "The Frontispiece to the New Minster Charter and the King's Two Bodies", in *Edgar, King of the English,* ed. Scragg, 239-41.
[108] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 66-9.
[109] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies,* 69-77.

shown as a type of Christ.[110] Karkov has argued that one can draw distinct parallels between the Ottonian scene and that in the Tiberius manuscript, where Edgar's flowing scroll makes a similar division of the king's body.[111] As she also observes, "the book [Edgar's scroll] might also be understood as a metaphor for the king himself as it too was an earthly material body, while the Rule it contained was enduring law".[112]

By analogy with other contemporary Anglo-Saxon portrayals of Edgar, we might yet note the implications of this symbolism for the royal book. It is important to note, alongside Karkov's findings, that the book-scroll held by Edgar is not simply a manifestation of his personal or official "body", but represents a specifically bibliographic type of power.[113] Otto's banderole in the Aachen Gospels is rather different in this regard, portrayed as a piece of drapery rather than as a textual object. The symbolism of the scroll in the Tiberius scene, if deliberately evocative of Ottonian royal imagery, is yet firmly couched within the network of textual associations we noted earlier. The comparisons between the veil, with its Christological connotations, and the book-scroll suggest not a straightforward authoritative analogy between the persons of Edgar and Christ, but rather a reading of the scroll as a particularly holy object, invested with divine power and representing the Word of God. Sharing in the powerful symbolism of the veil, Benedict's *Rule* and the Anglo-Saxon *Regularis,* the scroll here becomes an apparent reification of several holy books and objects.

We might also note here the significance of the scroll elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon iconography. Whilst developed as a distinctive type of "book" during the Reform, one also comes across this visual type in other contexts, especially in evangelist portraits. One might point, for instance, to a portrait of St. Mark in a codex known as the "Royal Bible" (London, British Library, MS Royal 1. E.vi, f. 30v) [**Figure 26**]. This image, departing from more traditional evangelist iconography, shows Mark's composition not as a codex, but as a long, flowing scroll. This scroll is held, at the top of the image, by the Hand of God, and flows vertically down the length of the miniature past the evangelist's pen. In casting the book as a scroll, the artist of the Royal Bible has been able to indicate the transmission of the Word as it flows directly to the evangelist. This portrayal of the book thus sets up a clear indication of the sanctity of holy bibliography.

[110] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies,* 78.
[111] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 95-6.
[112] Karkov, *Art of Anglo-Saxon England,* 112.
[113] For Karkov's, somewhat different, articulation of this point, see Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 96.

If the Anglo-Saxon use of the scroll is so intended to indicate the specific sanctity of holy books, the book-scroll in the Tiberius scene itself becomes a specific symbol of the sacred nature of Edgar's volume. This symbolism, importantly, is predicated on a multivalent conception of the book, whether as the Rule, the *Regularis* or the Word of God. Edgar's role as a "type" of Christ, Benedict or David is thus grounded in a markedly bibliographic set of images, indexed closely to the authority of the Reform.

Beginning with Oneself in Books: Edgar as Monk-Abbot

The powerful assimilation between several "types" of royal, abbatial and divine book in the portrayals promulgated by the reformers reveal the key role of the codex in the ideology of Reform. Benedictine book-imagery, if carefully rooted in the sacred symbolism of the Rule and the Psalter, was yet indexed, as we have seen, to a much broader set of ideas, in which the authority of secular books and those of divine sanction were shown as indivisible parts of a salvific whole. The king's role, through being associated with these representations of the sacred book, seems especially important. In this, concluding part of the section, we may yet observe some of the more ambiguous or anomalous aspects of these portrayals.

An especially instructive source in this regard is "Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries", the prologue to the Old English Rule. Notwithstanding scholarly interest in the "Christological" model of Benedictine kingship, Edgar's books, in this text, are presented in a notably humble light. Set within an account of the king's sponsorship of the movement, Edgar's promotion or "authorship" of the Rule is indexed, not only to royal command, but to careful self-examination. Edgar is described not only as authoriser of the translation, but as using Benedictine book-learning to carefully reflect on his own moral status. In this, the prologue observes how Edgar "angan to smeagenne ærest þinga hu he his agen life gerihtlæcan meahte mid rihtre æfestnesse" ("began eagerly to inquire first of all how he could rectify his own life with true piety") [**App. §2.3/18-19**]. This moral scrutiny is the necessary precursor to the king's authorisation of the Reform, which occurs only "æfter þam þe he sylf geriht wearð" ("after he had been amended himself") [**App. §2.3/20**]. Importantly, and in rather pointed language, Æthelwold's text also observes: "Hit eac swa on bocum awriten is: 'Se þe god beginnan þence, he þæt angin on him sylfum astelle'" ("It is also written in books: 'He who plans to begin a good work, let him make a beginning with himself'") [**App. §2.3/19-20**].

Edgar's portrayal as a monk who must order himself, like Benedict's followers, through the observance of books, here provides an added nuance to the bibliographic imagery

associated with the reign. Contrasting somewhat with Deshman's observations about Edgar as a type of Benedict, these portrayals suggest a rather more humble royal association with books. Intimations of royal sin, as David Pratt notes, are carefully woven through the prologue to the Rule, casting the king in a distinctly penitential, as well as pious, light.[114] If to some degree a conventional *topos* for royal humility, Æthelwold's careful implication of Edgarian self-regulation according to the stringent precepts of the Rule is somewhat revealing. We might note here how Æthelwold's allusion to Edgar's childhood allegiance to the Reform, if indicative of precocious piety, also serves, in the text, to present the movement as that which the king is now duty bound to support by virtue of his youthful promise. In "beginning with himself" in books, the king is presented as much as a follower of the Reform as its spiritual leader.

If frequently discussed as a measure of powerful royal status, we might also interpret some of the nuances of Reform-era book iconography in light of these readings. Turning back to the Tiberius frontispiece, we might note how the king is less overtly glorified by God (as in the Aachen Gospels), but rather bound by the Rule in much the same way as his monastic counterparts. If we interpreted the scroll scene in Tiberius as an indication of Edgar's powerful authorship or typological authority, we might also note how the king's role is also visually ambiguous. Edgar, as opposed to the clerical leaders of the Reform, is mirrored by the monk directly below him in the lower register of the scene, setting up a visual relationship between the king and the Benedictine acolyte. This monk, whose twisting posture and raised head are indications of his humble reception of the Rule, might further be compared to the portrayal of Edgar in the New Minster Charter. This frontispiece, as we have seen, is one in which the king's body is twisted and his head inclined upwards to the divine [**Figure 23**]. This pose, if cited by Cohen as a marker of Davidic kingship, yet seems strongly paralleled by the posture of the subservient monk in the Tiberius image. The conception of royal-divine authority in books in the Reform imagery is thus given an added twist, as Edgar becomes both the authoritative representative of the Word, and, insofar as he is like a Benedictine monk, the humble recipient of this tradition and its precepts.

This alternative perspective on the Edgarian book, if seemingly in conflict with our earlier readings, yet flags up the complex cross-currents between monastic and royal depictions of the book. If Deshman and others have emphasised the quasi-divine significance of Edgar in

[114] Pratt, "The Voice of the King", 149-57.

Reform books, we might note that this symbolism was one firmly predicated on an ecclesiastical conception of the royal office. As commensurate with the needs of the reformers to gain the king's support for their movement, we find, on the one hand, an extraordinary elevation of Edgar's books, which become the representatives of Christ's Word. At the same time, the textual and visual portrayals created by the reformers cast the king as one humbled and "ordered" by the injunctions of the Rule. Here we are perhaps reminded, in a rather different context, of Karkov's observations about Edgar's "two bodies", spanning the earthly and personal and the symbolic and official. In casting Edgar as "David"; "Christ" or "Benedict", the reformers sought to capitalise not on the king's personal status but rather on the sacred connotations of his office.[115] Insofar as this office is one in which the king is guided and supported by bishops and abbots as God's representatives on earth, one detects a careful circumscription of Edgar's political (and bibliographical) role in these images.[116] This, we might argue, reflects the carefully-controlled nature of Æthelwoldian rhetoric and imagery surrounding books. It also hints, as we shall explore in more depth later on, at a skilful, and firmly monastic, representation of the book in support of reformed interests.

By way of concluding our observations on this theme, we might briefly discuss a further piece of visual evidence. This relates to an eleventh-century miniature produced in the "second generation" of the Reform. This miniature, now part of a Durham hymnal (Durham, Cathedral Library, B.III.32, f. 56v), is an almost exact copy of the scroll scene in the Tiberius manuscript [**Figure 27**]. The posture, facial expressions and monastic costume of the figures representing Dunstan and Æthelwold in the Durham codex almost exactly mirror those in the Tiberius volume. The monk in the lower register of the scene, if slightly squashed, is likewise strongly reminiscent of that in Tiberius.[117] Strikingly, however, the portrayal of King Edgar as the central figure in the upper register of the image has been totally removed from the Durham miniature. The scene, as Francis Wormald observes, has now been transformed into "a dialogue picture, the archbishop and his companion becoming masters in disputation".[118] Edgar's "co-authorship" and quasi-divine status in relation to the book has been totally elided, leaving intact the powerful symbolism of the monastic book-scroll.

[115] For this point, see also Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies,* 81-3.
[116] For further discussion of the reformers' careful representation of Edgar's role, see Adrienne Jones, "The Significance of the Regal Consecration of Edgar in 973", *JEH* 33, no. 3 (1982): 384-90.
[117] For discussion of this portrait, see Francis Wormald, "Two Anglo-Saxon Miniatures Compared", *British Museum Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1935): 113-5.
[118] Wormald, "Two Anglo-Saxon Miniatures", 114.

If this iconographic adaptation was developed following Edgar's death in 975, we accordingly find some suggestive evidence that the king's role in the movement was largely contingent on his temporary authority over divine books in accordance with his term of office. If circulated in copies of the Rule contemporary with the Reform, we find a clear indication that the reformers' iconography of bibliographic authority was by no means fully dependent upon the person of the king. The sophisticated portrayals developed by Æthelwold and his associates offer a representation of the book that asserts the temporal authority of the movement and, perhaps more importantly, emphasises the overarching power of holy, and specifically Benedictine, books. In this, we are perhaps returned to the unilateral authority of divine books so carefully developed from the "proto-Reform" period onwards. The codex, if marshalled as part of an elaborate set of ideas about royal and Benedictine authority in Anglo-Saxon England, is ultimately that which is derived from the Word of God, and transmitted, unilaterally, through Christ's saintly, and ecclesiastical, representatives.

Conclusion

The portrayal of monastic and royal books in the Benedictine Reform reflects an extraordinarily complex engagement with the image of the codex. Incipient in texts and images from the 930s, one finds the promulgation of a new conception of the book as that which relates, directly, to the powerful moral authority of the monastic vocation. Spread throughout Anglo-Saxon texts and images from the 960s and 970s, the Benedictine codex is portrayed as that which governs all aspects of the monastic life. The book is indexed, moreover, to a powerful assimilation of secular and sacred authority, in which royal, divine and saintly volumes cohere. The complex range of connotations attached to such books positions the Reform-era codex as a multivalent symbol, in which the boundaries between the Word in heaven; Benedictine book-history and the Anglo-Saxon codex are collapsed. As contemporary depictions suggest, Dunstan, Æthelwold and the leaders of the Reform skilfully deployed the image of the book within an array of important Benedictine volumes. These representations were designed to express, augment and carefully demonstrate the unique authority of the Benedictine book.

§3) Land and Book in the Benedictine Reform

The liturgical and consuetudinary volumes portrayed in relation to the Reform, if by far the most iconic manifestations of Benedictine book-culture, are not the only representations of the codex relevant in the period. As we saw in Chapter One, the Anglo-Saxon bibliographic imaginary was one which ranged widely, encompassing literary, liturgical and documentary

"bec". The charter or "land-boc", as we saw previously, is one such "type" of book with particular representative significance in late Anglo-Saxon sources. In the context of the Reform, the "land-book" is again important, issued both in support of the movement and discussed and portrayed in contemporary texts and images. In this section, we shall explore these depictions in more depth, asking how, and why, the reformers sought to capitalise on the symbolism of the legal "land-book". This discussion, as we shall see, involves careful consideration of the changing ideology of the book in the Reform period, which, at times, marshalled the image of the book in new and surprising contexts.

§3.1) Territory and Transaction: The Charter as Sacred Codex

The charter or "land-book", though often regarded as categorically distinct from the codex, represents a contemporary conceptualisation of the "boc" of key importance. The royal diploma, as we saw in the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan, was both the primary instrument of royal land endowment and added significantly to the representation of bibliographic kingship. In the context of the Reform, such land-books, issued in accordance with royal sanction, became of especial representative significance. The language and style of the "land-book" underwent considerable shifts in the mid-tenth century in tandem with these developments. Though ostensibly reliant on secular, royal authority, "book-land" and the "land-book" also became subject to the monastic ideology of authority and moral order. These ideas, as we shall see in this section, implicated the "land-book" within a particularly potent nexus of book imagery.

Land and Book in the Reform

Before examining these depictions in more detail, we might first observe the particular significance of the "land-book" in the Reform. The spread of the Benedictine movement in the 960s and 970s involved the establishment or refoundation of monasteries, whether at new sites, such as Abingdon and Ely, or the renovation of traditional clerical foundations, as at Winchester. This process was one which relied upon the legal transfer of land and property, conveyed through the land-book.[119] Scholarly work on contemporary charters has shown the reign of Edgar to be especially prolific for charter production, with some 160 such land-books

[119] The precise legal status of "bookland" in the period, and the "evidential" or "dispositive" nature of the "land-book", is however, disputed. For discussion, see Eric John, "Anglo-Saxon Charters: Evidentiary or Dispositive", *Land Tenure in Early England: A Discussion of Some Problems* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1960), 168-77.

now extant.[120] Though not all of these relate to the Reform, a considerable body of contemporary diplomas are concerned, either directly or indirectly, with the endowment of monastic lands at institutions across the southern and eastern areas of Edgar's kingdom.

The complexity of contemporary diplomatic and its interpretation is somewhat beyond the scope of our discussion here. Nevertheless, we might note the ideological role of the "land-book" in the period. As John Blair has observed, the English Reform was one reliant not on the spontaneous acceptance of Benedictine monasticism, but on its firm imposition through the political alliance of the reformers and the king.[121] The "New Minster Charter", that important diploma we discussed earlier, effects its "booking" of the foundation to monks through the stringent castigation of secular clerical landholders, who had forfeited their right to manage the foundation through their lascivious conduct and personal enrichment in land and property.[122] New monastic landholders, by contrast, were to manage their foundations communally, thus obeying the strict moral precepts of the Rule about poverty and humility.[123] At times, this shift implicated the reformers within territorial and legal controversy. As at Winchester, land legitimately owned "by book" by aristocratic or clerical holders was seized by force of royal and monastic authority and "re-booked" in favour of Benedictine foundations.[124] Such also appears to have occurred at Ely, the foundation re-established by Æthelwold in c. 970, where land grants, and disputes about the ownership of land and "land-books", receive particular treatment in contemporary sources.[125]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the reformers thereby accorded particular importance to this type of "boc", both as a means of legitimising the new, monastic landscape and in demonstrating the legal validity of the new "booked" territories. Though few original charters are now extant, it would seem likely that most institutions were issued with a considerable collection of "land-bec" to authenticate their holdings. It is probable, further, that foundations not only received miscellaneous charters "booking" individual parcels of land, but were granted a (re)foundation document, setting out the terms of the monastery's privileges and

[120] For an especially useful overview of these charters, see Simon Keynes, "A Conspectus of the Charters of King Edgar, 957-75", in *Edgar, King of the English,* ed. Scragg, 60-80.
[121] John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 341-54.
[122] Rumble, ed., *Property and Piety,* 81-2.
[123] For discussion of this shift in tenurial status, see John, "The King and the Monks", 154-80. See also John, "Some Charters of the Tenth-Century Reformation in England", *RB* 70 (1960): 333-59.
[124] For some further discussion of this, see Alexander R. Rumble, "The Laity and the Monastic Reform in the Reign of Edgar", in *Edgar, King of the English,* ed. Scragg, 245-9.
[125] For discussion, see A.G. Kennedy, "Law and Litigation in the *Libellus Æthelwoldi episcopi*", *ASE* 24 (1995): 131-83.

securing its lands *in toto*. One such privilege, the lavish "New Minster Charter", gives some indication of the powerful symbolism of the land-book in the period. Others, such as the refoundation charter issued by Edgar to Abingdon Abbey in c. 971, are particularly striking in their formulation. The Abingdon charter, opening with a magnificent proem describing the Creation and Fall, secures the monastic lands with some especially stringent anathemata against potential malefactors.[126]

The Representation of the "Land-Book" in the Reform

The contextual importance of the land-book in the Reform yet belies some further, significant, features. One such feature, crucial to our discussion, is the reflexive importance of the "boc" within the "land-book". As scholars including Rolf H. Bremmer and Ben Snook have shown, Edgarian diplomas are notable for their rhetorical formulation and literary style.[127] We might bolster these observations by noting the representative importance of the "land-book", its style and lexis, from within contemporary "bec" linked to the Reform.

To begin the analysis, we might productively turn back to the corpus of charters linked to Æthelwoldian institutions. The Abingdon charter mentioned briefly above transfers its monastic lands with particular reference to the importance of the diploma itself. This land-book, as is perhaps fitting for the first of Æthelwold's new foundations, places particular stress on the importance of the document, invoking it as "huius libertatis" ("this [charter] of liberty"); "huius priuilegii libertas" ("this charter of privileges").[128] These terms, cognate with the Old English "land-book", recur across the corpus. Further, and perhaps more significantly, the charter describes the land-book as "huius munificentie singrapha" ("this written contract of munificence"), invoking a term, "singrapha" ("written deed; contract"), familiar from the "hermeneutic" vocabulary propagated by Aldhelm.[129] Later in the diploma, Æthelwold signs and authenticates the document with an especial flourish, drawing on the Grecism "sintagma", a term meaning "written treatise"; "doctrine", and which also appears in Alcuin to denote sacred writings.[130] As it appears in the charter, this, markedly elevated, term thus seems

[126] S 673.
[127] Rolf H. Bremmer, "The Final Countdown: Apocalyptic Expectations in Anglo-Saxon Charters", in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse,* ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riano (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 505-14; Ben Snook, *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: The History, Language and Production of Anglo-Saxon Charters from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 159-88.
[128] S 673.
[129] For further discussion of these terms in Reform-era charters, see John, "Some Charters of the Tenth-Century", 333-59.
[130] *DMLBS,* "syntagma".

designed to evoke the authority of other, holy "bec" in the authorisation of the secular "land-book".

Such language, if suggestive of the special status of the reformist charter, might yet be analysed further. In this, the vernacular terminology of such land-books seems of especial importance. S 806, a charter issued by Edgar to Winchester at the height of the Reform, does not merely invoke the authority of "hac … cartula"; "hanc libertatis", but foregrounds a new vernacular term, "freolsboc" ("book of freedoms") to describe the grant.[131] The "freolsboc", recurrent in several Edgarian diplomas, appears to gloss the Latinate description of the "liberty" of the monastic foundation. This word, which translates as "book of freedoms", denotes the particular privileges allowed to monastic land-holdings.[132] The term "freols", we might note, also appears in the period to refer to "holy days"; "feasts" or "religious festivals".[133] The "freolsboc" might thus be interpreted as a particularly resonant, ecclesiastical term, designed to reflect the special nature of the reformist land-book.

This lexical evidence, if suggestive, might be bolstered with recourse to some further diplomatic descriptions of the "boc". A grant made by Edgar to the Old Minster at Winchester, for instance, draws not only on the invocation of the documentary "boc", but also on other types of authoritative codex. The vernacular section of this grant again describes the land-book as a "freols[boc]", thus underscoring the special nature of the diploma.[134] This citation is yet followed by the observation that, "gif hwa þonne … þurh deofles lare þisne freols[boc] abrecan wille … se he awyrged mid eallan þan awyrgednessan þe synd awritene on eallan halgan bocan" ("whoever … wishes through the devil's teaching to pervert this book of freedoms will be cursed with all the curses which are written in all holy books").[135] The ecclesiastical diploma, elevated through its positioning as a "freols", is here authenticated through the sacred power of "eallan halgan bocan".

Charter and Codex in Books of the Reform

The evocative terminology and invocation of "holy books" in relation to contemporary charters point to the powerful, if subtle, ways in which the reformers marshalled secular and sacred ideals in support of their "bec". Some rather more striking representations of the contemporary

[131] S 806.
[132] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al, DOE,* "frēols-bōc".
[133] Cameron, Crandall Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al, DOE,* "frēols".
[134] S 817.
[135] S 817.

charter are yet found in other "books" from the period. One such of these, as noted in the foregoing part of the discussion, is the "New Minster Charter". Before returning to our analysis of this important diploma, we might first draw on some other, highly suggestive, evidence from the Reform period.

Important evidence in this regard comes in a record known as the *Libellus Æthelwoldi Episcopi.* This "little book" represents a gathering of Æthelwoldian land records apparently compiled in the mid to late tenth century. This *libellus* is now part of the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis,* a historical record of the community at Ely.[136] Though the precise format of the *libellus* during the Reform is uncertain, it would appear to reflect Æthelwold's deliberate codification of his single-sheet land-books into a proto-archival volume. The boundaries between the diplomas contained in the "little book" and the narrative voice of the twelfth-century compiler of the text is sometimes blurred. Notwithstanding this, the *libellus* goes into careful detail about the land-holdings at Ely, reproducing, within the "little book", many of the foundation's original land-books. In places, moreover, the *libellus* goes into unusual detail about the precise significance of the Reform-era charter in tandem with other holy books.

A particularly intriguing episode occurs early on in the *libellus,* in a passage recording how Æthelwold, eager to secure new territories for his foundations, approached Edgar about land at Ely. The scope and extent of these lands are listed in meticulous detail, after which one finds an apparent reproduction of the original re-foundation charter for the monastic house. Before the appearance of this "land-book", however, the *libellus* recounts how Edgar and Æthelwold reached an agreement about their exchange of land. Edgar's pious assent to the land grant is first noted, followed by an account of Æthelwold's offerings to the king in return for his munificence. One of these, the *libellus* states, is, "aurea cruce mirifico opera polita reliquiisque referta" ("a golden cross, embellished with marvelous workmanship and filled with relics") [**App. §2.4.1/9-10**].[137] As the account of the transaction yet goes on to note:

> Gloriosus rex in munimentum donorum suorum et loci libertatem cum texto mirifico super altare sancta Æðelðrede in Hely gratanter optulit. Has igitur terras a rege emptas cum omnibus regiis consuetudinibus et cum privilegio eterne libertatis

[136] For discussion of the *libellus* in relation to the Reform, see Kennedy, "Law and Litigation", 131-83.
[137] All references to the *Liber Eliensis* have been taken from E.O Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis,* Camden Third Series 92 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962). Translations are derived from Janet Fairweather, trans., *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005). Relevant sections have been reproduced as **Appendices §2.4.1)-§2.4.3)**.

coroboratas sanctus Ædelwoldus Deo et sancta Æðeldreðe optulit, sicut subsequens regis privilegium declarabit [**App. §2.4.1/10-14**].

The glorious king made a free-will offering of this cross, along with a wonderful gospel-book, upon the altar of St. Æthelthryth in Ely, as a safeguard for his grants and in furtherance of the liberty of the place. And thus St Æthelwold offered to God and St Æthelthryth the lands mentioned above, bought from the king with all customary royal rights, and confirmed with a privilege of eternal liberty, as the following privilege of the king will make clear.

The *libellus* here casts the grant of monastic land in unusual terms, in which the production of the "privilegium" is indexed to the giving of precious objects. The community's charter is not simply that connected with the foundation's lands, but occurs as part of a more complex exchange, in which Æthelwold's reciprocal offering of a "cruce mirifico opera" to the king is not only returned to him with the lands, but is supplemented, in like terms, by "texto mirifico". Both these holy objects, the cross and the book, are to be placed, in support of the grant, onto the altar at Ely. The account continues with a reiteration of the grant, confirmed "cum privilegio eterne libertatis" ("with a privilege of eternal liberty") [**App. §2.4.1/12-13**], and presented ("optulit") [**App. §2.4.1/12; 13**], like the cross and the book, to the foundation. The cross, gospel-book and the charter are placed here into apparent parallel, each given symbolic power in the authentication of the community's land-book.

This episode in the *Liber Eliensis,* if brief, offers a powerful suggestion of the sacred connotations of the land-book in the period. In addition, we might note the likelihood that contemporary diplomas were issued as part of public ceremonies. Though some land-books were issued at meetings of the *witan,* the administrative gatherings held by the king, it would appear that others, like the Ely charter, were granted as part of ecclesiastical transactions.[138] At times, as A.G. Kennedy and others have discussed, conveyancing via the land-book seems to have proceeded, especially in early charters, through the deposition of a clod of soil, along with the land-book, onto the high altar.[139] Elsewhere, as Pierre Chaplais has discussed, one finds the

[138] For a particularly useful discussion, see H.R. Loyn, *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England 500-1087* (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), 108-111.
[139] Kennedy, "Law and Litigation", 157.

special sanctification of ecclesiastical land-books both through their placement on the altar and via the laying-on of hands to cement the transaction.[140]

A fascinating analogue to the Ely grant occurs in an Edgarian charter slightly predating the main phase of the Reform, in a document issued by Edgar's grandmother, the dowager queen Eadgifu, in 959. Written throughout in Old English, this diploma takes the form of a lengthy narrative about disputed Kentish lands, which the queen inherited from her father and had been dispossessed of during the turbulent years between the reigns of Edmund I and Edgar. The revocation and return of Eadgifu's land-books according to the different policies of successive Anglo-Saxon kings sheds fascinating light on the importance of the land-book in symbolizing land ownership in the period. Towards the end of the charter, however, with Eadgifu's properties restored, one finds the following account of the queen's land-books:

> Þa nam Eadgifu be þæs cynincges leafe 7 gewitnesse 7 ealra his bisceopa þa bec 7 land betæhte in to Cristes cyrcean mid hire agenum handum upon þone altare lede þan hyrede on ecnesse to are 7 hire sawle to reste.[141]
>
> Then Eadgifu, with the permission and witness of the king and all his bishops, took the land-books and entrusted the estates to Christ Church [and] with her own hands laid them upon the altar, as the property of the community for ever, and for the repose of her soul.

The queen's land-books in this passage are placed upon the altar as if consecrated offerings, making clear the sacred finality of the land-transfer "on ecnesse". The vernacular record (as set within the land-book itself) stresses the importance of the physical transference of the books "mid [the queen's] agenum handum" as a visible sign of the books' new status. One might imagine, further, that the altar on which these land-books were placed was furnished with liturgical codices such as those which Edgar is said, later in the reign, to have dedicated to Ely. Such a ceremony would thus encode a symbolic, ceremonial treatment of books designed to authenticate and sanctify the legal land-book.

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[140] Pierre Chaplais, Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas on Single Sheets", in *Prisca Munimenta: Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to A.E.J. Hollaender,* ed. Felicity Ranger (London: University of London Press, 1973), 77.
[141] S 1211.

Sacred Landscapes and the "Liturgical" Land-Book

The richness and complexity of these ideas about land and book in the Reform are articulated with especial power in the "New Minster Charter". This charter, contemporary with the Reform, reflects, as we discussed earlier, Edgar's refoundation of the monastery at Winchester. This "Charter" as we observed, is an especially lavish example of a contemporary diploma, in which one finds, moreover, a vivid portrayal of the charter-codex in relation to Edgarian authority [**Figure 23**]. As we noted in the foregoing part of the discussion, the books held by Edgar, Christ and Peter in this miniature appear to set up an associative network of book imagery, in which the charter figuratively becomes a holy volume, whether as a "type" of the Psalms or as the holy Word.

Contrasting somewhat with contemporary accounts of the rhetorical or material juxtaposition of charters with other holy volumes, this diploma is itself presented in codex form. In this, the "New Minster Charter" contrasts markedly with other charters, which were usually issued, in the original, as single-sheet "bec". One is perhaps reminded here of the way Æthelstan's diploma-like inscriptions (as well as the king's charters) are found within gospel-books. The Winchester diploma is yet distinct from this practice, being itself a lavish volume written in gold and having the appearance of a liturgical book. As Arkady Hodge has argued, the codification of contemporary charters reflected an accepted way in which the special significance of important diplomas could be emphasised.[142] This dramatic moment of the Reform is given appropriate symbolism through the ecclesiastical appearance of the land-book. As Gameson suggests, it seems likely that the charter was not only made to resemble a holy volume, but was itself treated as such, displayed (like the land-books discussed earlier) on the high altar.[143]

The importance of this volume yet goes further. The charter opens with an elaborate cosmological proem, which describes, using a plethora of hermeneuticisms, the fall of the rebel angels and the creation of heaven and earth. In a lengthy narrative stretching to several pages of the charter, the diploma records the arrogant malpractices of those once favoured by God, and their consequent expulsion from Paradise. As David F. Johnson has shown, this account, in which the fall of the angels is cast as the precursor to the Creation, is markedly unusual, and

[142] Arkady Hodge, "When is a Charter not a Charter? Documents in Non-Conventional Contexts in Early Medieval Europe", in *Problems and Possibilities of Early Medieval Charters,* ed. Jonathan Jarrett and Allan Scott McKinley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 127-49.
[143] Gameson, *Role of Art,* 61.

represents a distinctively Anglo-Saxon interpretation of sacred eschatology.[144] This suggestive proem leads on to Edgar's account of the institution of monks at the New Minster, whose pious devotions and chaste living is described in pointed contrast to that of "clericos lasciuientes" ("lascivious clerics").[145] As Johnson notes, this portrayal parallels the expulsion of the rebel angels, so casting the Benedictine monks as the restorers of the foundation's paradisiacal status.[146] This impression is underscored a few lines later in the diploma, as the land-book asserts that the names of the monks will abide with those "in libro uite … in celeorem habitaculis" ("in the book of life … in the celestial dwellings").[147]

This portrayal of the monastery at Winchester foregrounds a powerful sense of the Benedictine foundation as itself a sacred space, in which the secular charter is closely aligned with the divine "book of life". Catherine E. Karkov, in an important reading of the charter, has argued, further, that the diploma's frontispiece encodes rather similar ideas about the relationship between earth and heaven.[148] Though the frontispiece does not depict the Creation, Karkov notes how Edgar is portrayed as if in abstract space, in which he acts as an intermediary with the divine.[149] The book that the king offers, representative of the charter-codex, is paralleled, as we noted earlier, with Christ's holy book. By analogy with the text of the diploma we might interpret this volume, furthermore, as a *liber vitae* or "book of life". This interpretation is perhaps underscored by the iconographic relationship between the books of Edgar and Peter, which, with their gold tooling and red binding, are almost identical to each other. St. Peter, as the guardian of heaven, holds keys to the celestial realm, which, in red and gold, are again cast in a visual relationship with the sacred books. In this extraordinary elevation of the charter volume, one finds a symbolic equation between the terrestrial landscape "booked" by Edgar's charter and the heavenly realm, accessed through inscription in the divine "book of life".

To round off these ideas, we might note, with Karkov, the possibility that the frontispiece also evokes contemporary liturgical devotions at Winchester.[150] If the charter was displayed on the high altar at the foundation, it seems possible, as in the evidence from other land-books, that the volume was also part of a transactional ceremony to mark the refoundation

[144] David F. Johnson, "The Fall of Lucifer in *Genesis A* and Two Anglo-Latin Royal Charters", *JEGP* 97, no. 4 (1998): 512-21.
[145] S 745. See also Rumble, ed., *Property and Piety,* 82.
[146] Johnson, "The Fall of Lucifer", 520-1.
[147] S 745.
[148] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 85-93.
[149] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 86-9.
[150] Karkov, "King's Two Bodies", 224-41.

of the site. Karkov has argued that the diploma may represent the symbolic re-dedication of the Winchester community, in which, following contemporary liturgical evidence, the foundation was symbolically evoked as a "new Jerusalem" which Christ and all his angels were invited to inhabit.[151] We shall return to some of these powerful ideas about liturgical ceremonies later in the chapter. Within the New Minster Charter, we might yet also observe, as in S 1211, the particular focus on the sacred status of the diploma. In the way the hands and books of Edgar and Christ are raised in parallel across the scene, one finds a powerful suggestion of the altar ceremonies "mid … handum" described in the earlier charter evidence.

§3.2) Saints' Cults, Relics and the Book as Sacred Space

The depiction of the "land-book" within tenth-century charters and liturgical codices points towards a nuanced, and multifaceted, conception of the "boc" in the Reform. The socio-economic and political basis for the movement, if documented through the diploma and other key volumes, was also given ideological expression in contemporary portrayals of these books. As we observed earlier, the permeable boundaries between sacred codices and secular charter-books facilitated some particularly powerful depictions of the links between heavenly and earthly space. A further important facet of these depictions, as we shall explore in this section, relates to the role of saints and saintly "books" in the Reform. The symbolism of the codex, marshalled in relation to holy men and women, provided a further means of sanctifying and legitimising the sacred, monastic landscape. This symbolism, as we shall see, had particularly important implications for the political and conceptual status of the book in the Reform.

Saints and Relics in the Benedictine Reform

Before delving more deeply into this intriguing corpus of depictions, we might first observe the key role of saints in the Benedictine Reform. An especially fruitful strand of scholarly enquiry into tenth-century monasticism has focused on the reformers' special interest in the revival and spread of saints' cults. St. Benedict, perhaps unsurprisingly, became the focus for special devotions in the period, consecrated as the patron of monastic foundations and celebrated as author of the Rule.[152] The Virgin Mary, symbolic of the monastic ideals of

[151] Karkov, "King's Two Bodies", 228-36. See also Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 233; 241-3.
[152] As, for instance, at Oswald's foundation at Ramsey. For discussion, see Alan Thacker, "Saint Making and Relic Collecting by Oswald and His Community", in *St. Oswald of Worcester,* ed. Brooks and Cubitt, 247.

chastity and virginity, represented a particular cultic focus.[153] More broadly, as at Mercian and Fenland sites linked to Æthelwold, one encounters the careful cultivation of local saints. As Janet Pope and Alexander R. Rumble have shown, the promotion of such saints served to aid the devotional spread of the movement, forming a focus for lay worship and rooting the Reform within the broader ecclesiastical landscape.[154]

Importantly, saints' cults were also indexed to the authority of the monastic land-holdings. The cultivation of saints' cults and relics offered, as Susan Ridyard has shown, a key means through which the reformers could highlight the sanctity of their foundations.[155] The bodily relics of saints were particularly prized, especially where these related to holy figures from the monastic "golden age" of the seventh and eighth centuries. In some cases, as John Blair has shown, this authoritative monastic past was literally appropriated through the digging up of saints' relics and transferring them to new or revived foundations.[156] Thus, the early Northumbrian monastic leader Benedict Biscop was translated from Monkwearmouth in Northumbria to Thorney in Mercia.[157] Elsewhere, as at Ely, the cult of the Mercian queen-abbess Æthelthryth, a saint long connected with the site, was carefully revived by Æthelwold and his acolytes.[158] This process served to demonstrate the sanctity of monastic space, placing it directly under holy protection. In this way, as David Rollason has observed, "the saints could be figures of supernatural authority, defending the lands and rights of particular churches".[159]

Saints' cults, moreover, were also carefully cultivated within contemporary book-culture. Liturgical volumes containing prayers and offices for Benedictine saints form a particularly fascinating feature of Reform-era devotions, with some evidence that they were used in contemporary translation ceremonies or on feast-days.[160] Important codices such as the Cambridge Psalter (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library Ff. 1.23), as analysed by Michael Lapidge, reflect the way reformist saints' cults were not only important at individual

[153] For discussion, see especially, Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 56-89; 122-41.
[154] Janet M. Pope, "Monks and Nobles in the Anglo-Saxon Monastic Reform", *ANS* XVII (1994): 171-2; Rumble, "Laity and the Monastic Reform", 251.
[155] Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 181-96.
[156] Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society,* 353.
[157] For discussion, see Alan Thacker, "Æthelwold and Abingdon", in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. Barbara Yorke (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988), 62.
[158] For a useful overview of Æthelthryth and Ely in the Reform period, see Simon Keynes, "Ely Abbey, 672-1109", in *A History of Ely Cathedral,* ed. Peter Meadows and Nigel Ramsay (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 3-27.
[159] David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 195.
[160] For discussion of such volumes in relation to Oswaldian houses, see Alice Correa, "The Liturgical Manuscripts of Oswald's Houses", in *St. Oswald of Worcester,* ed. Brooks and Cubitt, 290-8; 306-7.

institutions, but could spread between foundations with the circulation of books and personnel.[161] Elsewhere, as at Winchester, the lavish Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, a codex we shall discuss later in the chapter, highlights the symbolic power, in texts and images, of holy figures in relationship to sacred space. Intriguingly, following Rollason's analysis of Benedictine saints' cults, one can even posit direct links between saintly relics and books: from the mid to late-tenth century, one finds the emergence of a new term, the "haligdom(e)", used to denote the treasury within which books and holy relics were stored.[162] In some instances, this "haligdom" seems likely to have contained a foundation's charters, or land-books, alongside these precious objects.[163]

Saints and (Land)-Books in the Reform

The relationship between saints' cults, liturgical books and the authoritative assertion of sacred space provides some important evidence for the contemporary conceptualisation of monastic land-holdings. This might yet be pushed further through the observation that contemporary sources also foreground some intriguing depictions of saints and books. Charter records and "land-books" are again important here, offering some suggestive portrayals of holy books in relation to the Benedictine landscape.

A brief return to the *Libellus Æthelwoldi Episcopi,* that "little book" of Æthelwoldian land records we discussed earlier, might first help introduce these ideas. The *libellus,* as we have seen, offers a particularly vivid portrayal of the sanctification of the land-book by association with holy volumes. In another important episode, Æthelwold secures land at Sudbourne, "et cyrographum quod pertinebat" ("together with the charter for the land") [**App. §2.4.3/1-2**] on the explicit condition that he must translate the Rule of St. Benedict for the king. This striking juxtaposition between the monastic lands and the Rule flags up the erudite, monastic nature of the land agreement. Even more strikingly, the short record also observes how, "beatus Æðelwoldus dedit eandem terram sancta Æðeldreðe cum cyrographo eiusdem terre" ("the blessed Æthelwold gave the land in question, with the charter of this same land, to St. Æthelthryth") [**App. §2.4.3/4-5**]. This brief but suggestive excerpt appears to suggest that the charter issued by Edgar to Æthelwold was not merely associated with the book of the Rule,

[161] Michael Lapidge, "Abbot Germanus, Winchcombe, Ramsey and the Cambridge Psalter", in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss,* ed. Michael Korhammer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992), 99-129.
[162] Rollason, *Saints and Relics,* 162-3.
[163] Rollason, *Saints and Relics,* 159. See also Alexander R. Rumble, "Anglo-Saxon Royal Archives: Their Nature, Extent, Survival and Loss", in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 185-99.

but was addressed to St. Æthelthryth herself. The foundation of the community, in this section of the *Libellus*, is seemingly predicated on a highly complex concatenation of associations between the land, the book of the *Regula,* and the saint's reception of the land-book.

The intriguing depiction of the saintly "land-book" in the *Libellus* may be contextualised with recourse to some broader evidence from Ely. An important source in this regard is the foundation's confirmation of privileges, issued to the community in 970.[164] This "land-book" goes into considerable detail about the sanctity of the site, noting the ancient precedent for Benedictine monasticism at Ely. Significantly, the land-book also grounds its claims on the presence of, "miraculis almæ virginis Etheldredæ cujus vita venerabilis nobis modernis historia Anglorum promitur quae etiam incorruptibili corpore hactenus condita mausoleo marmoreo albo perdurat" ("the kindly virgin Æthelthryth, whose venerable life is recorded in the history of the Angles and whose incorruptible body is now stored in a mausoleum of white marble").[165] The authority of the tenth-century land-book is thus carefully related to the relics of the saint, whose authoritative symbolism of the monastic "golden age" is demonstrated, further, by her textual memorialisation in "modernis historia Anglorum".

In the vernacular portion of the charter, these ideas are made more explicit. The Old English bounds of the diploma, listing the community's lands, makes particular reference to St. Æthelthryth, not only as the patron of Ely, but as the founder of the East Anglian site. The special importance of "seo stow" ("this place") is specifically linked to the history of the saint, who, moreover, is described, "swa swa Beda awrat Engla þeodæ lareow on his larbocum" ("just as Bede, the teacher of the English people, wrote in his book of instruction").[166] This invocation of the Bedan book appears to position the land-book within a much broader bibliographic field, indexing the authority of the land-holdings to the seventh-century book of hagiography. As in the *libellus,* a complex bibliographic transaction is here grounded in a sophisticated portrayal of the book, in which the boundaries between Bede's volume, the secular charter, and the saints' own reception of the diploma are carefully blurred.

Saintly Volumes and Visions of the Sacred Landscape

The complex cross-currents between saintly authority and books in tenth-century documentary records offers tantalising evidence of the ideological symbolism of the land-book and the codex

[164] S 779.
[165] S 779.
[166] S 779.

in the period. Evidence from Ely, which we shall revisit later, flags up the close relationship between saints and charters, and between charters and other holy books in the legitimisation of Benedictine land-holdings. These themes recur, in a particularly striking way, in some broader contemporary sources.

One such source, perhaps surprisingly, is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which, whilst not a record of landholdings, does at times encode some interesting portrayals of the monastic landscape.[167] MS E of the Chronicle, copied in the twelfth century at Peterborough,[168] offers a brief account of Bishop Æthelwold's refoundation of the monastery, known in the period as "Medehamstead". Though the authenticity of this episode, post-dating the Reform, is uncertain, the vernacular narrative goes into some detail about Bishop Æthelwold's discovery of the old foundation, which had been established in the seventh century. The episode begins by narrating the bishop's journey to the East Anglian site, at which he was dismayed to find little remaining.[169] As the account goes on to note:

> Aðelwold … ne fand þær nan þing buton ealde weallas & wilde wuda; fand þa hidde in þa ealde wealle writes þet Headda abbot heafde ær gewriton: hu Wulfhere kyng & Æðelred his broðor hit heafden wroht, & hu hi hit freodon wið king & wið biscop & wið ealle weoruldþeudom.[170]
>
> Æthelwold … found nothing there except old walls and wild woods; then however he found hidden in the old wall some land-books which Abbot Headda had earlier written; [these related] how King Wulfhere and Æthelred his brother had founded the monastery, and had granted it freedoms from the king and [other] bishops and all worldly duties.

In this passage, Æthelwold's visit to the ruins at Peterborough yields the discovery of ancient monastic documents. These documents, though described as "writes", clearly relate to the community's charters of "freodon" or "land-books". The discovery of these books forms the

[167] For broader discussion of the portrayal of land and landscape in the Chronicle, see Smith, "Marking Boundaries", 167-85.
[168] For a useful overview of the Chronicle and its manuscript versions, see Simon Keynes, "Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle", in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* vol. 1, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 537-52.
[169] For some similar descriptions of Æthelwold's characterisation of the poverty of ancient monastic sites, see Thacker, "Æthelwold and Abingdon", 43-51.
[170] Susan Irvine, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition: Vol. 7: MS E* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 57 [A.D. 963].

basis for the bishop's legal demonstration of monastic rights to the ancient site, and for the way he "macede munecas þær ær wæs nan þing" ("re-established monks where previously there was nothing").[171] The episode, though brief, evokes the historical power of these earlier land-books, which posit the site as one with long-established terrestrial privileges. We might note, as in the Ely charter, how the appearance of a seventh-century volume is used to bolster the legal authority of a tenth-century (re)foundation. Here, however, these books are the quasi-miraculous title deeds associated with the "golden age" of Anglo-Saxon monasticism itself.

That this episode reflects a tenth, rather than twelfth-century, conceptualisation of the book is suggested by historical scrutiny of Æthelwold's land-holding practices. As A.G. Kennedy has demonstrated, the production of authoritative land-books to demonstrate the legitimacy of monastic land-holdings was a strategy of particular importance to the reformers.[172] Proving the sanctity of the new, or revived, foundations by calling on original charters lent the movement a numinous aura of historical, and sacred, authority. Insofar as, in the Peterborough example, such documents might be connected with the original founders of an institution, one finds the powerful invocation of land-books issued by figures of the "golden age", who, by association with this early English ideal of monasticism, were themselves held sacred by the reformers. In this one finds a powerful conjunction of ideas about the sanctity of the Benedictine landscape, ancient land-books and the new monastic privileges.

The discovery of the Peterborough land-books, if suggestive, might yet be contextualised with reference to a further evocative portrayal of land and book. This occurs, not in a documentary source, but in a hagiography composed by Byrhtferth of Ramsey, the pupil of Archbishop Oswald. Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Ecgwini,* though composed in the later tenth century, reflects on the eighth-century foundation of Evesham, an institution wrested from clerical control by Oswald in 960. Byrhtferth's life, focused on the sainthood of the site's original founder, Ecgwine, goes into some detail about the early history of the (recently refounded) monastery.[173] In two particularly fascinating chapters of the *vita,* Bishop Ecgwine's authority over the monastic land-holdings at Evesham receives particular attention.

Byrhtferth's account of the foundation of the monastery begins, in Chapter 11 of the narrative, with an unusual episode. Eoves, a humble swineherd tending to his pigs in the fields

[171] Irvine, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: MS E,* 57.
[172] Kennedy, "Law and Litigation", 131-83.
[173] For discussion of Byrhtferth's *vita,* see Michael Lapidge, "Byrhtferth and the *Vita S. Ecgwini*", *Medieval Studies* 41 (1979): 331-53.

around Evesham, suddenly receives a powerful vision, in which he sees, "quondam uirginem stantem cum aliis duabus psallentem et librum in manu" ("a virgin standing with two other virgins, singing psalms and holding an exceedingly beautiful book in her hand") [**App. §2.5.1/2**].[174] Eoves rushes home and reports all that he has seen to Ecgwine, who, in Chapter 12 of the *vita,* makes his way to the site, "ruminans psalmos sacros" ("reciting [to himself] the holy psalms") [**App. §2.5.2/10**]. The account proceeds with Ecgwine's first-person narrative:

> Surgens autem tacite ab oratione, ecce pene quo steti apparuerunt tres sacre uirgines, quarum una erat sublimior ceteris, crucem habens et librum in manibus, niueo splendore candidior et roseo flore uenustior [**App. §2.5.2/12-15**].
>
> As I got up silently from my prayers, suddenly three holy virgins appeared almost where I stood, of whom one was taller than the others, having a cross and a book in her hands, whiter than the brilliance of snow and more beautiful than a rose in bloom.

The bishop identifies this cross and book-bearing figure as the Virgin Mary, who then "illa eleuata manu consignauit me benedictione sancta crucis et euanuit" ("with her hand raised … signed me with the blessing of the Holy Cross and vanished") [**App. §2.5.2/16-17**]. This powerful vision of Mary with cross and book is interpreted as a sign that the site is holy, and, furthermore, that a religious foundation should be built there: "postea uero in eodem loco maiora erexi arcisteria, quia ualde dilexi habitationem propter demonstratum uisionem" ("subsequently I erected in the same place larger monastic buildings, since I greatly loved the place because of the vision I had been vouchsafed") [**App. §2.5.2/21-2**]. This vision forms the basis for the sanctification of the monastic lands, and, implicitly, the "booking" of the land to the monks.

In this powerful passage, the foundation at Evesham is predicated on the appearance of Mary with her saintly attributes. The motif of the virgin's "librum" is repeated in the visions of both the swineherd and Bishop Ecgwine, suggesting the authority of Mary as bearer of the Word. We might note here how Mary's singing of the Psalms in the first vision is echoed by Ecgwine's psalmic prayers in the second, perhaps evoking the important role of the Psalms in

[174] All references to the *vita* are taken from Michael Lapidge, ed. and trans. *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St. Oswald and St. Ecgwine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009). Selected passages have been reproduced as **Appendices §2.5.1-§2.5.2)**.

Benedictine worship. More than this, however, it is the Virgin's book and cross that symbolically authenticate the landscape in tandem with her hand of blessing. We might recall here the similar configuration of cross and book as they are dedicated alongside the Ely charter in the *Liber Eliensis*, and, moreover, the rather suggestive emphasis on books and hands, "librum in manu"; "librum in manibus", that we noted earlier in relation to land-book ceremonies. Set within the eighth-century monastic past, this vision of the book in the landscape accords the tenth-century lands at Evesham a special significance. It also, however, acts to secure the lands within a powerful vision of the "booked" landscape, in which saintly codices are foregrounded as the holy precursors to secular documentation.

Queens and Books in the Reform

The visionary presentation of books authenticating the monastic landscape in the Chronicle and the *Vita S. Ecgwini* points to the powerful ideological role of the "boc" in legitimizing the Reform. We might also note, in the particular emphasis on St. Æthelthryth and the Virgin Mary in contemporary sources, the especial significance of female saintly symbolism. A particularly important body of recent scholarly work has demonstrated the importance of female saints and queens in the Reform, who were portrayed by the reformers, and their followers, as emblems of the monastic ideals of chastity and virginity.[175] By way of concluding our discussion of saints and books, we might explore some further portrayals linking bibliographic sainthood to the Benedictine ideology of sacred space.

Some especially nuanced, and unusual portrayals in this regard are found in contemporary iconography. One especially important image occurs in a volume mentioned briefly earlier, the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold (London, British Library, MS Add. 49598). This codex, which contains a series of blessings for holy feast-days and saints' days, was commissioned for Bishop Æthelwold in c. 970 during his episcopate at Winchester. This manuscript affords some particularly rich insights into the Benedictine portrayal of the book which we shall explore, in greater depth, later on in the chapter. For now, we may note that the codex includes a striking visual portrayal of St. Æthelthryth, the Ely saint whose powerful authority we have explored in contemporary land-books and the *Libellus Æthelwoldi*.

Laid out on folio 90v of the manuscript, Æthelthryth, in the centre of the image, is shown as a full-length figure [**Figure 28**]. Her wimple and habit are rendered in gold leaf, as

[175] For an important overview of this scholarship, see Catherine Cubitt, "Virginity and Misogyny in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England", *Gender & History* 12, no. 1 (2000): 1-32.

is her large halo. In her left hand she carries a flowering plant; in her right is a small, golden codex, held open against her body. In the background of the image, an inscription written in gold directly onto the parchment of the Benedictional reads: "Imago S[an]c[t]e Æþelðryþe abb[atisse] ac perpetue virigin[is]" ("The image of St. Æthelthryth, abbess and perpetual virgin"). Opposite the portrayal on folio 91r, a historiated initial "O" shows Christ holding a small, closed book and making a sign of blessing. This letter represents the opening of the manuscript's benediction for the saint's feast. Æthelthryth on the left looks across to Christ as he figuratively announces the opening of the benediction. Æthelthryth's book, tucked into the corner of her robe, appears, moreover, to echo that borne by Christ on the following page.

The lavish illumination and visual power of this scene have been analysed by several commentators. Virginia Blanton, drawing attention to the iconographic attributes of the saint, has argued that Æthelthryth is here portrayed as a symbol of the monastic life.[176] The scene's inscription carefully emphasises the "perpetual" virginity of the saint, whilst her habit and crozier might be interpreted as symbols of her status.[177] Æthelthryth's book, as Blanton notes, might further reflect her role as teacher or instructress of those in holy orders.[178] John Black, in a sensitive reading of this portrayal, has called attention to the theme of fecundity as it appears in the image.[179] Æthelthryth's flowering rod or crozier, echoed in the foliate frame of the miniature, might, as Black notes, be interpreted as a lily, a sign of chastity and virginity more usually associated with the Virgin Mary.[180] Here, both flowers and book might underscore the virtues of "fruitful steadfastness" and devoted attention to the Word of God that the monks were to perform at their foundations.[181]

Somewhat more unusually, however, this holy image finds reflection in another, quite different, context. Following the work of Catherine E. Karkov on Benedictine iconography, one can detect close parallels between the portrayal of Æthelthryth in the Benedictional and that of a female figure on a contemporary seal matrix linked to Edith of Wilton. [**Figure 29**].[182] Edith, the illegitimate daughter of King Edgar, was the founder, along with her mother,

[176] Virginia Blanton, *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St. Æthelthryth in Medieval England, c. 695-1615* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 82-96.
[177] Virginia Blanton-Whetsell, "*Imagines Ætheldredae:* Mapping Hagiographic Representations of Abbatial Power and Religious Patronage", *Studies in Iconography* 23 (2002): 55.
[178] Blanton-Whetsell, "*Imagines Ætheldredae*", 58.
[179] John Black, "*Nutrix pia*: The Flowering of the Cult of St. Æthelthryth in Anglo-Saxon England", in *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 184-6.
[180] Black, "*Nutrix pia*", 185-6.
[181] Black, "*Nutrix pia*", 185.
[182] Karkov, *Ruler Portraits,* 114.

Wulfthryth, of the female religious community at Wilton,[183] where, after Edith's early death in 984, she was elevated to sainthood.[184] Her seal matrix shows a figure, like that in the Benedictional, wearing a wimple and robes and holding aloft a small book. Though evidence for the contemporary use of seals is contested,[185] it seems possible that the object could be indicative of Edith's role in securing and authenticating documents linked to the foundation.[186] In the seal's portrayal of a saint-like figure with a book, one finds some intriguing evidence for the complex symbolic cross-currents between holy books and secular documentation.

The parallels between the Æthelthryth image and Edith's seal are suggestive of some wider links between saintly attributes and secular authority. Linked to these ideas, we might note a broader body of scholarly work highlighting the symbolic role of women in the Reform. As several commentators have shown, Ælfthryth, Edgar's second wife, was accorded particular powers of patronage over nunneries, and posited, moreover, as a mediatrix in disputes over land.[187] Ælfthryth appears in several contemporary charters, sometimes using her symbolic status to shore up the authority of the "land-book".[188] In the same way that Edgar was cast as a quasi-Christological figure, the queen was foregrounded, in some contemporary records, as a type of the Virgin Mary, acting as a quasi-abbatial figure to protect her foundations.[189] As D.A. Bullough has argued, the ideal of female sanctity and secular queenship might be understood as a further way in which the reformers sought to place their rights over monastic

[183] For further discussion of reformed (and non-reformed) female foundations in the period, see Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women: Vol. 1: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000): 85-110. See also, Barbara Yorke, "'Sisters Under the Skin'?: Anglo-Saxon Nuns and Nunneries in Southern England", *Reading Medieval Studies* XV (1989): 100-1.
[184] For further discussion of Edith and her importance, see Stephanie Hollis, "St. Edith and the Wilton Community", in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius,* ed. Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 245-80.
[185] For discussion, see Jane Roberts, "What Did Anglo-Saxons Seal When?", in *The Power of Words: Essays in Lexicography, Lexicology and Semantics,* ed. Graham D. Caie, Carole Hough and Irene Wotherspoon (New York: Rodopi, 2006), 131-57. See also T.A. Heslop, "Seals", in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Michael Lapidge, John Blair and Simon Keynes, 2nd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 426-7.
[186] For some suggestive indication of Edith's role in this, see Hollis, "St. Edith and the Wilton Community", 250-1.
[187] For discussion, see especially Simon Maclean, "Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology in the Late Tenth Century: Ælfthryth and Edgar in Continental Perspective", in *England and the Continent,* ed. Rollason, Leyser and Williams, 255-74. For some further background to this strand of scholarly research, see Marc A. Meyer, "Women and the Tenth-Century English Monastic Reform", *RB* 87 (1977): 51-61, and Meyer, "Land Charters and the Legal Position of Anglo-Saxon Women", in *The Women of England from Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present: Interpretative Bibliographical Essays,* ed. Barbara Kanner (London: Mansell, 1980), 57-82.
[188] For a particularly rich discussion of Ælfthryth's role, see Andrew Rabin, "Female Advocacy and Royal Protection in Tenth-Century England: The Legal Career of Queen Ælfthryth", *Speculum* 84, no. 2 (2009): 261-88. For a rather different perspective, see Pauline Stafford, "Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England", *P&P* 163 (1999): 3-35.
[189] Maclean, "Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology", 257-60.

land beyond dispute.[190] In indexing the terrestrial landscape to the specific commands of Mary, "queen of heaven", or other female saints, secular negotiations over land could be placed in a cosmological context far removed from the earthly, male-dominated world of legal transaction.[191] In this, though the evidence is often scattered and suggestive, we might also note the role of the book, whether in the saint-like seal, or Ælfthryth's land-books, in demonstrating and securing the sanctity of monastic space.

Returning to the portrayal of St. Æthelthryth, we might yet note a further intriguing piece of evidence. This occurs in a particularly evocative passage of the *Liber Eliensis*, which records not only Æthelwold's refoundation of the site, but the circumstances that led to Æthelthryth's first founding of Ely in the seventh century. Book I of the *Liber* recounts how the saint, *en route* to Ely, sought a shady place, "undique aspersum floribus variorum colorum" ("sprinkled all about with flowers of various colours"), where she and her followers could rest.[192] This evocative description, perhaps reminiscent of the floral imagery in the Benedictional, is yet followed by Æthelthryth's discovery that, "baculum … viridi amictum cortice fronduisse ac folia prodisse" ("her travelling-staff … was now clothed with green bark, had sprouted, and had put forth leaves").[193] This sign is taken, in the *Liber,* to indicate the sanctity of the resting place, at which, "facta est etiam illic ecclesia in honore beate virginis ad laudem domini nostri Iesu Christi qui mirabilis est in sanctis suis" ("a church was constructed … in honour of the blessed virgin, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is a source of wonder among the saints").[194]

This holy vision of a sacred place, reminiscent of that in Byrhtferth's account, seems to have direct significance for the tenth-century portrayal of the saint. Æthelthryth's flowering rod in the Benedictional, whilst indicative of chastity and virtue, might be read as a depiction of the miraculous sign granted to the saint in the *Liber*. The sprouting staff in the saintly narrative seems markedly close to the bloom carried in the manuscript image. This attribute might thus be interpreted as pointedly evocative of Æthelthryth's authority over the monastic landscape. As in the *Vita S. Ecgwini,* the role of the depicted book thus becomes of particular significance here, redolent not only with the ideal of saintly virtue, but with authoritative command over land. The Benedictional's portrayal of the book, as in the hagiography, might

[190] Bullough, "Continental Background", 35-6.
[191] Maclean, "Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology", 258-63.
[192] Blake, ed. *Liber Eliensis,* 30 (I.13); Fairweather, trans., *Liber Eliensis,* 39.
[193] Blake, ed. *Liber Eliensis,* 30 (I.13). Fairweather, trans., *Liber Eliensis,* 39.
[194] Blake, ed. *Liber Eliensis,* 30 (I.13). Fairweather, trans., *Liber Eliensis,* 39-40.

accordingly be read not only as a traditional emblem of divine status, but rather as doubly significant, pointing both to Æthelthryth as abbess and teacher and to her role in "booking" Benedictine territories.

Conclusion

The portrayal of books in the Benedictine Reform, if often discussed in relation to the holy Rule or the *Regularis concordia,* is, following the evidence above, found in rather more wide-ranging contexts. The contemporary conception of the book as a "land-book", as we have seen, casts the Benedictine diploma not merely as a documentary record but as a "boc" with powerful links to ecclesiastical and holy books. Charters or land-books appear in the sources in close proximity to the sacred status of gospel-books or other "halgan bocan". Saintly books, likewise, are drawn upon and evoked, in texts and images, to authenticate the reformers' tenth-century "land-bec". Moreover, as seen in the "New Minster Charter" or Reform-era hagiographies, the boundaries between the charter and the holy book seem almost indistinguishable, as each "type" of volume is presented as part of a powerful synthesis of bibliographic authority. In the reformers' innovative development of book imagery, the "land-book", the liturgical codex, and books of the divine all cohere in a vivid demonstration of the sanctity and legitimacy of the movement.

§4) Bishops and Books in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold

The analyses of Benedictine imagery of the book advanced so far in this chapter have indicated the complexity of the codex, its portrayal and ideological status. These ideas may be furthered and consolidated by considering how such imagery might have functioned within individual manuscripts produced in the Reform. This section accordingly turns to consider the representation of the book in a single case study: the codex known as "The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold" (London, British Library, MS Add. 49598). This manuscript, long noted for its lavish iconography and liturgical innovations, is especially significant for the way it depicts books in both texts and images. This imagery, as hinted at the magisterial portrayal of St. Æthelthryth that we discussed briefly earlier, incorporates some rich and unusual representations of the codex. These, as we shall see, amount to a sustained focus on the Benedictine book, in which one finds, furthermore, some particularly unusual individual portrayals.

§4.1) "The Bishop's Book": Bibliographic Imagery in the Benedictional

The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, dated to between c. 970-984, is one of the most complex and important manuscripts to have survived from the late tenth century. Though its precise date of production is unknown, it has been conclusively linked to the episcopate of Æthelwold at Winchester (963-84). A poem on ff. 4v-5r of the manuscript describes how Godeman, a Winchester scribe, executed the codex on behalf of "magnus Aþeluuoldus" ("the great Æthelwold") [**App. §2.6/3**], who is also credited with the design of the volume.[195] Running to some 119 folios, the codex contains a multitude of blessings, or "benedictions", which the bishop pronounced during the Mass, on holy feast-days or as part of special rites. These benedictions are organised according to the liturgical year, and are accompanied by lavish illuminations of saints and scenes from scriptural history.[196] These images, as J.J.G. Alexander and Robert Deshman have shown, represent the apotheosis of Carolingian influence in Anglo-Saxon art, which, by the mid to late tenth-century, was becoming ever more indebted to the visual style associated with the ninth-century Frankish Reform.[197]

The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold and Anglo-Saxon Liturgical Books

Before exploring the codex's representations of the book in greater depth, we might first take an overview of the manuscript and its contextual significance. The liturgical category known as the benedictional is one with particular importance in the context of the Reform, emerging, in Anglo-Saxon England, only with the development of Benedictine liturgy and worship from the 970s and 980s onwards.[198] Developed in the early Church as a book of blessings designed solely for episcopal use, benedictionals became especially popular during the Carolingian Reform.[199] Cultivated by analogy with Frankish volumes, Anglo-Saxon benedictionals represent a relatively new liturgical development, forming the focus of both textual and iconographic innovation from the mid-tenth century onwards.

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[195] All citations from Godeman's poem are derived from Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style", 105-6. The text of the poem is also presented as **Appendix §2.6)**, cross-referenced in the discussion.
[196] For a useful guide to these illuminations see Andrew Prescott, ed., *The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold: A Masterpiece of Anglo-Saxon Art* (London: British Library, 2002), 8-19.
[197] J.J.G. Alexander, "The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold and Anglo-Saxon Illumination of the Reform Period", in *Tenth-Century Studies,* ed. Parsons, 169-83; Robert Deshman, *The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 159-69.
[198] For further discussion, see Janet L. Nelson and Richard W. Pfaff, "Pontificals and Benedictionals", in *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Richard W. Pfaff (Michigan: Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), 87-98.
[199] Andrew Prescott, "The Text of the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold", in *Bishop Æthelwold,* ed. Yorke, 120-7.

In the context of late tenth-century manuscript survivals, the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold represents a particularly interesting example. As Sarah Hamilton has shown, episcopal rites are more frequently represented, in the tenth century, by a slightly different category of episcopal book: the pontifical.[200] The Sherborne or "Dunstan" Pontifical (Paris, BnF, MS. Lat 943), produced for Archbishop Dunstan at Canterbury, is one such example, containing, as is usual for the period, an array of episcopal rites, blessings and special services.[201] Pontificals, incorporating a diversity of content useful to the bishop, were sometimes included within sacramentaries, containing all rituals performed by a celebrant.[202] The benedictional, containing only episcopal blessings, represents a rather more specialised type of episcopal codex. Though several benedictional volumes are extant in the later tenth century, the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, and a less lavish predecessor, the Ramsay Benedictional (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 987) are the earliest Anglo-Saxon witnesses to this type of book.[203] As Helmut Gneuss has shown, the emerging nature of this liturgical category is seemingly reflected in new vernacular descriptions for the bishop's books in the period, including the terms "bletsungboc"; "bletsingboc" ("book of blessings") and "halgungboc" ("book of consecration").[204]

The production of benedictionals in the tenth and eleventh centuries, has, further, been linked to the changing status of contemporary clerics in the Reform. The Anglo-Saxon Reform, unlike the Continental movement, was one which spread, in part, through the foundation of cathedral-monasteries, in which monk-bishops like Æthelwold played both a monastic and episcopal role.[205] The role of the bishop, as Richard W. Pfaff has shown, accordingly took on particular importance in the context of the Reform, a status seemingly reflected in the production of exclusively episcopal liturgical manuscripts such as the pontifical and

[200] Sarah Hamilton, "The Early Pontificals: The Anglo-Saxon Evidence Reconsidered from a Continental Perspective", in *England and the Continent,* ed. Rollason, Leyser and Williams, 411-28.
[201] For discussion of this important codex, see Jane Rosenthal, "The Pontifical of St. Dunstan", in *St. Dunstan,* ed. Ramsay, Sparks and Tatton-Brown, 143-63. For the iconographic significance of the manuscript, see also Rosenthal, "Three Drawings in an Anglo-Saxon Pontifical", 547-62. For the possibility that Dunstan also commissioned a benedictional, see David Dumville, "John Bale, Owner of Dunstan's Benedictional", *N&Q* 41, no. 3 (1994): 291-5.
[202] Hamilton, "The Early Pontificals", 413.
[203] For a useful overview of all such manuscripts from medieval period, see J. Brückmann, "Bibliographical Survey: Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals in England and Wales", *Traditio* 29 (1973): 391-458. For a particularly cogent discussion of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript evidence, see also Andrew Prescott, "The Structure of English Pre-Conquest Benedictionals", *BLJ* 13 (1987): 118-58.
[204] Helmut Gneuss, "Liturgical Books in Anglo-Saxon England", 131-4.
[205] For discussion of this unusual feature of the English Reform, see Patrick Wormald, "Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast", in *Bishop Æthelwold,* ed. Yorke, 37-41.

benedictional.[206] These manuscripts, as the prefatory poem at the opening of Æthelwold's volume implies, were generally custom-made according to the textual, and visual, specifications of a given prelate. Volumes such as the Benedictional, as John Lowden has argued, may often have had a symbolic function, highlighting the bishop's authoritative status within a given community.[207] In the context of Æthelwold's Benedictional, one might also note the size and bulk of the manuscript, which some commentators have described as too large and unwieldly for easy liturgical use.[208] In addition, we might observe the extraordinarily lavish nature of the codex, which includes some twenty-eight full-page miniatures and a prodigious number of blessings, spaced liberally across the manuscript in a large, Caroline hand.

As meticulous scholarly work on the textual composition of Æthelwold's Benedictional has demonstrated, the manuscript's blessings are themselves textually significant. Though principally derived from Continental textual traditions for episcopal benedictions, Æthelwold's codex, as Andrew Prescott has shown, represents an ambitious synthesis of prayers from different sources.[209] The two major traditions of benedictional blessings, the Gallican and the Gregorian, were usually selectively combined in episcopal volumes to provide the bishop with an adequate number of prayers.[210] In the Benedictional, however, both these traditions have been reproduced in full, with the addition, moreover, of some original, English-composed benedictions.[211] This assimilation of texts, as Prescott argues, serves to underscore the prestigiousness of the codex, which differs notably from more modest textual offerings found in other episcopal volumes.[212] The textual composition of the Benedictional strikes the viewer of the manuscript as an almost virtuosic demonstration of liturgical scholarship. Following Prescott's observations, we might even draw comparisons here with the composition of the *Regularis concordia,* which, as set out in its hermeneutic prologue, seeks to gather heterogenous liturgical material "even as honey is gathered by bees" into one volume.[213]

[206] Richard W. Pfaff, "The Anglo-Saxon Bishop and his Book", *BJRL* 81 (1999): 1-24.
[207] John Lowden, "Illuminated Books and the Liturgy: Some Observations", in *Objects, Images and the Word: Art in the Service of the Liturgy,* ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 29-33.
[208] Lowden, "Illuminated Books and the Liturgy", 32-3.
[209] Prescott, "The Text of the Benedictional", 127-32.
[210] Prescott, "The Text of the Benedictional", 127.
[211] Prescott, "The Text of the Benedictional", 127; 133.
[212] Prescott, "The Text of the Benedictional", 132.
[213] Prescott, "The Text of the Benedictional", 145.

"Bletsungboc" and "Biblus": Textual Representations of the Benedictional

The unusual nature, and symbolic status, of Æthelwold's Benedictional highlights the particular significance of the codex in the developing liturgy of the Reform. This significance, intriguingly, is underscored throughout the manuscript in texts and images which reflect directly on the sanctity of the book. In some cases, the book itself is directly invoked and portrayed, both in relation to the manuscript's cycle of blessings, and to the Benedictional itself. To introduce these depictions and their relevance within the codex, we might first explore a particularly important set of portrayals. These occur in the opening folios of the manuscript, in the Latin poem written by the scribe Godeman.[214]

Godeman's poem, as we noted earlier, offers an intriguing glimpse into Bishop Æthelwold's involvement with the manuscript. Laid out on folios 4v and 5r of the codex, the piece acts as a textual preface to the benedictional. This introduction to the codex is rendered in a particularly lavish style, set out over a double-page spread and written throughout in gold letters [**Figure 30**]. Running to some thirty-eight lines, the poem goes into careful detail about the production context, purpose and significance of the volume. Æthelwold's status as patron of the codex receives particular attention, as does the scribe's role in bringing his master's plan to fruition. Rather like a scribal colophon, Godeman asks for prayers both for "patri magno" ("the great father") [**App. §2.6/34**] who ordered the volume, and for himself as the codex's "scriptor" ("writer") [**App. §2.6/38**].[215] In this, the status of the book receives special embellishment. Opening with a large golden initial stretching across some six lines of text, the poem begins with the announcement that, "Presentem biblum iussit perscribere presul …" ("A bishop … ordered a certain monk subject to him to write the present book") [**App. §2.6/1**].

More unusually, this invocation of the Benedictional's origins is followed by a meticulous account of the visual construction and appearance of the manuscript. Godeman notes how Æthelwold, "circos quoque multos in hoc precepit fieri libro bene comptos" ("commanded also to be made in this book many arches well-adorned") [**App. §2.6/11-12**], and, moreover, how he ordered the depiction of "uariis decoratis multigenis miniis pulchris necnon simul auro" ("various figures decorated with manifold beautiful colours and with gold") [**App. §2.6/13-14**]. These descriptions appear to invoke the lavish decorative frames

[214] For some historical background to Godeman and his role in the Reform, see Thacker, "Æthelwold and Abingdon", 58-9.
[215] For a discussion of a further such colophon, see Craig Ronalds and Margaret Clunies Ross, "*Thureth*: A Neglected Old English Poem and its History in Anglo-Saxon Scholarship", *N&Q* 48, no. 4 (2001): 359-70.

which enclose each of the codex's miniatures, or perhaps the "arches" and arcades which are a prominent feature of the manuscript's architectural settings.[216] Godeman's invocation of "various figures" appears likewise to reflect on a further specific feature of the volume's design, which, in including numerous blessings for saints' days, is redolent with a wealth of visually innovative, figural imagery. So conjuring the contents of the book that follows, the poem offers an especially rich evocation of the Benedictional and its importance.

Godeman's discussion of the manuscript is deepened and elaborated as the poem continues. The specific spiritual purpose of the volume in relation to the episcopal role comes in for especial consideration. Having outlined the beautiful adornment of the manuscript, the poet advances a particularly rich description of the benedictional's purpose:

> Craxare hunc sibi prescriptus fecit boanarges
> idcirco ut soteris populum in biblo potuisset
> sanctificare […] [**App. §2.6/15-17**]

> This book the Boanerges aforesaid caused to be indited for himself in order that he might be able to sanctify the people of the Saviour by means of it.

This description of the benedictional, cast in ornate, hermeneutic Latin, underscores the sacred function of the manuscript. Æthelwold's book, as the verse notes, has been specially prepared so that the bishop may be able to sanctify the people under his pastoral protection. These lines, if rendered in a particularly allusive, literary fashion, index the book to the particular duties of the prelate, whose ability to bless "soteris populum" by means of benedictions is a marker of his episcopal role. We might note here the unusual terminology for the bishop, who is described using the word "boanarges", a Greek term for a thunderous preacher.[217] These lines, invoking the importance both of the bishop and his book, are augmented several lines later in the poem, as Godeman expresses the salvific hope that, "patri magno iussit qui scriber librum hunc//aeternum regnum concedat in arce polorum" ("to the great father who ordered this book to be written may [God] grant an eternal kingdom above") [**App. §2.6/34-5**].

The manuscript's prefatory poem, if drawing on the traditional textual model of the colophon, thus encodes a highly detailed and elaborate focus on the Benedictional as an

[216] For further discussion of these, see Robert Deshman, "The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia and the English Monastic Reform", in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture,* ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 261-82.
[217] For the Greek origins of this hermeneuticism, see Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style", 86.

episcopal volume. Godeman's descriptions of the codex's appearance and function seem geared towards underscoring, in rhetorically and visually lavish style, the superlative significance of the bishop's book. We might yet note, in the extracts from the poem discussed above, how the book comes in for particularly powerful lexical depiction. The Benedictional is cast not merely as a "liber" or "codex", but as a "biblum"; "biblo", drawing on a "hermeneutic" Grecism for the book familiar from our discussion of the depictions developed in the proto-Reform.[218] The poetic account of the Benedictional is accordingly framed, not simply as a pious act of book production, but as the incarnation of a holy codex, described using the same sacred terminology for the codex found in Aldhelm, and, as noted earlier, in the Greek New Testament.

Towards the conclusion of the poem, this ornate vocabulary for the book is again employed, as Godeman commands:

> Omnes cernentes biblum hunc semper rogitent hoc
> post metam carnis ualeam caelis inherere:
> obnixe hoc rogitat scriptor supplex Godemannus [**App §2.6/36-8**]

> Let all who look on this book pray always that after the term of the flesh I may abide in heaven – Godeman the writer, as a suppliant, earnestly asks this.

This passage, echoing the beginning the of poem ("presentem biblum …"), constitutes the poem's fifth explicit invocation of the book. It evokes Æthelwold's Benedictional, once more, in markedly salvific terms, indexing the completion of the book to Godeman's own salvation.[219] Thus recapping on the patronage, execution, and symbolism of the codex, the manuscript's opening poem casts the book in particularly powerful terms, portraying it as a sacred, lavish volume.

The Iconography of the Book in the Benedictional

The Benedictional's magisterial emphasis on the importance of Æthelwold's book is reflected, furthermore, in the manuscript's imagery. Books form a repeated iconographic focus in the manuscript, in which the codex is given visual distinction across a diverse range of contexts.

[218] For further discussion of Æthelwold's cultivation of the hermeneutic style at Winchester, see Michael Lapidge, "Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher", in *Bishop Æthelwold*", ed. Yorke, 95-102.
[219] For further discussion, see W. Schipper, "Dry-Point Compilation Notes in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold", *BLJ* 20 (1994): 17-34.

The golden codices held by St. Æthelthryth and Christ on folios 90v and 91r of the manuscript give some impression, as noted in the previous section, of the lavish nature of these bibliographic depictions [**Figure 28**]. These, however, are but a small indication of the scale and complexity of the manuscript's portrayals.

Some sense of the richness of the Benedictional's iconography of the book is found at the very opening of the codex, in a series of full-page miniatures showing various groups of saints, virgins and apostles. This introduction to the manuscript has been described as a "pictorial litany" of holy figures, which, following the observations of Richard Gameson, seem designed to lead the viewer of the codex gradually towards the sacred benedictions.[220] Each group of figures, reflecting Godeman's poetic description, are set within elaborate golden archways and have been lavishly decorated in gold. Significantly, within the context of our discussion, each holy individual has been provided with one, or in some cases, two, golden books. These books, as in a portrayal of three crowned virgins on folio 1v, are rendered with particular care, shown both open and closed; in different sizes, and in different relationships to their bearers [**Figure 31**]. In many cases, as in a depiction of three apostles on folio 3r, such volumes are also markedly ornate, distinguished by circular and cruciform decoration and shown with colourful leaves [**Figure 32**]. Folio 4r of the codex, showing a further group of apostles, offers a rich set of portrayals. In this scene, the apostle on the far left holds not one but two codices, that to the left shown with a golden spine adorned with crosses, and that to the right with blue-edged leaves and a white cross on a golden cover [**Figure 33**].

These portrayals, contrasting notably with the visual style of depicted books elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon art, offer a lavish iconographic focus on the codex. These unusual images, as Michael Gullick has argued, might perhaps be designed to reflect ornate treasure-bindings, which, though largely absent from the material record of the Anglo-Saxon period, are also known to have been embellished with gold, gems and decorative motifs.[221] Decorative bindings, as Gullick notes, were often associated with lavish display volumes or with holy relics such as the Stoneyhurst Gospels, the codex deposited in the tomb of St. Cuthbert [**Figure 34**].[222] In the Benedictional, we might note how the status of certain saints is seemingly augmented by the elaboration given to their books. On folio 4r of the codex, the central figure with large golden keys represents St. Peter, who bears a tall volume with a golden, decorated

[220] Gameson, *Role of Art,* 29.
[221] Michael Gullick, "Bookbindings", in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* vol. 1, ed. Gameson, 308.
[222] Gullick, "Bookbindings", 294-309.

cover.[223] Even more strikingly, this saintly book is enclosed within a red binding, which adorns the spine and top edge of the volume. This detail, distinguishing St. Peter's codex from those held by other figures in the scene, seems designed to underscore his special authority. The motifs on the book's golden binding are perhaps evocative of elaborate tooling motifs. We might also note here the possibility that the red binding of the depicted book is designed to evoke an especially elaborate covering, such, perhaps, as the red goatskin binding on the Cuthbert codex.

In some instances, the special sanctity of golden volumes in the iconography is indicated by the inclusion of inscriptions. On folio 2r of the codex, one finds another gathering of virgins, including the Virgin Mary, in the centre, and Æthelwold's particular patron, St. Æthelthryth [**Figure 35**]. St. Æthelthryth's book, held open towards the body of the saint, bears the text, "Aþeldryd", an alternative spelling of the virgin's name [**Figure 35a**]. This small volume is echoed, in the same scene, by the codex carried by Mary, who stands to the right of Æthelthryth. The Virgin's book bears a partially illegible inscription, of which two letters, "MA", are the apparent beginning of the saint's name [**Figure 35b**]. These portrayals, contrasting with the plainer books given to other virgins and apostles, appear indicative of the symbolic relationship between these saints and their authoritative books. Elsewhere in the codex, the use of inscribed books is deployed sparingly, found only once more in the manuscript on folio 19v, where John the Evangelist's golden book is inscribed with the opening text of his gospel: "In principio erat uerbum et uerbum …" [**Figures 36 and 36a**].

If the visual litany of holy figures and books encodes some especially powerful portrayals, books are found, later on in the manuscript, in some particularly striking settings. In addition to the codex's depiction of St. Æthelthryth and her book, one might note some further, iconographically distinctive, portrayals. One such of these occurs in the portrayal of St. Swithun, a former bishop of Winchester, whose cult was subject to particular elaboration during Æthelwold's episcopate.[224] Swithun's image, set out on folio 97v of the codex, shows the saint enclosed within a lavish golden arcade, embellished with acanthus ornament [**Figure**

[223] For discussion of the iconographic significance of St. Peter in the Reform, see Higgitt, "Iconography of St. Peter", 282.
[224] For further discussion, see Martin Biddle, "*Felix Urbs Winthonia*: Winchester in the Age of Monastic Reform", in *Tenth-Century Studies,* ed. Parsons, 136-9.

37].[225] The saint is shown with a golden halo, wearing lavish episcopal robes.[226] In his left hand, he bears a tall, golden book, towards which he inclines his head and makes a gesture of blessing. The edges of this book, though not decorated, have been tooled with small points. This motif, intriguingly, is reflected in the similar tooling of the saint's halo and stole [**Figure 37a**]. This would appear to set up a visual relationship between Swithun's saintly (and episcopal) accoutrements and the symbolism of his codex.

By way of rounding off these observations, we might also point, briefly, to the manuscript's portrayal of St. Benedict. St. Benedict, on folio 99v of the manuscript, is shown, like St. Swithun, in a lavish architectural setting, enthroned beneath a large archway and holding a crown [**Figure 38**]. This iconography of the abbot, evocative of the descriptions of "abbatial rulership" advanced by Deshman, is augmented by Benedict's large, golden volume. This volume, by contrast with those shown in the Tiberius and Arundel images, has been rendered in an unusual style, shown propped on the abbot's legs. The golden codex, extending diagonally from Benedict's knee to his breast, is a particularly large, thick volume, perhaps representative of the book of the Rule. The spine of the book, turned towards the viewer, is ornamented with binding marks and decorative motifs. These serve, as elsewhere in the manuscript's iconography, to emphasise, in a markedly unusual visual style, the special, lavish nature of this treasure-bound volume.

§4.2) "A Blessing of this Book ...": The Annunciation Miniature

The complex and unusual depictions of books found throughout the manuscript culminates, in certain miniatures, in some especially striking, individual, portrayals. Alongside the depictions of virgins, apostles and other saints, one finds, in addition, some rather more intriguing representations of the book. For the remainder of the discussion, we shall explore two of the Benedictional's most suggestive depictions in greater detail. The first, forming the iconographic opening to the Benedictional's prayers, comes in the manuscript's portrayal of the Annunciation. This scene, which has received repeated attention for its unusual presentation, offers a particularly interesting focus on the codex. As we shall see in the

[225] For discussion of this setting, see Deshman, "Living Ecclesia", 261-2. See also Deshman, "Anglo-Saxon Art After Alfred", *Art Bulletin* 56, no. 2 (1974): 199.
[226] For some further discussion of episcopal dress in the manuscript's portrayals, see Sarah Larratt Keefer, "Every Picture Tells a Story: Cuthbert's Vestments in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold", *LSE* 37 (2006): 111-34. See also Owen-Crocker, "Image Making", 112-9.

following analysis, this oft-explored representation might be productively re-interpreted in light of our earlier findings about the imagery of the Benedictine book.

The Annunciation Miniature and its Iconography

The portrayal of the Annunciation in the Benedictional occurs near the opening of the manuscript, following the visual litany of saints and Godeman's poem. Set out on folio 5v of the codex, the miniature acts as the frontispiece to the manuscript's first group of benedictions. These benedictions open, on the page facing the image, with a large, decorated initial "Om[ni]p[oten]s D[eu]s cuius …". These prayers, though following the scene, do not relate to the spring-time feast of the Annunciation, but, instead, to the season of Advent, the traditional liturgical opening of benedictional volumes.

Enclosed within a lavish foliate frame, the image presents a richly illuminated interpretation of the Annunciation [**Figure 39**].[227] The Archangel Gabriel, on the left, is shown wearing prominent wings and with a large halo. He bears, in his left hand, a golden sceptre; with his right, he makes a gesture of blessing towards Mary. The Virgin Mary, opposite Gabriel, is shown enthroned, seated beneath a ceremonial canopy (or baldachin), and identified through a short inscription, "S[an]c[t]a Maria". She wears a veil and wimple, and carries, in her left hand, a small oval object. Mary's right hand is placed over the pages of a small, open book, which rests on a draped lectern. This book, held open towards the Virgin, appears as a white, unadorned folio. Above Mary and Gabriel at the top of the scene is a green, open space, distinguished, on the right, by a cluster of buildings. Directly above this imagery, one finds a short inscription:

> Nuntius ecaelo hic stat predicando Mariae
> Ecce d[eu]m paries homin[em] q[ue] simul benedicta.
>
> Here stands [the angel] announcing to Mary, "Behold, you, blessed, will bear God and man and at the same time".

This inscription, presented in golden letters, offers a short textual summary of the scene, including the words of Gabriel's announcement to Mary, as found in *Luke 1.30-35*. In its visual appearance on the manuscript page, the couplet is evocative of the golden uncials of Godeman's poem. More intriguingly, we might note how this inscription is echoed by a further

[227] For a full iconographic description of the scene and the translations of the inscriptions, see Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 9-17.

couplet on the page facing the scene [**Figure 40**]. This folio, containing the opening of the first Advent benediction, is enclosed within a foliate frame identical to that surrounding the Annunciation miniature. At the top of this folio, in parallel with the golden couplet on folio 5v, one finds a further short inscription:

> Quisq[ue] caput cernis presto est benedicto presul
> Libri huius Nati adventus tibi nam patris almi.
>
> You, O bishop, whoever you are who looks upon this book, a blessing of this book of the Advent of the Son of the loving Father is at hand for you.

This inscription refers to the opening of the Advent benedictions below. It evokes the book of the Benedictional and its episcopal viewer directly, framing the codex as a "libri huius Nati adventus" ("book of the Advent of the Son"). The orientation of the couplet, placed into a visual relationship with the Annunciation scene, appears to link the two folios of the manuscript together. Though referring to two different feasts, these texts, as Robert Deshman has observed, appear also to echo each other lexically.[228] Thus, as Deshman notes, the first couplet's evocation of the "benedicta" ("blessed") Virgin Mary, is seemingly reflected in the second inscription's reference to the "benedicto" ("blessing") to be performed by the bishop during Advent.[229]

The richness of this imagery is suggested, further, in some markedly unusual iconographic features. Deshman has pointed to the rarity of depictions of the Annunciation in an Anglo-Saxon context, noting the presence of some unusual imagery. The elaborate baldachin or canopy enclosing the enthroned Virgin is somewhat unexpected in this context, more usually found royal iconography.[230] It appears, as Deshman notes, to reflect the special sanctity of Mary, who is suggestively portrayed as the palace or temple of Christ.[231] Gabriel's arrival to the Virgin in a large purple cloud on the left-hand side of the scene appears to be a particular innovation of the miniature, designed, as Deshman argues, to reflect Carolingian

[228] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 16.
[229] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 16.
[230] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 17.
[231] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 17.

exegesis of the Annunciation as a moment of fruitful abundance, in which Christ's incarnation in Mary is akin to a raincloud nourishing virgin ground.[232]

Mary's Books and the Symbolism of the Word

Notwithstanding the overall complexity of the iconography, we may yet note a particularly unusual facet of the imagery: the presentation of Mary with a book. Mary's codex, if an apparently traditional visual attribute of the saint, has been shown, in some recent scholarly work, to reflect an iconographic innovation of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The Benedictional's portrayal of Mary's book at the Annunciation represents the first such depiction in Anglo-Saxon manuscript art. It has been rendered, moreover, in a particularly striking way.

In drawing attention to Mary's book in the scene, we might first note the precise presentation of the Virgin's codex. Our foregoing overview of book imagery in the volume alerted us to the especial richness of the manuscript's portrayals, which show the codex as a lavishly illuminated, decorated object, often with golden treasure-bindings. Mary's book at the Annunciation is yet rendered as a small, plain volume, not held aloft in display, but orientated to face the Virgin herself. This portrayal contrasts notably with Mary's golden, inscribed volume in the Benedictional's litany of virgins, and, moreover, with all other such depicted books in the manuscript. To render the book in this way, the artist of the Benedictional has simply provided the depicted codex with a line-drawn outline. Set beside the painting and gold-leaf used in the surrounding components of the scene, the body of the book, left unadorned, allows the viewer to see through to the surface of the parchment on the manuscript page.

This distinctive portrayal of the book yet has broader significance. As Laura Saetveit Miles has demonstrated in a recent discussion of Marian iconography, the depiction of Mary with a book reflects a markedly unusual development.[233] Focusing primarily on Continental visual sources, Miles has shown how the portrayal of Mary's book arose as part of the Carolingian Reform, during which the Virgin's erudition and piety were seen as fitting models for monastic devotion.[234] Rare and sometimes apocryphal sources, such as the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew,* which describes Mary as "learned in the wisdom of the law of God", were

[232] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 12-13. For some further comments on this interpretation, see J.G.G. Alexander, "Robert Deshman: The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold – Review Article", *Speculum* 73, no. 1 (1998): 170.
[233] Laura Saetveit Miles, "The Origins and Development of the Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation", *Speculum* 89, no. 3 (2014): 632-69.
[234] Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 642-7.

evoked as authority for these ideas.[235] A further important set of descriptions occur in Ambrose, where Mary is portrayed as "most studious in reading", and as having studied the prophecy of her conception in *Isaiah 7:14*.[236] One ninth-century Carolingian poem, as adduced by Miles, even departs from orthodox scriptural authority to portray the Virgin as reading from and singing the Psalms.[237]

Such contexts, as both Miles and Deshman note, may have influenced the Benedictional's imagery. As both scholars also demonstrate, the Anglo-Saxon scene appears to have been developed by analogy with Carolingian visual sources. One of the most important of these is the Brunswick Casket, a ninth-century repository with ivory panels.[238] One panel on the casket offers a particularly striking portrayal of the Annunciation [**Figure 41**]. In this scene, Gabriel on the left holds a short staff and extends a hand of blessing towards the Virgin. Mary, enthroned beneath a baldachin, looks across to the Archangel, clutching a set of spindles towards her chest. In the centre of the scene, Mary extends her hand over a book standing on a lectern. This book is shown partially open, as the Virgin turns over a new leaf of the codex. As Miles notes, this portrayal appears to reflect the first iconographic expression of the tradition of the Virgin's book at the Annunciation.[239] It would seem, furthermore, in the close visual correspondences between this portrayal and that in the Benedictional, to have influenced the Anglo-Saxon manuscript.[240] Noting the particular visual focus on the codex in both scenes, Miles has suggested that Mary's blank, open book might be interpreted as evoking the multiplicity of Carolingian textual traditions for the Virgin's learning, focused, variously, on the prophecy in Isaiah, the Psalms, and/or Christ as the Word of God.[241]

This contextual background to the scene sheds important light on the significance of the Marian book. In the context of the Anglo-Saxon portrayal, however, we might yet note some important visual differences. Mary's book in the Benedictional is placed such that it faces towards her, a feature not paralleled on the Brunswick Casket, which, in an apparent iconographic confusion, shows Mary's book positioned towards Gabriel.[242] Further, we might note how, in contrast to the plain reading stand in the Casket, the lectern in the Benedictional

[235] Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 636-9.
[236] Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 639-42.
[237] Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 645-7.
[238] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 264-5; Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 643-5. See also Alexander, "The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold", 177-9.
[239] Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 643.
[240] For further discussion, see Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 265-6.
[241] Miles, "Mary's Book at the Annunciation", 644-5.
[242] For this point, see also Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 264.

is draped. This detail has been identified by Carl Nordenfalk as an unusual component of tenth and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon iconography.[243] Nordenfalk points, in particular, to the draped lectern in the Benedictional's portrayal of John the Evangelist [**Figure 36**], noting how this setting for the Word is evocative of an altar covering.[244] As it appears in the Annunciation scene, this iconographic detail might perhaps be interpreted as offering a particular focus on the quasi-eucharistic coming of Christ, whose transmission through the Virgin is symbolic of the Word made flesh.

A further significant difference in the Anglo-Saxon miniature comes in the precise positioning of the book and the lectern in the scene. In the Benedictional, as we noted earlier, one finds the book in a directly mediating position between Mary and the Archangel, whose hands are in close proximity over and above the central codex. This is not paralleled on the Casket, where the book on the reading stand is placed at a short distance from Gabriel, who stands slightly apart to the far left of the image. Mary and Gabriel's relationship to the book in the Benedictional seems more closely aligned with that found elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon Benedictine iconography. We might perhaps recall here the similar, mediating position of books in the St. Benedict images in both the Tiberius copy of the *Regularis concordia* [**Figure 21**] and the Arundel Psalter [**Figure 20**]. The interactive placement of hands over books, a feature not mirrored in the ivory sculpture, is one common to all these scenes. This powerful imagery, in which the book forms the visual fulcrum of the iconography, seems indicative of a specifically Benedictine, Æthelwoldian, depiction of the book in the mid to late tenth century.

"Benedic hereditatem tuam": The Multivalent Symbolism of the Book

The visual distinctiveness of Mary's book might yet be evaluated with recourse to a broader body of evidence. Mary's volume occurs, as we noted earlier, as part of a complex visual schema, in which the Annunciation scene is cast, not as a standalone miniature, but as the frontispiece to the manuscript's prayers for Advent. These prayers, as Robert Deshman has observed, offer a rich focus on the coming of Christ from the Virgin.[245] As we shall see in this section, this textual and visual relationship offers intriguing, albeit subtle, reflections on the significance of the Marian book.

[243] Carl Nordenfalk, "The Draped Lectern: A Motif in Anglo-Saxon Evangelist Portraits", in his *Studies in the History of Book Illumination* (London: Pindar Press, 1992), 206-15.
[244] Nordenfalk, "The Draped Lectern", 209-10.
[245] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 15-16.

Before discussing these ideas about the iconography of the book in more detail, we might first note the textual focus of the Advent blessings. The first Advent blessing, which continues from the initial page onto folio 6v, begins, as expected, with an invocation of the "unigeniti adventum" ("the advent of [the] only begotten Son") [**App. §2.7.1/ai**]. This, as we saw earlier, follows on from the invocation of the "Libri huius Nati adventus" in the initial page's inscription. Unusually, however, as Barbara Raw has observed, the codex's blessings do not focus exclusively on Advent as a period of expectancy and anticipation, but also on the eschatological significance of the season in relation to the Last Judgement.[246] The manuscript's second benediction for Advent accordingly implores God to "ianuas caeli" ("open the gates of heaven") [**App. §2.7.2/ai**] and pour down the Holy Spirit "et irriga terram nostrum, ut germinet nobis spiritum alem fructum" ("[to] irrigate our earth, so that it might bring forth spiritual fruit for us") [**App. §2.7.2/aii**]. These descriptions are, importantly, carefully linked back to the Virgin's conception. In the manuscript's second, alternative blessing for Advent, the benediction asks God to "qui datus ex virgine et benedic hereditatem tuam" ("bless your inheritance [i.e. Christ], who has been given to us in peace from a Virgin") [**App. §2.7.2/bi-ii**].

This striking characterisation of Advent in relation to Christ and the Virgin, might, as Deshman notes, be read in tandem with the iconography of the Annunciation scene.[247] The second blessing's invocation of Christ as "spiritual fruit" falling from heaven is perhaps reminiscent here of the fecund symbolism of Gabriel's rain-cloud.[248] These ideas are emphasised further in the benediction's striking allusion to the irrigation of the earth, casting Mary as the fertile landscape on which Christ is metaphorically propagated. We might note the rhetorical interplay between earthly and heavenly space in these blessings, which refer both to the mortal realm in which Christ is incarnated, and to the opening of the "gates of heaven" made possible by His Advent. This metaphoric relationship between earthly and heavenly landscapes is given greater impetus by the idea of Christ as a "hereditatem" ("inheritance") transmitted by Mary. This striking characterisation is one that receives echo throughout the Benedictional's prayers, including in the manuscript's English composed benedictions, which are resonant with ideas about the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom ("caelestis paradisi

[246] Barbara Raw, "Two Versions of Advent: The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold and *The Advent Lyrics*", *LSE* 34 (2003): 1-13.
[247] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 15-17.
[248] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 13-17.

hereditatem");[249] descriptions of promised landscapes ("repromissione hereditatis"),[250] and the concept of the divine inheritance as a joint or shared heirdom ("regni caelestis coheredes").[251]

The portrayal of Christ's appearance to the Virgin as part of an inheritance or the fruitful cultivation of land is particularly striking. We might note, further, the appearance of such terms as "hereditatem" and "cohere[de]s" in contemporary charters to denote the ownership or legal rights attached to a particular tract of land. A confirmation of land rights to St. Mary's, Abingdon, a foundation established by Æthelwold in the early years of the Reform, is described as being transferred to the bishop, "in eternam largitus … hereditatem" ("granted by eternal inheritance").[252] Abingdon's land-books, as laid out in the biography of Æthelwold by his pupil Wulfstan, are described in the period as "aeternae libertatis suffultus priuilegiis" ("endorsed by the privileges of eternal liberty").[253] Though the idea of the "priveligium" is not reflected in the Benedictional's inscriptions or benedictions, some Anglo-Saxon descriptions of the Virgin cast the Annunciation and Conception in similarly legalistic terms. One such depiction, occurring in Aldhelm's *De virginitate,* that volume so ideologically crucial to the reformers, portrays Mary as carrying Christ "propter perenne puritatis privilegium" ("[due to] the privilege of her perpetual purity").[254] This "privilegium", which can mean either "written grant" or "gift", affords an almost legal emphasis to the virgin's bearing of Christ as the Saviour of the world.

These ideas about the potential importance of the Marian "privilege" or "inheritance" seem evocative, following our earlier discussion, of Mary's key role in the ideology of the Reform. The cult of the Virgin was assiduously promoted by Æthelwold, who dedicated many foundations to her, and set particular store by her symbolic guardianship of monastic territory. Powerful textual descriptions of Mary with books symbolising both the Word and the sanctity of holy property, as in the *Vita S. Ecgwini*, helped demonstrate Benedictine rights over land. Further, as Mary Clayton has shown, Æthelwold seems likely to have composed a new Office of the Virgin in the tenth century, in which one finds prayers invoking both Marian intercession with the divine and her help in securing the temporal "possession offered to [a] holy church".[255]

[249] *CBP,* benedictio: 1499, membrum: b, SL 162A, pag.: 615, linea: 13-15, LLT-A, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=RBEPOC162 [Accessed 30 December 2019].
[250] *CBP* benedictio: 1920, membrum: a, SL 162A, pag.: 785, linea: 13-15.
[251] *CBP* benedictio: 380, membrum: b, SL 162, pag.: 158, linea: 13-15.
[252] S 682.
[253] Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom, eds., *Wulfstan Cantor: The Life of St. Æthelwold* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 36-7 (Ch. 21).
[254] Aldhelm, *Prosa de uirginitate,* CPL 1332, cap.: 40, pag.: 581, linea: 1.
[255] Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin,* 67-8.

We might bolster these associations between Mary's bearing of the Word and the legal land-book by briefly noting a particularly unusual passage of the Marian Office preserved in an early eleventh-century codex known as the Portiforium of St. Wulstan (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 391). This volume, which Clayton discusses as indicative of Reform-era rites, reflects specifically on the symbolism of Mary as the mother of Christ.[256] Using particularly striking terminology, the rite describes Mary as, "uirgo quae antiquum diabolice deditionis cyrographum aboleuit … et caeleste regnum patefecit" ("the virgin who destroyed the old signed document of diabolical surrender and … opened up the heavenly kingdom").[257] Here, the "cyrographum", another term for "charter" or "land-book", implicates the virgin within a distinctly legalistic framework, in which the Virgin's protection of heavenly territory is cast as a quasi-diplomatic transaction. This unusual portrayal describes Mary's relationship with the holy landscape as if it were controlled through the production and destruction of land-books, predicated, in this case, on the Virgin's bearing of Christ as the true "hereditatem", which triumphs over all other bibliographic claims.

Mary's portrayal in the Benedictional, in which ideas about fertile landscapes are found reflected in the codex's texts and imagery, set up a chain of connections implicating the Marian book within a broad associative field. The interplay between the "spiritual fruit" described in the manuscript's Advent blessings and the portrayal of the Virgin as a fecund space situate the miniature within a complex of ideas about terrestrial and heavenly ground. These are yet redolent with broader connotations, situating Marian space within a much more immediate, legal, framework. Though the evidence is nuanced and allusive, we might read the unusual inclusion of Mary's book in the scene as part of these topical, late Anglo-Saxon ideas about the Virgin as a symbol of "booked" land, whether earthly or divine. Of perhaps further significance, given the way the Annunciation miniature departs from its Carolingian source, we might note the particular emphasis the artist has given to the meeting of Mary and Gabriel's hands over the book. We are perhaps reminded here of the textual descriptions of the laying-on of hands over books in contemporary legal ceremonies, in which, as we noted earlier, the transmission of books "mid agenum handum" was viewed as symbolically significant. Insofar, moreover, as the draped lectern in the Benedictional's image represents a visual type of the

[256] Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin,* 75.
[257] Anselm Hughes, ed., *The Portiforium of Saint Wulstan: Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 391,* vol. 2, HBS 90 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1960), 61.

altar, we might read additional, ceremonial, connotations into this transactional depiction of the book.

§4.3) The Episcopal Codex: The "Bishop Blessing" Miniature

The powerful complex of ideas about Marian books of the Word and the Anglo-Saxon "hereditatem" in the Annunciation scene give some indication of the special symbolism of the book in Æthelwold's Benedictional. To further and augment the analysis, we might turn to consider a second case study, which appears, some hundred folios after the Annunciation, at the end of the manuscript. This image, identified by Deshman as a "bishop blessing" his congregation,[258] departs significantly from the Benedictional's otherwise consistent visual focus on saints and scriptural scenes. The miniature, which is both iconographically and stylistically distinctive, contains one of the codex's most intriguing, and suggestive, depictions of the book.

The Bishop Blessing Miniature and its Iconography

The "bishop blessing" scene, found on folio 118v of the manuscript, represents the final miniature in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold [**Figure 42**]. Contrasting somewhat with the Annunciation scene, it is not attached to a specific liturgical festival, but comes between a benediction for the "nativity of many virgins", and, on the page facing the image, a blessing for the dedication of a church. The scene does not represent a full-page miniature, but rather a three-quarter-length image, which appears, at first glance, to have been added as a sketch onto a folio originally designed for text.

Notwithstanding these unusual features, the miniature offers a visually distinctive portrayal. The lower register of the scene shows a single bishop, whose status is identified by his ecclesiastical dress. This cleric, shown in dark blue vestments with a golden trim, is tonsured and wears a stole. He stands beneath a tall archway, supported by columns with golden capitals. In front of the column on the left is a draped altar, on which appears a ciborium and paten. The prelate, turned to the right, holds in his left hand a thin, open volume, adorned with gold leaf. With his right hand, he makes a gesture of blessing towards a group of tonsured monks. These monks, sketched using red outlines, turn to face the bishop. The hand of one of the acolytes reaches over the open folio of the bishop's golden book. Further to the right, two

[258] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 139.

more of the monks hold thick volumes. One of these volumes is held with a veiled hand; the other, on the far side of the image, is shown tucked into the body of an attentive monk.

In the upper register of the scene one finds a further cluster of figures. These figures, rendered in simple outline, are visible only from the head and shoulders upwards. None appear to be tonsured, and some of the male figures are wearing tunics, clasped at the shoulder with brooches. The third individual from the right appears to be a woman, shown wearing a veil or headdress. These figures, looking down on the bishop and the monks in the lower register, appear to be congregants witnessing a Eucharistic ritual. Enclosing the whole scene is a larger line-drawing, rendered in the same red outline used for the monks and congregants. This drawing evokes architectural space, setting the "bishop blessing" image within a cross-section of an ecclesiastical building. At the top left and right of this structure, the drawing is elaborated through the addition of two clusters of buildings, which are shown with towers and archways. In the top centre of the scene, just above the roof of the line-drawn church, the artist has added a bell-tower, complete with two bells, and, at the very top, a weathervane decorated with a rooster.

Though once considered unfinished, the miniature, as Francis Wormald and Deshman have shown, reflects the distinctive style of late Anglo-Saxon Benedictine art, in which lavish illumination was deliberately combined with line-drawing.[259] The components of the scene in red outline are accordingly to be considered part of the finished design. We might point, for comparison, to the rather similar style of the Arundel Psalter's image of St. Benedict [**Figure 20**], which also incorporates line-drawing. As we noted earlier, that scene, though dating from the early eleventh century, represents the "Winchester style" developed during Æthelwold's episcopate. The Arundel scene, we observed, renders the right-hand side of the iconography showing Anglo-Saxon monks in a much humbler visual manner to the lavish illumination accorded to St. Benedict. Much the same principle is at work in the "bishop blessing" miniature, which, affording the bishop on the left richly coloured robes and a fully-illuminated altar and archway, draws a clear visual distinction with the tonsured acolytes on the right of the image.

[259] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 139-41; Francis Wormald, *The Benedictional of St. Ethelwold* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959)*,* 30.

The Portrayal of the Bishop's Book in Manuscript Context

The portrayal of the "bishop blessing", if in accord with the style of Benedictine art in the late tenth century, yet offers a rather unusual focus. The scene does not show a saint or Benedictine figure of authority, but rather a single bishop, who appears to be conducting the Mass. This depiction of the prelate has been identified, by some commentators, as a possible representation of Bishop Æthelwold himself.[260] In this, comparison might be made with the portrayal of St. Dunstan in Dunstan's Classbook, or, indeed, with the striking image of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Edgar in the Tiberius copy of the *Regularis concordia.* In the Benedictional, however, we might note the distinctive focus of the scene, shown not as an abstract moment of devotion or collective authority, but as part of a liturgical ritual.

The depiction of the book, as it appears in this miniature, is given special distinction. Books are portrayed, in the scene as a whole, on three occasions, twice as attributes of the line-drawn monks, and once in the magisterial depiction of the bishop's golden codex. This central codex forms the centrepiece of the scene, which, held open by the bishop, is yet gestured towards, and partially obscured, by the hands of the monastic acolytes. The bishop's golden book, extending into the right-most part of the scene, sets up a clear visual contrast with the plain rendering of the monks and lay congregation. In the way it is placed open towards the prelate, one gains a sense of the bishop's special privileges in being able to see and bless from this lavish codex. Virginia Blanton has observed, moreover, how the bodies of the lay congregants in the upper register of the image are literally screened-off from the rite, emphasising the separation between bishop, monks and the secular church.[261] In this, the miniature appears to set up several hierarchies of viewing and witnessing, in which the episcopal book, forming the visual fulcrum of the scene, is placed in a strategic position in relation to various types of episcopal, monastic and secular protagonists.

This apparent representation of an Anglo-Saxon episcopal book might be viewed as indicative of the growing importance of Benedictine codices in the late tenth century. Richard Gameson, discussing the Benedictional, has suggested that Æthelwold may have exerted careful control over who could see and view its dazzling iconography.[262] The "bishop blessing" scene, as Gameson notes, might be read as a reflection on the way Æthelwold's monastic

[260] George Warner and Frederick Wilson, eds., *The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1910), xxix-xxx.
[261] Blanton, *Signs of Devotion,* 88-91.
[262] Gameson, *Role of Art,* 58.

followers and the lay community at Winchester were intended to view the sacred importance of the Benedictional as an episcopal book.[263] More broadly, one might situate the "bishop blessing" scene in relation to Carolingian episcopal portrayals, which, as Sigrid Danielson has shown, began to emerge in conjunction with the elevation of the bishop's status from the ninth century onwards.[264] Bishops and books, usually shown in the context of holy rituals, appear with increasing frequency during the period, often reflecting on the bishop's role as the representative of God on earth.[265] In the Benedictional's miniature, the apparent role of the book in the Mass seems particularly significant. This, we might note, casts the bishop as mediator, not only with his monastic and lay congregation, but with the divine, whose holy status is indicated, elsewhere in the manuscript, by the presence of golden books similar to that carried by the bishop.

A reading of the significance of this final scene might yet be deepened through some wider iconographic comparisons. Following Robert Deshman's careful reading of the "bishop blessing" image, we might note some visual correspondences between this scene and the iconography found in the codex's Annunciation miniature.[266] The books in both scenes are shown as thin, open volumes, their pages angled towards their sacred readers.[267] Both books are placed in a central position between two (groups of) protagonists. The intersection of the hands of Mary and Gabriel over the book in the Annunciation might be compared with the interplay between episcopal and monastic hands over the codex in the episcopal miniature. More intriguingly, as Deshman notes, one might observe how the lectern in the Annunciation image is paralleled by the altar in the "bishop blessing" scene.[268] Though rather more ambiguous, Deshman also adduces comparisons between the baldachin in the Annunciation image and the columned archway and canopy stretching over the bishop's head; and between the golden paten resting on the bishop's altar and the oval object carried by the Virgin.[269]

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[263] Gameson, *Role of Art,* 60.
[264] Sigrid Danielson, "The Bishop's Presence: Depicting Episcopal Authority in the Early Middle Ages", in *Envisioning the Bishop: Images and the Episcopacy in the Middle Ages,* ed. Sigrid Danielson and Evan A. Gatti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 137-52.
[265] For some examples (albeit under-discussed in the articles concerned), see Danielson, "The Bishop's Presence", 142-6. See also Evan A. Gatti, "Building the Body of the Church: A Bishop's Blessing in the Benedictional of Engilmar of Parenzo", in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages,* ed. John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 93-100.
[266] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 145-6.
[267] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 145-6.
[268] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 145.
[269] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 145.

The visual correspondences between these miniatures, which form the first and last images in the codex's illumination of its benedictions, have particular consequences for an interpretation of the book. In being portrayed in like terms to the book at the Annunciation, the bishop's codex is seemingly imbued with a special, spiritual significance. The inclusion of the draped lectern and Eucharistic imagery in both scenes might posit the "bishop blessing" as a metaphorical "second coming" of Christ, in which the moment in the Mass in which the sacrament is transubstantiated becomes a direct reflection of Mary's conception of the Word. Mary's volume, marked out as the symbolic "inheritance" of Christian believers and the culmination of a salvific promise made in holy scripture, might further be compared to the intercessory, and visually mediating, role played by the bishop's book. Given the rich intercessory imagery in the Annunciation and Advent cycle, this episcopal codex might be read as a similarly salvific object, functioning, like the "compact" of the Marian volume, to secure a place in heavenly territory for all believers.

Holy Church and Heavenly City: The Symbolism of the Book in Reform-era Winchester

The suggestive iconography of the "bishop blessing" scene, if indicative of the place of the scene in the manuscript's wider visual programme, might yet be analysed further. The miniature, as we noted earlier, is set within a particularly intriguing line-drawn setting, placed between two different benedictions. These texts, as in the Annunciation cycle, might help shed further light on the specific importance of the depicted codex, which appears in proximity to some especially evocative blessings.

The portrayal of the bishop and his golden book, occurs, rather unusually, not as a full-page miniature, but on a folio already bearing text. The text of this blessing, as we observed briefly earlier, is a rather generic benediction, invoking "plurimarum uirginum" ("many virgins"). Beginning on folio 118r, the page preceding the miniature, the blessing asks that all virgins may represent "uitutem lampadibus" ("lamps of virtue") [**App. §2.7.3/bii**] in their service to the Lord. Evoking the fruitfulness of virginity, the benediction asks that such virgins may triumph "de antique hoste" ("against the ancient enemy") [**App. §2.7.3/aii**]. The concluding words of the blessing allude to the heavenly kingdom, imploring God to bless his virgins such that "eis caelestis sponsi thalamum ualeatis ingredi" ("they may be able to enter the bridal chamber of heaven") [**App. §2.7.3/ci-ii**]. These final parts of the prayer are those which extend to the top of folio 118v, directly above the "bishop blessing" scene.

If formerly regarded as a rather haphazard addition to the manuscript, we might note how the prayer at the top of the folio has seemingly been placed in direct connection with the imagery. The ecclesiastical architecture of the "bishop blessing" scene extends to the very top of the manuscript page, intruding directly into the text of the prayer. The church's bellcote, replete with a tall weathercock, reaches up directly into the conclusion of the benediction, bisecting the words "thalamum ualeatis". This, the tallest point of the church, is accordingly placed into an apparent relationship with the benediction's description of the heavenly realm.[270] This, as the foregoing text of the prayer demonstrates, draws on further architectural imagery, evoking paradise as like a marriage bed. We might perhaps argue here that the temporal depiction of the church is therefore intended to evoke the "caelestis sponsi thalamum" described by the text. In this intriguing configuration of text and image, we might also note how the bell-cote, the support of the church roof and the bishop's archway are in vertical alignment in the centre of the manuscript page. These lead the eye down from the prayer's description of the heavenly realm directly to the episcopal book and hand of blessing. Insofar as this book is that which acts to intercede with the divine through prayers, one finds an intriguing suggestion of the intercessory power of the bishop's volume in negotiating between temporal and spiritual space.

These ideas about the relationship between the book and its ecclesiastical setting are furthered, as Robert Deshman has suggested, in the benediction appearing on the page facing the miniature.[271] This prayer, as we noted earlier, is that to be used by the bishop during the dedication of a church. The benediction, invoking the guardianship and protection of God over the temporal church, asks for salvation for all who "ad dedicationem huius basilicae devote convenistis" ("devoutly gather at the dedication of this basilica") [**App. §2.7.4/bi-ii**]. The blessing also invokes the presence of saintly relics within the building, describing the church, moreover, as "templum sancti Spiritus" ("the temple of the Holy Spirit") [**App. §2.7.4/ci**]. Church dedication rituals, as Helen Gittos has shown, were particularly important in the Reform period, when many monastic institutions were being established or refounded.[272] Such rituals involved the ceremonial processing of the exterior and interior of a church, which was described as the "gate" or "door" of heaven.[273] These rites, as Gittos demonstrates, were performed solely by bishops, and involved the symbolic transformation of the temporal church

[270] For a further commentary on this observation, see Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 143.
[271] Deshman, *Benedictional of St. Æthelwold,* 141-3.
[272] Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture and Sacred Places,* 221-8.
[273] Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture and Sacred Places,* 230-44.

into “a vision of the heavenly city”.[274] In this, the episcopal role in sanctifying ecclesiastical space was key.

The “bishop blessing” scene, though not directly illustrative of these rites, encodes a particularly important reflection on the role of the bishop in relation to holy space. The miniature, with its detailed evocation of a “cross-section” of the church, portrays, in similar fashion to contemporary dedication rites, both the interior and exterior of the church. The citation of the “basilica” and its holy importance in the text facing the miniature seem powerfully evocative of the church in the scene. If we may interpret the bishop’s golden volume as a benedictional being used at the Mass, we might note how this benedictional, like that owned by Æthelwold, would also have included dedication rites for the blessing of a church like that on the page opposite the miniature. This powerful, reflexive, interplay between the text(s) and images in the Benedictional set up a further, highly complex, set of ideas about the material and representative importance of the bishop’s book.

Following the work of Danielson and Evan A. Gatti on Continental portrayals of tenth and eleventh-century bishops, we might note, in addition, how such scenes were often topical or political in their representation of the bishop’s role. Gatti, pointing to the portrayal of an episcopal rite in the eleventh-century Benedictional of Engilmar of Parenzo, notes how that codex’s portrayal of a bishop in architectural space serves to underscore the role of the prelate in “defining the boundaries of the community”.[275] Gatti, drawing on Cynthia Hahn’s work on the bishop’s role in securing episcopal (or monastic) territory, notes how such representations are frequently designed to show the way bishops symbolised the cohesion of a community’s spiritual, and terrestrial, landscape(s).[276] The golden book in the Anglo-Saxon scene, given such a specific ecclesiastical setting, might well be interpreted as a further symbol of these important episcopal duties.

These ideas of heritage and inheritance might return us to the interplay between the spiritual and legal symbolism of the book that we have noted to be such a feature of Æthelwoldian Benedictinism. The holy codex, if acting as a sacred symbol of the “caelestis sponsi thalamum”, is also the visual fulcrum of the scene, around which the depicted church is arranged. So mediating between lay, monastic and episcopal figures, the codex is placed into

[274] Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture and Sacred Places,* 243. For some further comments on this idea as it impacted on contemporary iconography, see Barbara Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8-12.
[275] Gatti, “Building the Body of the Church”, 114.
[276] Gatti, “Building the Body of the Church”, 114.

a spatially crucial position, sanctifying space in its relationship both to the "caelestis" and in its demonstration of the power of the Word to the watching congregation. Following our foregoing arguments about the irreducible interplay between holy codices and secular, quasi-sacred "land-books", this visual mediation between earthly and heavenly territories casts the central book in a particularly suggestive light. If the bishop's golden codex seems authoritatively reminiscent of the striking, golden volumes held by saints, virgins and apostles throughout the Benedictional, we might also note the key symbolic role of monastic land-books, "laminis aureis sigillata" ("sealed with gold leaves"), such as those which Æthelwold is said to have sanctified at favoured houses such as Abingdon and Ely.[277]

Conclusion

The Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, if long noted as one of the most lavish manuscripts to have survived from the height of the Reform, offers some especially important insights into the contemporary symbolism of the book. The codex, portrayed throughout the Benedictional, is found in a variety of richly evocative contexts, from the iconographically innovative portrayals in the visual litany, to the hermeneutic focus on the "biblos" in Godeman's poem. As we have seen in the foregoing case studies, the manuscript encodes individual portrayals of particular innovation and complexity. In the Annunciation and the "Bishop Blessing" miniatures, one finds depictions of the book that are both visually powerful and rich in textual and symbolic meaning. These portrayals, redolent with eschatological and territorial motifs, reflect the distinctive set of ideas attached to the Anglo-Saxon "boc" in the Benedictine Reform. They encode, moreover, a powerful focus on the spiritual status of the bishop, and on Æthelwold himself, as a figure whose authority relied upon the visual and textual representation of the book.

§5) The Book and the *Boceras*: Books in the "Second Generation" of Reform

The role of the book in demonstrating the authority of the Reform and the status of its episcopal leaders provides a fresh perspective on the representative dynamics of Benedictine monasticism. These portrayals, developed and elaborated over several decades of the movement, offer important insights into the ideological role of book-culture in late Anglo-Saxon England. By way of furthering this discussion, we now turn to consider how these powerful portrayals impacted on book-culture in the later phase of the movement. This period,

[277] Lapidge and Winterbottom, eds., *The Life of St. Æthelwold,* 36-7 (Ch. 21).

known as the "second generation" of Reform, was one in which the pupils and acolytes of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald sought to continue and augment the work of their illustrious predecessors. This continuation is reflected in the spread and development of Benedictine liturgy, and in the growing sophistication of education at the monastic schools.[278] Importantly, this period was also one in which the monastic achievement of the earlier tenth century and the younger reformers' ambitions for the future were given cultural expression. In this, the representation of the book was again key, tied both to the (now legendary) origins of the movement, and, more intriguingly, to a growing sense of monastic identity in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.

§5.1) Benedictine Hagiography and the Monastic Book

We might begin our discussion of the book in the "second generation" by turning to perhaps the most significant body of evidence from this period: the *vitae* of the reformers. If the later tenth century saw the apotheosis of Benedictine book-culture in such magnificent volumes as Æthelwold's Benedictional, it also marked the end of the first phase of Reform. Bishop Æthelwold and Archbishop Dunstan died in 984 and 988 respectively, followed, in 992, by Oswald. All three major leaders were soon heralded as saints, and subject, within a few years of each other, to elaborate hagiographies.[279] The *Vita Sancti Æthelwoldi,* a life of Æthelwold by his pupil Wulfstan Cantor was probably the first such volume to be produced, issued in c. 996.[280] Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Vita S. Oswaldi,*[281] and the *Vita Dunstani* composed by the anonymous "B.", followed in c. 997-1002.[282] These *Lives* provide especially important evidence for the ecclesiastical and literary activities of the reformers. In some cases, however, as we shall see through a close reading of the biographies by "B." and Wulfstan Cantor, the *vitae* provide some especially revealing depictions of the book. These point both to the role of

[278] For an alternative perspective on the continuation and success of the movement in the second generation see Christopher A. Jones, "Ælfric and the Limits of 'Benedictine Reform'", in *A Companion to Ælfric,* ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (Leiden, Brill, 2009), 67-108.
[279] For discussion of the timing and historical context of the hagiographies, see Catherine Cubitt, "Reading Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Latin Hagiography in the Context of the Reign of King Æthelred II "The Unready", in *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950-1150),* ed. Loredana Lazzari (Barcelona: Fédération internationale des instituts d'études médiévales, 2014), 347-64.
[280] Lapidge and Winterbottom, eds., *The Life of St. Æthelwold*, xv-xvi.
[281] Lapidge, *Lives of St. Oswald and St. Ecgwine*, lxvii-viii. For some further discussion, see Lapidge, "Byrhtferth and Oswald", in *St. Oswald of Worcester,* ed. Brooks and Cubitt, 64-83.
[282] For an edition and translation of B's *vita,* see Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom, eds. and trans., *The Early Lives of St. Dunstan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

the codex as a continued measure of Benedictine authority, and, more intriguingly, to the changing status of books and book-culture as the movement entered a new phase.

The Portrayal of the Book in the Monastic *Vitae*

The hagiographies of Dunstan and Æthelwold, produced within a decade of the Reform leaders' deaths, provide some especially important evidence for these key figures of the movement. Wulfstan Cantor, who was also responsible for a lavish poetic *Metrica de S. Swithuno,* was one of Æthelwold's most illustrious pupils at the Winchester school.[283] Wulfstan's *vita* is described in the *Life* as one explicitly derived from the biographer's experience of his master, or, alternatively, from the testimony of older monks.[284] The anonymous "B.", though rather more ambiguous in his relationship to his subject, has been provisionally identified by Michael Lapidge as a cleric who knew the saint during his time at Glastonbury.[285] "B." might even, though the evidence is less secure, represent one "Byrhthelm", an individual described in charter evidence as Dunstan's secretary.[286]

The *vitae,* though wide-ranging in their portrayal of both leaders, provide some especially vivid depictions of books. The biographer "B.", as we noted in our discussion of Dunstan's Classbook, offers a striking account of the way Dunstan was fond of writing and illuminating books.[287] Wulfstan Cantor, as we observed in the last section, offers several evocative descriptions of Æthelwold's volumes, including his deposition of land-books "sealed with gold leaves" at Abingdon.[288] These brief glimpses into reformist book-culture in the *Lives* are yet part of a more widespread theme. Thus, we might note how B's *Vita Dunstani* goes into close detail about the abbot's early interest in books, especially the study of "sacris … litterarum" ("[books of] holy scripture") [**App. §2.8.1/1**], which Dunstan scrutinised in his youth.[289] Wulfstan's *Vita S. Æthelwoldi,* likewise, offers a particularly vivid account of the way Æthelwold, "studiose et diligenter in ipsa puerita sacris litterarum studiis animum dederit"

[283] For further discussion of the Winchester school, see especially Lapidge, "Hermeneutic Style", 85-90. For a rather different perspective on the school's literary activities, see also Mechthild Gretsch, "Winchester Vocabulary and Standard Old English: The Vernacular in Late Anglo-Saxon England", *BJRL* 83, no. 1 (2001): 41-87.
[284] Lapidge and Winterbottom, eds., *Life of St. Æthelwold,* 2-3.
[285] Michael Lapidge, "B. and the *Vita S. Dunstani*", in *St. Dunstan,* ed. Ramsay, Sparks and Tatton-Brown, 248-50; 259.
[286] Lapidge, "B. and the *Vita S. Dunstani*", 256-9.
[287] For further discussion, see also Higgitt, "Glastonbury, Dunstan, Monasticism and Manuscripts", 277.
[288] Lapidge and Winterbottom, eds., *Life of St. Æthelwold*, 36-7.
[289] All references to Dunstan's *vita* are derived from Lapidge and Winterbottom, ed. and trans., *The Early Lives of St. Dunstan*. Selected passages from the *vita* appear as **Appendices §2.8.1)-§2.8.4)**, and are cross-referenced within the discussion.

("even as a child devoted himself studiously and industriously to studying holy literature") [**App. §2.9.1/1-2**].[290]

To some degree, as one might expect from the genre of hagiography, the *Lives* by Wulfstan and B. evoke the book as a general marker of reformist piety. In common with other Anglo-Saxon *vitae,* such as the near-contemporary hagiographies of early saints produced by Ælfric, one finds, in the reformers' *Lives,* several rather conventional portrayals of the "bookish" saint. Dunstan is described, in B.'s *Life,* as precociously gifted, such that "coetaneos quosque precelleret, et suorum tempora studiorum facili cursu transiliret" ("he came to excel all his peers, easily racing through his student days") [**App. §2.8.1/3**]. Drawing on the trope of the gifted ecclesiastical leader, Æthelwold is portrayed in similar terms, being "agilis natura atque acutus ingenio" ("naturally quick and sharp of mind") [**App. §2.9.1/5**] in his ready retention of book-learning. Both saints are identified as gifted teachers who are keen to provide their followers with appropriate instruction.[291] Thus, Dunstan is one who, "mendosos libros dum primam orientis diei lucem contueri potuit, erasa scriptorium falsitate corrigeret" ("[laboured] to correct mistakes in books, as soon as he glimpsed the earliest light of dawn, by getting rid of false. readings") [**App. §2.8.4/8-9**]. Æthelwold, in Wulfstan's *vita,* is similarly evoked as an eager tutor of "adolescentes et iuvenes" ("young men and the more mature students") [**App. §2.9.3/2**], producing, furthermore, "Latinos libros Anglice eis soluere et regulas grammaticae artis ac metricae rationis tradere" ("translations of Latin texts in English books, and passing onto them the rules of grammar and metric") [**App. §2.9.3/2-3**].

Some sense that books and book-learning have rather greater significance in the *Lives* comes in more unusual passages. B.'s *Vita Dunstani* is especially important in this regard, foregrounding several markedly unorthodox episodes. Describing Dunstan's early study at Glastonbury, B. notes how the school there attracted Irish pilgrims, who visited the foundation to pay homage to St. Patrick's supposed burial place at the site. B. gives little detail about the precise relationship between these pilgrims and the Glastonbury school, but is careful to observe that, "horum etiam libros rectae fidei tramitem philosophantes, diligenter excoluit …" ("Dunstan carefully studied their books, which teach the way to the true faith") [**App.**

[290] All references to Æthelwold's *vita* are derived from Lapidge and Winterbottom, eds. and trans., *Life of St. Æthelwold.* Selected passages from the *vita* appear as **Appendices §2.9.1)-§2.9.5)**, and are cross-referenced within the discussion.

[291] For an overview of Æthelwold as teacher, see Lapidge, "Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher", 104-17. See also Loredana Lazzari, "The Scholarly Achievements of Æthelwold and His Circle", in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers Presented at the International Conference, Udine, 6-8 April 2006,* ed. Patrizia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari and Maria Amalia D'Aronco (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 309-47.

§2.8.2/17-18]. B. apparently has some qualms about the orthodoxy of these books, noting that, whilst sometimes not strictly allied to Christian tradition, these books were nevertheless carefully scrutinised by Dunstan. This scrutiny, B. argues, was such that, "quos ab intimo cordis aspectu patrum sanctorum assertione solidatos esse persenserat, solubili semper indagauit scrutamine" ("[Dunstan] realised deep in his heart [that these books had] been given solidity by the affirmations of the holy fathers") [**App. §2.8.2/18-19**].

Elsewhere in B.'s *vita,* a further interesting passage is deployed to reflect further on Dunstan's book-learning. The saint's apparent taste for all manner of books, both Christian and those of Irish "phylosophantes", is cited as that which leads to his persecution by enemies. B. devotes considerable discussion to Dunstan's early popularity at court, and how his wisdom endeared him to the king. This yet sparks the jealousy of other courtiers, who are particularly envious of his wide-ranging facility with books. In one striking passage, the biographer records how these malefactors began to slander Dunstan:

> Conflabant enim sub liuido antro neuosi pectoris inopinata mendacia, dicentes illum ex libris salubribus et uiris peritis, non saluti animarum profutura sed auitae gentilitatis uanissima didicisse carmina, et histriarum friuoleas coulisse incantationes. [**App. §2.8.3/5-8**].
>
> From deep in the malign caverns of their flawed breasts [Dunstan's enemies] concocted lies he did not expect, saying that those healthful books, from those wise men, he had learned not things that would help to save souls but the vain spells of ancestral heathendom, and had cultivated the empty incantations of wizards.

In this, vivid, account, Dunstan's early piety and learning are said to be evidence of his whimsical, antiquarian interest in "vain" volumes. Even more seriously, these assertions leave Dunstan open to accusations of witchcraft and sorcery, for which he is eventually expelled from court. The saint's polymathic learning, a feature drawn out with somewhat unusual emphasis by B., is here indexed to a rather ambiguous narrative about Dunstan's fascination with all manner of books, whether Christian or "heathen".

The nature of this emphasis, departing somewhat from hagiographic convention, might point to the later tenth century as one particularly rich in legends about the Reform leaders' learning. Contemporaries at the Glastonbury school, as Mechthild Gretsch has observed, would have inherited a particular wealth of books and abstruse lore from the extraordinary heights of

scholarship reached in the "proto-Reform".[292] It seems likely, as we saw in both Æthelwold's Benedictional, and (to a more limited degree) in Dunstan's "Sherborne Pontifical", that the self-image of the reformers in relation to books was already being carefully cultivated by them for the benefit of their followers and pupils. Helen McKee has shown how Irish books such as those cited by B. in Chapter Five of the *vita* appear to be reflected in manuscript evidence from Dunstan's school, in which, as in the saint's own Classbook, Celtic material has been carefully preserved.[293] Even more intriguingly, one might note how B's account of Dunstan's persecution and expulsion, an event with real historical basis, is here given a notably bibliographic gloss, perhaps in accord with the saint's own interpretation of his peers' jealousy and envy.

If such distinctive episodes in the *Vita S. Dunstani* are suggestive of the particular role of the book in the characterisation of the saint, the *vitae* of both Dunstan and Æthelwold bear further signs of first-generation Benedictine book-culture. Æthelwold's early period of study at Glastonbury is given particular description in Wulfstan Cantor's *vita*. This period is noted as one in which the future bishop learned "liberalem grammaticae artis peritiam atque mellifluam meritricae rationis dulcedinem" ("the liberal art of grammar and the honey-sweet system of metrics") [**App. §2.9.2/9-10**]. This evocative description is furthered in the next few lines of the text, which note how, "more apis prudentissimae, quae solet boni odoris arbores circumuolando requirere et iocundi saporis holeribus incumbere, diuinorum carpebat flores uoluminum" ("like a provident bee that habitually flits around looking for scented trees and settling on the greenery of pleasant taste, he [Æthelwold] laid toll on the flowers of religious books") [**App. §2.9.2/10-11**]. A similar description occurs in B's *vita,* in which Dunstan's early taste for books marks him out as specially gifted: "Nam multa sacrorum et divinorum voluminum prata velut apis ingeniosa rapido cursu capacis ingenii peruolavit" ("Many were the meadows of sacred and divine volumes, which, like some bee of genius, he flew over on the swift wings of his able nature") [**App. §2.8.2/12-13**].

This trope of the "clever bee" is one, as we observed earlier, that the reformers extracted from Aldhelm's *De uirginitate,* using this evocative description of book-learning to add emphasis to their portrayal of the monastic book. As it appears in the later *vitae,* one gains a powerful sense of the continuing impact of Aldhelmian book-culture in the "second

[292] Gretsch, "Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 57", 143-6.
[293] Helen McKee, "The Circulation of Books Between England and the Celtic Realms", in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* vol. 1 ed. Gameson, 341.

generation" of Reform.[294] This might, again, reflect the legends and narratives about the monastic book beginning to develop in the later period. More plausibly, it might reflect the continued teaching of Aldhelm, and his potently devotional volumes, in the later tenth-century monastic schools. Promulgated as part of a growing trend for reformist *vitae* from the 980s onwards, we might also read this mirroring of tropes as a deliberate evocation of the reformists' own style. This, importantly, would bind the later *vitae* into the deliberate cultivation of a specifically monastic, Aldhelmian-inspired book-culture promulgated by the Reform leaders themselves.

The Visionary or Miraculous in the Portrayal of the Reformist Book

The distinctive focus on the monastic book in the lives of the reformers points to the important role of the codex in later conceptualisations of the Reform. Dunstan and Æthelwold's scholarly activities are given careful description in the *vitae* by B. and Wulfstan, adding significantly to the historical narrative of early reformist book-learning. At times, however, as we have seen, this discussion of books is cast in markedly hagiographical terms, deployed to denote the special status of the monastic leaders. Tropes of piety and devotion, derived from the reformists' own, Aldhelmian, descriptions of sacred books, recur in the portrayals foregrounded by their followers. More surprisingly, perhaps, these representations of the monastic book are furthered, in the lives, by some more remarkable bibliographic episodes. These stories, developed and elaborated in different ways in the *vitae,* offer further intriguing evidence for the evolving conception of the book in the later Reform.

To provide some sense of these portrayals*,* we might first note an unusual episode inserted at the beginning of B.'s *Vita Dunstani*. This episode, found in Chapter Four of the *Life,* occurs as part of B.'s discussion of Dunstan's precocious learning. Noting first how Dunstan's parents set him to "sacris … litterarum … studentem", B. devotes, as we noted earlier, some lengthy discussion to the way the saint surpassed his peers in learning. These descriptions, somewhat surprisingly, are suddenly interrupted by B's assertion that, "contigit hunc laborare diu nam febribus" ("for a long time he suffered from a constricting fever") [**App. §2.8.1/6**]. The biographer then observes how Dunstan's rapid progress as a student was interrupted by illness, in which the saint was disturbed by "deliramenta nugarum" ("the affliction of delerium") [**App. §2.8.1/8**]. Dunstan's sickness is such that he begins to spout "plurima

[294] For some further literary context for this, see Michael Lapidge, "Three Latin Poems from Æthelwold's School at Winchester", *ASE* 1 (1972): 86-97.

uerborum uacua … ab ore" ("many a word from a mouth devoid of sense") [**App. §2.8.1/9**] and so is incapable of attending to his books.

In the next section of the *vita,* this digression is taken further. B. describes how the saint's delirium, in rendering him unfit for study, also brings him close to death. One night, at the height of his fever, Dunstan leaves his sick-bed and attempts to climb onto the roof of the abbey church. His confused ramblings bring him "summam … in arcem" ("to the very topmost parts of the church") [**App. §2.8.1/26**], where he finds himself in mortal peril. Miraculously, "Domini pietas rapuit de fastigiorum casibus insontem" ("God in his mercy snatched him down unscathed from the perils of the roof") [**App. §2.8.1/28-9**], conveying him "incolumem membris" ("safe and sound of limb") [**App. §2.8.1/30**] to safety in the grounds of the abbey. This encounter cures Dunstan's fever, and, as B. notes, marks him out as specially favoured by God. More intriguingly, however, this episode is said to have occurred as a marker of Dunstan's wisdom and erudition, in which "quantoque roticulis annorum maturior" ("the riper he became as the years rolled by") [**App. §2.8.1/46-7**]. Returning to the theme of Dunstan's book-learning, B. notes how this visionary experience provided the impetus for the saint's decision to become a monk, from which stems his resumption, in the next chapter, of the study of "sacrorum et divinorum uoluminum". So bridging the *vita's* early account of Dunstan's book-learning with his introduction to monastic volumes, this miraculous episode underscores the divine sanction given to Dunstan's involvement with books.

This theme of the visionary or miraculous in association with Benedictine books constitutes something of a new focus in the hagiographies of the later tenth century. As we noted slightly earlier in the discussion, late tenth or early eleventh-century saints' lives such as Byhrtferth's *Vita S. Ecgwini* offer some markedly unusual portrayals of the visionary or miraculous codex. In the *Vita S. Ecgwini,* as we noted earlier, Bishop Ecgwine receives a vision of St. Mary and her books, an event that seemingly demonstrates the sacred legitimacy of the "booked" land at Evesham. The episode in B., if presenting a rather different focus, nevertheless draws an intriguing equation between the book and the reception of a miraculous vision. Though the precise sources for B's depiction of monastic books in this way are unclear, his portrayal seems designed to bolster his account of Dunstan's erudition by setting it in a supernatural context.[295] This might suggest how legends about reformist books and learning were becoming of particular importance in the years following the Reform leaders' deaths.

[295] For a rather different perspective on the visionary in *vitae* of Dunstan, see Catherine Cubitt, "Archbishop Dunstan: A Prophet in Politics?", in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters,* ed. Barrow and Wareham, 145-66.

Given B.'s apparent familiarity with the chronology of Dunstan's early education, one might even wonder whether Dunstan's own books might have inspired this account. Dunstan's Classbook, as we discussed earlier, contains a particularly striking frontispiece, showing Dunstan, as a pious scribe, kneeling before Christ, who holds open a book of the Rule [**Figure 19**]. The Classbook, containing this quasi-visionary encounter between Dunstan and Christ, was apparently carefully preserved and associated with the saint long after his death.[296] If viewed by B. in preparation for his writing of the *Life,* this vision of the monastic book might have given rise to a new, distinctly miraculous, interpretation of the Dunstanian codex and its symbolism in the later tenth century.

The suggestive portrayal of Dunstan's book-learning in B. might be furthered with recourse to a yet more striking episode. This occurs towards the end of Wulfstan's *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*, in which Æthelwold, nearing the conclusion of his life, is described as devoting his spare time to reading. Set out in Chapter 36 of Wulfstan's *Life,* the biographer describes how it was Æthelwold's particular custom to study holy books by night. On one occasion, as Wulfstan notes, the bishop remained at his books too long, leading to a remarkable occurrence:

> Item accidit, cum famulus Christi nocturno tempore lectioni operam daret, eum ob nimiam uigilantiam obdormisse, et candelam ardentem de candelabro super librum in quo legerat cecidisse. Quae tandiu ardens super folium iacebat donec unus frater, nomine Leofredus, adueniret. Qui festinus accepit candelam adhuc flammantem de libro, et intuitus aspexit fauillas ipsius candelae *per multas lineas iacentes*, *et exsufflans eas* inuenit paginam inlaesam [**App. §2.9.5/2-7**].
>
> It also happened that, when the servant of Christ was devoting himself to reading at night, he fell asleep because he had stayed awake too long, and that a burning candle fell from the candlestick on the book in which he had been reading. It lay alight on the page until a brother, whose name was Leofred, came along. He quickly removed the candle, still alight, from the book. On examination he saw hot ash from the candle lying across many lines of the writing. Blowing them away he found the page undamaged.

In this, extraordinary, episode, Æthelwold's book becomes the focal point of a miracle. The bishop's codex, which he has been reading long into the night, is set ablaze by a stray candle

[296] Budny, "'St. Dunstan's Classbook'", 123-6.

but yet cannot be destroyed by fire. This, distinctly supernatural, story casts Æthelwold's volume as a particularly holy object, which, by association with the bishop, is miraculously preserved. Summing up the meaning of this short episode, Wulfstan notes: "qua in re meritum sancti uiri patuit, quia ardentem candela flamma consumpsit et tamen uim uirtutis suae ne paginam laederet amisit" ("here the merit of the holy father was made obvious: the flame wore away the candle as it burned, but it lost its force and could not harm the page") [**App. §2.9.5/7-8**].

This story, contrasting somewhat with that in B., offers an unusual focus on the book as a symbol of reformist holiness. The sainted Æthelwold, described as "famulus Christi", is portrayed as holy, not simply through pious book-learning, but through the mysterious sanctity of his books themselves. This vivid account emphasises how the "second generation" defined their leaders through books. It also indicates the extent to which Æthelwold, viewed in relation to his volumes, was seen as one whose sanctity was explicitly predicated on book-culture. Even more intriguingly, we might yet note how the idea of physical preservation, or incorruptibility ("inlaesam") is one more usually found in hagiographies to describe the miraculous preservation of a saintly body. Wulfstan's *vita,* written within only a few years of Æthelwold's death, does not directly draw on this idea. Nevertheless, it is perhaps revealing that, where it does occur in the *Life,* it is to denote the miraculous survival of the body of a book, which, through being associated with Æthelwold, demonstrates "meritum sancti uiri". Given the production of such magnificent codices as the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, it is not difficult to imagine that such books could have been regarded by the monastic leaders' followers as quasi-relics of Benedictine holiness. In the striking episode in Wulfstan's *vita,* one accordingly finds a suggestion of the numinous power of Benedictine books, reinterpreted, and portrayed, as divine symbols of monastic sanctity.

Books and the Monastic Hierarchy

The sanctity and authority of the monastic leaders, as portrayed through their special power over books, finds further expression in the *vitae*. An intriguing aspect of the *Lives* in this regard relates to their later tenth-century setting, in which the books associated with the earlier reformers took on a particularly symbolic role. If something of this symbolism is suggested in the trope of the miraculous book, one also finds portrayals designed to underscore the place of the codex in the monastic community as a whole. At times, these depictions seem indicative of

the increasingly rarefied nature of monastic book-culture, in which books, and access to books, were viewed as a particularly important symbol of Benedictine status.

To draw out these ideas in more detail, we might first return to Wulfstan's *Life of Æthelwold.* Chapter 35 of Wulfstan's *vita* foregrounds a particularly unusual episode, which appears just before the miraculous story of the burning book. Couched as a short sketch reflecting on the bishop's role in his foundation, the episode is one, again, in which Æthelwold's reading and book-learning are foregrounded. One winter's day when the monks are keeping the Divine Office, Æthelwold remains reading in his study. Bearing an important message for the bishop, a lesser-ranking monk called Theodric enters Æthelwold's room and finds his master, "luminis candelabrum manu tenentem repperit et legentem et sedula agilitate palpebrarum seniles obtutus acuentem" ("with a candlestick in his hand, reading, and sharpening his aged sight by keeping his eyelids hard at work") [**App. §2.9.4/5-6**]. Theodric is greatly impressed by this spectacle, keeping silent and "adtendens quam studiose oculos paginate infigeret" ("watching how closely Æthelwold fixed his eyes on the page") [**App. §2.9.4/6-7**]. Later, as Wulfstan records:

> Surrexit tandem uir sanctus a lectione, et ille frater residens accepit candelam coepitque legere, probans utrum et ipse posset oculos suos sanos ad legendum tam diligenter acuere sicut episcopum suos caligantes fecisse uiderat [**App. §2.9.4/7-9**]
>
> At length the holy man rose from his reading, and the monk sat down, took the candle, and started to read, testing whether he could make his healthy eyes as sharp at reading as he had seen the bishop do his dim ones.

This tableau, suggestive of the inspirational nature of the reformers' book-learning and its impact on their followers, yet takes a rather different turn. Wulfstan continues his narration with the rather ominous observation that, "illa temeritas non inpune euenit illi" ("such presumption did not go unpunished") [**App. §2.9.4/9**]. On the night following his visit to the bishop's chamber, Theodric is said to have received an unfamiliar visitor, who rebukes him for his "temeritate" ("temerity") and "praesumpsisti" ("presumption") [**App. §2.9.4/11**]. Theodric's actions, interpreted as a disobedient attempt to "viro Dei in legendo assimilare" ("vie with the man of God in reading") [**App. §2.9.4/1**], are severely punished by the visitor, whose reprimand is delivered "terribili comminatione" ("with fearful menace") [**App. §2.9.4/10-11**]. Theodric receives a sharp jab in the eye for his audacity, a violent rebuke which

leaves him afflicted "multis diebus" ("for many days") [**App. §2.9.4/15**]. Though Wulfstan notes that Theodric's guilt has been incurred "incaute" ("unwittingly") [**App. §2.9.4/16**], his aping of Æthelwold's skill in reading is regarded as a clear breach of monastic discipline.

This striking story about Æthelwold's books, again unparalleled in other contemporary *vitae,* portrays the bishop's volumes not only as indicative of his sanctity, but as a symbol of his special status in the monastery. Somewhat surprising, given Wulfstan's earlier focus on Æthelwold's benevolent teaching, is the rather harsh, punitive manner in which Theodric's actions are corrected. Alison Hudson, drawing attention to other such "violent" episodes in the *Life,* has argued that these stories reflect the contemporary expectation that Æthelwold and other bishops should act as strict guardians of their monastic charges.[297] Thus, as Hudson notes, one comes across other such punishments meted out by Æthelwold in the *vita,* often where a monk has demonstrated disobedience.[298] In the context of this bibliographic episode, we might yet note the rather arbitrary nature of Theodric's punishment, which even Wulfstan Cantor notes as "unwitting". The monk's crime, it would seem, is to attempt to emulate the bishop's special authority in relation to books, an action which disrupts the monastic hierarchy. This, implicitly, is one in which the bishop's books and learning are figuratively, or literally, untouchable by ordinary monks.

This short episode in Wulfstan's *vita,* though not elaborated in any greater detail, seems of wider significance. We might note, in addition, how, despite the considerable historical evidence for Æthelwold's "Winchester school", the major mention of the bishop's teaching in the *Life* confines itself to noting Æthewold's benevolent translation of "Latinos libros Anglice" for beginning students. The presence of an array of talented scholars at the school (including Wulfstan himself) is considerably downplayed in the text, seemingly to stress Æthelwold's own superior status in book-learning. This might be read as part of the ideology of books and book-culture perpetuated in the Reform, in which the powerful symbolism of the Benedictine codex was marshalled, not only in support of the movement, but to demonstrate the prestige of the ecclesiastical elite.

[297] Alison Hudson, "From Medieval Saint to Modern Bete Noire: The Case of the *Vitae Æthelwoldi*", *Postmedieval* 4, no. 3 (2013): 284-95.
[298] Hudson, "Medieval Saint to Modern Bete Noire", 285-6.

§5.2) Monks as *Boceras* in Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Enchiridion*

The powerful portrayals of books as a marker of the sanctity and authority of Dunstan and Æthelwold in the *Lives* give some indication of the continuing ideological role of the codex in the "second generation" of Reform. The book as a measure of holiness and ecclesiastical status, both in the *vitae* and in their context(s) of production, offer some intriguing insights into both the spiritual status of the codex and the social dynamics of late tenth-century book-culture. To further these ideas, we now turn to consider the works of a further important protagonist of "second generation" monasticism: Byrhtferth of Ramsey (c. 970-c. 1020). Byrhtferth, discussed earlier as the compositor of the *Vita S. Oswaldi* and the *Vita S. Ecgwini,* is perhaps most famous for his *Enchiridion,* a scientific treatise on the computus. This treatise, offered as a commentary on computistical calculation, reflects the increasing range and ambition of late Anglo-Saxon learning. More surprisingly, it also offers a particularly complex portrayal of the role of the book, and its status, in the later phase of the Benedictine Reform.

Books and "Boccræft" in the Byrhtferthian Rhetoric of Computus

Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion,* produced c. 1010, represents one of the most unusual literary survivals from the monastic schools. Contrasting somewhat with Byrhtferth's hagiographical writings, the text offers a quasi-scientific overview of the computus, a set of calculations used in the Western Church to determine the date of Easter. Covering such topics as arithmetic, astronomy and numerology, the *Enchiridion* represents the branch of learning known as the *quadrivium,* an advanced addition to the curriculum focused on mathematical and cosmological study.[299] Written in alternating passages of Latin and Old English, the *Enchiridion* is seemingly designed to act as a primer on the computus for both learned monks and secular clerics.[300] As preserved in a mid-eleventh-century manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 328), the tract is presented as a technical "manual", complete with a bilingual text, diagrams and tables.[301]

[299] For a helpful overview of this branch of learning in the medieval period, see Winston Black, "The Quadrivium and Natural Sciences", in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature,* ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 78-82.
[300] For an overview of Byrhtferth's canon and vernacular style, see Peter S. Baker, "The Old English Canon of Byrhtferth of Ramsey", *Speculum* 55, no. 1 (1980): 22-37.
[301] For discussion of the text's manuscript context, see especially Rebecca Stephenson, *The Politics of Language: Byrhtferth, Ælfric and the Multilingual Identity of the Benedictine Reform* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 39-67.

The *Enchiridion,* described by Byrhtferth as "*manualis* on Lyden and hand-boc on Englisc" ("in Latin, a manual, and in English, a hand-book"),[302] reflects new trends in Benedictine book-culture in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Byrhtferth's Ramsey, the house founded in 969 by Archbishop Oswald, appears to have become a particular focus for innovations in scholarship and learning, profiting from an influx of books and teachers.[303] One such teacher, from 985 onwards, was the famous Carolingian scholar Abbo of Fleury, who acted as instructor to a generation of monks, including Byrhtferth.[304] Abbo's teaching, though ranging widely over Latin grammar and rhetoric, specialised in astronomical and computistical lore.[305] His tenure at Ramsey appears to have led to an influx of computistical and astronomical volumes, including Bede's *De Temporum ratione,* a text well-attested in Anglo-Saxon England, and rarer books, such as Hyginus's *Astronomica*.[306] Such books, as Baker has demonstrated, appear to have strongly influenced Byhrtferth's "hand-book" on the computus.[307]

The nature of the *Enchiridion* as a textbook and commentary is reflected in the style and tone of Byrhtferth's didactical tract. A notable feature of the "manual", if relatively unsurprising in an educational volume, is the extent to which the author offers frequent reflections on his sources. Byrhtferth's sources, especially Bede, are repeatedly cited. At times, these citations are markedly bibliographic in style. In Book II, a passage discussing the equinox is derived explicitly from Bede, and introduced with the words, "[Beda] … cwæð on þære boc þe he gesette be gerimcræfte …" ("[Bede] says in the book which he created about arithmetic …").[308] In Book III, Byrhtferth, invoking an imagined student, advises, "gyf hwylcum frynd lyste ma þinga smeagan … þonne ræde he Isidorus boc þe ys *Ethimolegiarum* genemned" ("if

[302] Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, eds. and trans., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* EETS s.s. 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 120-1 (II.3.248-9).
[303] For a particularly rich discussion of learning at Ramsey in this period, see C.R. Hart, *Learning and Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England and the Influence of Ramsey Abbey on the Major Monastic Schools,* vol. 1 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2003), 77-112.
[304] For an overview of Abbo, Fleury and the significance of this cultural exchange, see Mostert, "Relations Between Fleury and England", 190-4. For the impact of the Anglo-Saxon Reform on Abbo's own ideas, see Elizabeth Dachowski, "The English Roots of Abbo of Fleury's Political Thought", *RB* 110.1 (2000): 95-105.
[305] For further discussion of Abbo's corpus, see Roger Wright, "Abbo of Fleury in Ramsey (985-987)", in *Conceptualising Multilingualism,* ed. Tyler, 105-20, and Catherine A.M. Clarke, "Panegyric and Reflection in a Poem by Abbo of Fleury to Ramsey Abbey", in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent,* ed. Hans Sauer, Joanna Story and Gabriele Waxenberger (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011), 293-302.
[306] For discussion, see Michael Lapidge, "The Library of Byrhtferth", in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* vol. 1, ed. Gameson, 685-93.
[307] Peter S. Baker, "Byrhtferth's Enchiridion and the Computus in Oxford, St. John's College 17", *ASE* 10 (1981): 123-42.
[308] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 66-7 (II.1.177-9).

any friend wishes to read more things [about this] then let him read the book by Isidore which is called *Etymologies*").[309] Such references are liberally sprinkled throughout the tract, ranging from the specific, "aperiat librum reuerentissimi Bede" ("let him [the student] open the book of the Venerable Bede"),[310] to the generic: "þære sunnan lætnys binnan feower geara fæce gewyrcð ænne dæg, swa, þæs ðe bec <secgað> …" ("the slowness of the sun creates a day over a four-year period, just as the books tell us").[311] This rather self-conscious citation of bibliographic sources forms a hallmark of the piece, which makes repeated reference to books, especially by Bede and Hrabanus Maurus. This might be interpreted as a reflection on the relative innovation of Byrhtferth's volume, which, in delving into mathematical and astronomical sources, represents a departure from the more traditional Benedictine focus on devotional literature and hagiography.

Such citations of books sometimes seem more ideological or unusual. Byrhtferth's discussion, in Book I, of the nature of cosmological bodies, is laid out as a rather bombastic proem, in which the account of the Creation, "fecit Deus omniparens … duo magna luminaria et stellas et omnia sidera" ("all-creating God fashioned two mighty luminaries and the planets and all the stars"),[312] is repeatedly cast, in both Latin and Old English, as that which is magisterially demonstrated, "liber primus bibliotheca"; "seo forme boc on biblitheca" ("in the first book of the Bible").[313] Book IV of the *Enchiridion,* devoted to a discussion of numerology and number symbolism, repeatedly invokes holy books in order to demonstrate its points. The number four is thus said to reflect both the "quattuor anni temporibus" ("the four seasons of the year") and to be "ornatur et doctrinis quattuor euangelistarum" ("adorned by the teachings of the four evangelists").[314] The number five is that represented by "quinque … libri Moysi" ("the five books of Moses").[315] In one passage, the complex numerological connotations of holy scripture appears itself to become the computist's main theme: "denarius ad uetus testamentum pertinent; quadragenarius ad nouum testamentum, quorum sunt quattuor libri euuangeliorum" ("ten pertains to the Old Testament, forty to the New Testament, of whose books four are gospels").[316] This use of books as pedagogical examples sometimes intersects with the computist's rhetorically elaborate citation of other volumes. Invoking Bede again at

[309] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 178-9 (III.3.230-3).
[310] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 222-3 (IV.1.327).
[311] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 66-7 (II.1.169-71).
[312] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 8-9 (I.1.82-3).
[313] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 8-9 (I.1.91-2).
[314] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 198-201 (IV.1.39-41).
[315] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 202-3 (IV.1.99).
[316] Baker and Lapidge, eds, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 226-7 (IV.1.379-81).

the end of Book IV, Byrhtferth advises that, "si quis deuotus huius numeri uel ceterorum desiderat agnitionem luce splendidus agnoscere, aperiat librum reuerentissimi Bede quem *De Temporibus* pretitulauit" ("if any devoted student should wish to acquire a knowledge more brilliant than light of this or any of the other numbers, let him open the book of the Venerable Bede which is entitled *De Temporibus*").[317]

Rather more unusually, however, this focus on computistical sources is frequently attended by reference to other types of book. Book III of the tract, ostensibly dedicated to a discussion of Easter and its calculation, contains a lengthy excursus on rhetorical figures, which Byrhtferth terms "boccræfte fela hiw" ("the many colours of book-craft").[318] Later in the discussion, Byrhtferth elaborates on the division of the day into twenty-four hours by invoking the way "boccræftige weras secgað þæt þæt syxfete uers sceal habban feower and twentig timan" ("literate men say that a hexameter must have twenty-four *morae*").[319] Elsewhere in Book III, Byrhtferth embarks on a discussion of the way computists make use of signs or abbreviations to show their calculations. Somewhat surprisingly, this quickly segues into a digression on the literary or codicological "signs" used by scribes. Comparing mathematical symbols to manuscript abbreviations, the computist diverges from his theme to note how signs such as the dyple (">") found in holy volumes are those "gesetton … on ciriclicum bocum þæt hig twæmdon otwæmdon oððe ætywdon þa gewitnyssa haligra gewrita" ("set down … in ecclesiastical books to set off or indicate the testimony of sacred scriptures").[320]

This citation of literary or liturgical "bec" in parallel with computistical ideas sometimes detracts from, rather than illustrates, the computist's theme. These references, unlike those designed to illuminate numerological ideas or the divine Creation of the heavens, introduce quite different bibliographical contexts into Byrhtferth's computistical discussion. Notable too is the way that the Latin portions of the *Enchiridion* sometimes deploy a highly abstruse, ornamental style, identified by Lapidge as a further example of the "hermeneutic" method of composition.[321] Like Æthelwold's corpus and that of the earlier reformers, Byrhtferth employs such hermeneuticisms as "caraxare" ("to write"), adding a layer of literary polish to his, ostensibly scientific, discussion.[322] Somewhat more unusually, these hermeneutic

[317] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 222-3 (IV.1.326-8).
[318] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 162-3 (III.3.23).
[319] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 182-5 (III.3.305-6).
[320] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 176-7 (III.209-11).
[321] Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style", 90-5.
[322] For further discussion of this, see Baker, "Old English Canon", 35 and Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style", 90.

terms are sometimes found in Old English passages of the text, including those where books are self-consciously cited. Thus, discussing the temporal divisions of the season known as Septuagessima, Byrhtferth notes how "on manegum bocum synt … þa *termini* amearkode þe man hæt *septuagessimales*" ("the terms called *Septuagesimal* are written … in many books").[323] This invocation of the book appears in tandem with a highly unusual Anglicisation of a hermeneutic term, "amearkode", meaning, in this case, "to identify or scrutinise in books".[324]

Byrhtferth's hermeneutic rhetoric, as Lapidge notes, colours the Latinate parts of the tract to an elaborate degree.[325] We might also note here how this extends, directly, to the portrayal of the book. As we observed earlier, the computist's ostensibly astronomical focus on the creation of the stars at the opening of the *Enchiridion* does not merely invoke the scriptural account of this event in Genesis, but frames this as "liber primus bibliotheca" ("the first book of the Bible"). This description, using the hermeneutic Grecism "bibliotheca", is strongly reminiscent of the earlier Benedictine invocations of the "biblus" that we noted as a prominent feature of Reform-era portrayals. This elevated rhetoric of the book, like the word "amearkode", is also carried through into the Old English portion of Book I, in which God is said to have "geworhte twa mycle leohtfatu, swa Genesis geseð (þæt ys seo forme boc on *biblitheca*") ("made two great lamps, as is said in Genesis (that is, the first book of the Bible)").[326] This addition of the word "biblitheca" into the text casts the biblical book in a markedly elevated, Greek style, lending the portrayal of this book notable distinction, even as it is invoked as part of an ostensibly computistical description.

To round off these opening observations, we might note how, on occasion, such elevated bibliographic vocabulary and digressions range yet more widely. One especially intriguing, albeit brief, instance of this comes in Book III, when Byrhtferth, discussing the onomastic basis for some of his scientific terms, draws on a wealth of distinctly literary examples to make his points. Ranging widely across alternative Greek and Latin words for key concepts, Byrhtferth, somewhat unusually, invokes classical book-culture. Thus, in a highly intriguing insertion that is yet left unexplored, the computist notes that "*Ilias* … beoð gewyn,

[323] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 154-5 (II.2.212-3).
[324] For further discussion of these Anglicisations of Latin hermeneutic terms, see Baker, "Old English Canon", 28-30.
[325] Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style", 90.
[326] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 8-9 (I.1.91-2).

and Odissia beoð gedwyld, swa Omerus on þære bec recð" ("*Ilias* means strife and *Odyssey* means wandering, as Homer tells in that book").[327]

Bibliographic Networks and the Authority of the "Boceras"

The repeated invocation of books, both scientific and literary, in the *Enchiridion* offers a somewhat surprising insight into the important rhetorical role of the codex in Byrhtferth's computistical tract. The citation of books in both Latin and Old English casts the piece in a somewhat elevated, stylised light, in which the bibliographic background to the work, and its relationship to other types of "boccræft", is ideologically paramount. As we shall see in this section, this impression of the *Enchiridion's* style is bolstered with recourse to a further notable feature of Byrhtferthian rhetoric: his repeated invocation of a group known as the "boceras".

We might begin our discussion of this idea by drawing attention to the first such reference in the *Enchiridion.* This occurs in Book II of the tract, following Byrhtferth's exposition of the heavens and his careful justification of his book by analogy with his sources. Following a discussion of the seasons of the year and the calculation of their divisions, Byrhtferth inserts one of his characteristic asides, referring the reader, once again, to other volumes. On this occasion, Bede and Hrabanus are again cited:

> Gif hwylcum cnihte lyste ma þinga and deopra gesetnyssa be him witan þonne we her habbað gebreued, þonne ræde he þæs eadigan weres getingnyssa Bedan þæs æðelan boceres oððe Rabanes, þe wel gehende an asmeadun ymbe þisum cræfte.[328]
>
> If any young man wishes to know more things about [this], and read deeper works than we have briefly written here, he should read the eloquence of the blessed man and noble scholar Bede, or that Hrabanus; they are almost the only ones who have investigated this science.

Addressing an imagined audience of young scholars, Byrhtferth advises his reader to seek out other "gesetnyssa" ("works" [or "books"]) to bolster his knowledge of the topic. Cast in rather different language to other such bibliographic recommendations, this passage does not directly invoke the books written by earlier scholars, but characterises the works of Bede as those by "þæs æðelan bocere[s]" ("noble scholar"). This term, "bocere", though rendered idiomatically

[327] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 162-3 (III.3.17-18).
[328] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 64-5 (II.1.146-50).

by Baker and Lapidge, literally translates as "book-er" or "book-man": one who is responsible for the production of books.[329] This description, a word-formation on the prefix "boc-", is not one that we have encountered previously. In the passage just cited, the term appears to denote the special importance of Bede and his books, along with those of Hrabanus. These "boceras", as Byrhtferth states, are especially important to his "hand-book" as they represent, notwithstanding Byrhtferth's own efforts, "wel gehende an asmeadun ymbe þisum cræfte" ("almost the only ones who have investigated this science").

The word "bocere", though not unique to Byrhtferth's corpus, is yet unusual in an Anglo-Saxon context, extant only in writings dating from the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Elsewhere in Old English, one finds the term being used to accord special status to biblical scholars, as in Ælfric of Eynsham's description of Jerome as "se wisa bocere" ("the wise book-man") in his *Letter to Sigeweard*.[330] In some cases, most notably in the Old English translation of the Gospels, "bocere" is used to refer to Jewish scribes and scholars of the Old Testament.[331] In most cases, the "bocere" is a literary or theological producer of books, and usually highly learned in the scriptural languages. Thus, in one allusion to the "boceras" found in Ælfric, this group are cited as, "boceras, þe þæt leden cunnon" ("book-men, those who known Latin").[332] In Byrhtferth, this equation between learned scholarship in Latin and the superlative achievement of historical writers is given particular emphasis. Mirroring Ælfrician discourse, Byrhtferth's "boceras" are those who "cunnon on Lyden" ("know [various concepts] in Latin").[333] The term is also used to lend Byrhtferth's major influence, the Venerable Bede, especial distinction. Later in Book II, Bede and his books are invoked again, this time as "Bedan gesetnysse þæs arwurðan boceres" ("the writings of Bede the worthy book-man").[334]

The use of the term "bocere" in tandem with Byrhtferth's meticulous citation of his source-books lends the *Enchiridion* a further, bibliographic, emphasis. The computist's authorities are not merely learned scholars, but "book-men", whose volumes have closely influenced the late Anglo-Saxon "hand-boc". Bede and Hrabanus, repeatedly invoked by Byrhtferth, are defined and described in terms of their book production, which, in turn, lends the computist's own tract an added authority. Though, as Baker and Lapidge have shown, these

[329] Cameron, Crandell Amos and diPaolo Healey *et al, DOE,* "bōcere".
[330] Richard Marsden, ed., *The Old English Heptateuch and Ælfric's Libellus de Veteri Testamento et Novo,* EETS o.s. 330 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 223.
[331] *DOE,* "bōcere".
[332] Bruno Assmann, ed., *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 114, ll. 405-6.
[333] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 94-5 (II.2.8-9).
[334] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 120-1 (II.3.243-4).

two writers represent Byrhtferth's major sources,[335] it is perhaps revealing that the computist chooses to cite these authors so carefully throughout his text. In portraying these figures as "almost the only ones who have investigated this science", Byrhtferth draws a particularly clear line of descent between his volume and those of his illustrious predecessors. We might also note how, in eschewing his intermediary authorities in Abbo of Fleury and the (rather less famous) commentary on the computus by Helperic of Auxerre,[336] Byrhtferth places particular stress on his eighth and ninth-century monastic sources. In casting these figures as "boceras", we might detect a desire to link the book with the advanced computistical learning of the monastic "golden age" in England and that characteristic of the Carolingian revival of the ninth century.

Elsewhere in the tract, we might briefly note some rather more intriguing citations of the authoritative "bocere". In the third part of Book II of the *Enchiridion* Byrhtferth discusses the parts of the day and its divisions. This involves an appropriately astronomical set of observations about the movement of the sun and how the temporal components of days, minutes and hours are calculated. To underscore his points, Byrhtferth invokes his source in Hrabanus:

> Rabanus cwyð þæt se dæg hæfð *partes* (þæt synt dælas) and boceras beotlice habbað dælas, þæra synd eahta, þæs ðe hig gylpað gelome and ymbe cyrtenlice sprecað.[337]
>
> Hrabanus says that the day has *partes* (that is, divisions), and book-men proudly have divisions, of which there are eight, as they often boast and elegantly discuss.

In this brief allusion, Byrhtferth notes how the explanations about *partes* that he has just advanced in the *Enchiridion* are backed up by his Carolingian authority. Once again, one finds here a reference to the "boceras" ("book-men") who have influenced these ideas. Though cited directly after Byrhtferth's invocation of Hrabanus's *De computo,* these "book-men" appear not to be computists but rather literary compositors. In this, Byrhtferth enacts a slippage between the *partes* (or "dælas") of the day, and the "dælas" of the "boceras", which appear, in this

[335] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, lxxxvi-xc. See also Baker, "Byrhtferth's Enchiridion", 123-42.
[336] For discussion of this source as sued in Byrhtferth and as influential at Ramsey, see Baker, "Byrhtferth's Enchiridion", 124-30.
[337] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 104-5 (II.3.32-4).

context, to refer to the eight rhetorical modes. In this rhetorical sleight of hand, the computistical authority of Hrabanus is linked to Byrhtferth's bookish preoccupation with grammatical learning and rhetorical figures. This strategy, as we discussed earlier, reflects the notably bibliographic, literary undercurrents of the *Enchiridion*. We might yet note how this passage subtly links the authority of the "bocere" Hrabanus to the computist's interest in rhetorical "boccræft" found in the works of other, unnamed, "book-men".

The "Bocere" as a Marker of Elite, Benedictine Identity

The portrayal of books and the "boceras" in Byrhtferth's text paints the *Enchiridion,* and its erudite sources, as a "hand-book" closely invested in the image and ideal of the book. Byrhtferth's characterisation of the literary and historical background of his commentary casts the monastic computus in a distinctly elevated light, indebted to the books of the learned "boceras". These portrayals are yet rather more widespread, and complex, than our discussion so far has revealed. As we shall see in this section, Byrhtferth's interest in the "boceras" might be read as reflecting some distinctly topical concerns, geared to the specific status of books and learning in the monastic milieu of the "second generation".

To introduce these ideas, we might first note one, rather intriguing, facet of Byrhtferth's portrayal of the "boceras". This appears, perhaps paradoxically, in moments of the discussion in which the computist does not invoke any specific authority. In Book III of the text, for instance, a discussion of the paschal cycle and its divisions is explained, in Old English, as that which "on Lyden … ys geciged of þrym awemmedum dælum, þæs ðe boceras secgað, þæt ys of *decem* and *nouem* and *annalis*" ("is so called in Latin from three corrupted parts, as the book-men say, that is, from *decem* [ten], *nouem* [nine] and *annalis* [of the year]".[338] This passage, including a general reference to computistical "book-men", is, by contrast with the passages invoking Bede as "bocere", couched firmly in the present tense. These "boceras", it would appear, are not to be identified as Byrhtferth's historical sources, but rather as another group. This impression is reinforced elsewhere in the *Enchiridion,* as the computist describes apparently contemporary "boceras … þe þas þing fulfremedlice cunnon" ("book-men who [already] know these things perfectly").[339] These descriptions point to "boceras" as part of Byrhtferth's intended audience, and thus to a group seemingly contemporary with the "hand-book" itself.

[338] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 134-5 (III.1.195-7).
[339] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 120-1 (II.3.258-9).

More intriguingly, these computistical references to "boceras" who are familiar with learned concepts are by far outweighed by Byrhtferth's invocation of "book-men" who specialise in a different type of learning. We have already noted how the *Enchiridion* makes frequent digressions on literary and rhetorical "boccræft". Importantly, the tract also includes a particular wealth of references to contemporary "boceras" whose interest is rather more poetic than computistic. In Book II, for example, Byrhtferth suddenly diverges from his major theme to discuss the importance of syllables in metrics. This sudden change of subject is introduced with the words, "eac me com stiðlice to mode hu þa getyddusta boceras gewyrceað sinelimpha on heora uersum" ("it also came forcibly to my mind how the most learned book-men produce synaloepha in their verses").[340] A similar remark occurs several lines later in the same section of the text, as Byrhtferth, elaborating further on the craft of writers, describes these individuals as "bocerum þe beoð cyrtenlice getydde on þam cræfte" ("book-men who are elegantly taught in that discipline").[341] These allusions, though vague, are again cast in the present tense, invoking writers and poets as those who are skilled in the "calculation" of literary books. Crucially, this topical, rather than historical, invocation of the "bocere" appears unique to Byrhtferth's text, contrasting notably with the scriptural or patristic status of the "book-man" found elsewhere in the Old English corpus.

This rather puzzling fascination with "boceras" and literary books in the *Enchiridion* has received limited scholarly attention. One exception yet comes in an important, if neglected, series of articles by Wilhelm G. Busse. Busse, though primarily concerned with Ælfric's corpus, notes the particular prevalence of the term "bocere" in vernacular writings of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.[342] This period, as Busse observes, was one in which the monastic teaching role and the ever-growing sophistication of monastic learning at Benedictine schools was contributing to a collective, monastic sense of their special relationship to books and learning.[343] Texts invoking "boceras", as Busse notes, are generally Benedictine volumes produced in elite centres of learning such as Byrhtferth's Ramsey or Æthelwold's Winchester.[344] The term "bocere" might accordingly be interpreted as denoting a specifically

[340] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 88-9 (II.1.431-3).
[341] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 90-1 (II.1.465-6).
[342] Wilhelm G. Busse, "'Sua gað ða lareowas beforan ðæm folce, & ðæt folc æfter": The Self-Understanding of the Reformers as Teachers in Late Tenth-Century England", in *Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter,* ed. Ursula Schaefer (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1993), 75-83. See also Busse, "'Boceras: Written and Oral Traditions in the Late Tenth Century", in *Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im englischen Mittelalter,* ed. Willi Erzgräber und Sabine Volk (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1988), 27-37.
[343] Busse, "Boceras", 28-31.
[344] Busse, "Self-Understanding of the Reformers as Teachers", 82-4.

monastic scholar, whether historical, such as the learned monk Bede, or contemporary. Rather less convincingly, Busse argues that this appeal to books and "boceras" might have been designed by monks to emphasise the importance of book-culture in opposition to an aristocratic elite still reliant on oral, Germanic modes of discourse.[345] Notwithstanding this, Busse clearly demonstrates how, "in basing their claim to leadership on the knowledge of a *bocere* … the reformers implicitly claim that they alone are in possession of the true kind of *wisdom*".[346]

In the context of Byrhtferth's text, these observations seem particularly revealing. The *Enchiridion's* preoccupation with elevated, literary book-culture and with the achievements of the past glories of such monastic "boceras" as Bede and Hrabanus posit the commentary as one with distinctly ideological aims. We might note in addition here some recent important work on the ideology of the *Enchiridion,* which, as Rebecca Stephenson has demonstrated, appears to draw a firm, linguistic, distinction between its use of Latin and the Old English portions of the text.[347] Invoking Byrhtferth's "language politics", Stephenson shows how the computist repeatedly equates English with the ignorance of clerics, and Latin with the superior status of learned monks.[348] Byrhtferth goes so far as to make pointed asides about the low moral standards and poor learning of clerics, especially in the parts of the text written in hermeneutic Latin.[349] Where simple explanations of computistical ideas are required, Byrhtferth turns to the vernacular, accompanied by scathing comment on the educational needs of priests compared to monks.[350] This strategy, as Stephenson observes, sets up a clear dichotomy between the two languages in the text, positioning elevated, "hermeneutic" Latin as a monastic mode of discourse, and English as a linguistic allowance made to the clerics.[351] Notwithstanding these descriptions, as Stephenson shows, the computist's increasing reliance on English to explain complex scientific topics as the tract develops somewhat gives the lie to the assertion that his monastic audience have no need for the vernacular.[352]

We might bolster Stephenson's sophisticated arguments by noting that this contrasting rhetorical invocation of language also extends to Byrhtferth's depiction of the book. As we

[345] Busse, "Boceras", 28-9; 33-7; Busse, "Self-Understanding of the Reformers as Teachers", 86-97.
[346] Busse, "Self-Understanding of the Reformers as Teachers", 84.
[347] Rebecca Stephenson, "Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*: The Effectiveness of Hermeneutic Latin", in *Conceptualising Multilingualism,* ed. Tyler, 121-43. See especially, however, Stephenson, *The Politics of Language,* 112-21.
[348] Stephenson, *Politics of Language,* 90-100.
[349] Stephenson, *Politics of Language,* 68-101.
[350] Stephenson, *Politics of Language,* 112-21.
[351] Stephenson, *Politics of Language,* 112-21.
[352] Stephenson, *Politics of Language,* 39-102.

observed above, the computist deploys the unusual term "bocere" not only to refer to a historical scholar, but to the elevated book-craft of contemporary monks. Moments of transition between Latin and Old English, though calculated, as Stephenson observes, to draw a distinction between the "monastic" and "clerical" linguistic registers, are also the occasion for several Byrhtferthian comments on the superior status of Benedictine book-learning. Thus, as at the beginning of the second part of Book II, the computist uses Latin to introduce a discussion of the "septem embolismis" ("seven embolisms") of the year.[353] This complex idea, concerning the insertion of days or months to regularise the solar calendar, is given a heading in Latin, but a following explanation in English. Passing straight to the English explanation for this concept, Byrhtferth justifies his omission of the Latin by noting that, "ðas rædinga syndon wide cuðe on Lyden; forþan us gelustfullað þæt andgit nu eow gecyðan on Englisc þæt þa boceras cunnon on Lyden" ("these readings are widely known in Latin; therefore it pleases us to make known to you in English that sense which the book-men [already] know in Latin").[354] This invocation of the superior learning of the "book-men" is seemingly deployed to emphasise the greater status of Byrhtferth's monastic audience, who are said to have no need of the computist's English descriptions.

On occasion, Byrhtferth's allusions to the "boceras" seem even more calculated, designed almost to humiliate, or, in Stephenson's words, to "scapegoat" the secular clergy.[355] One transitional section in Book II recaps on the vernacular explanation of the computus, noting that, "manega þing we mihton of þeodwitena gesetnysse herto geicean" ("we could add many things from the writings of these learned men").[356] Byrhtferth demurs from this, adding that, "we witon þæt þas þing þincað clericum and uplendiscum preostum genoh mænigfealde" ("we know that these things seem complicated enough to clerks and rustic priests").[357] The computist then advances a rather extraordinary address to "iungum munecum" ("young monks"), who are characterised as those who "heora cildhad habbað abisgod on cræftigum bocum … hig habbað ascrutnod Serium and Priscianum and þurhsmogun Catus cwydas þæs calwan esnes, and Bedan gesetnysse þæs arwurðan boceres" ("have occupied their childhoods with learned books … they have scrutinised Sergius and Priscian, and have read through the sayings of Cato the bold man and the compositions of Bede the venerable writer").[358]

[353] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 94-5 (II.2.1).
[354] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 94-5 (II.2.7-9).
[355] Stephenson, *Politics of Language,* 68-101.
[356] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 120-1 (II.3.237).
[357] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 120-1 (II.3.238-9).
[358] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 120-1 (II.3.240-4).

This characterisation of the superior, monastic "bocere" posits monks, even very young ones, as those defined by their erudite knowledge. Somewhat notably, however, it tends to be literary and rhetorical, rather than computistical, learning, that is the preserve of these Benedictine "book-men". Here again we might nuance Stephenson's arguments by observing that Byrhtferth appears, throughout his text, to run into the rather uncomfortable reality that secular clerics are often considerably well-versed in scientific lore. Thus, in Book II, a discussion of astronomical leaps leads to the concession that, "iunge preostas witon … þæt se dæg and seo niht habbað feower and twentig tida" ("young priests know … that the day and the night have twenty-four hours").[359] No sooner is this allowance made than Byrhtferth, in one of his characteristic digressions, diverts the discussion to a totally different type of "leap": the rhetorical "leaps" used in the metre and scansion of literary compositions. If priests are knowledgeable about the division of time and lunar leaps, Byrhtferth notes how, "scolieras … þe synt getydde on boclicum cræfte … witon … þæt þæt rihtmeteruers sceal habban feower and twentig timan" ("scholars … who are learned in the craft of books … know that a correct metrical verse must have twenty-four *morae*").[360] In this, pointed, comparison between the scientific knowledge of priests and the bookish aptitude of learned monks, it is the "bocera saltus" ("the book-man's leap") that is lauded and privileged by the computist. This leads, furthermore, to Byrhtferth's plea to priests that they "hawiað geornlicre gesihðe … hu boceras awringað up þæne *saltus* on heora cræfte" ("observe with eager sight … how book-men wring out the leap in their art").[361]

The rhetorical complexity of Byrhtferth's text and his invocation of the "boceras" draws, as Stephenson argues, a clear dividing line between monastic and clerical learning. At times, in Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion,* one gains the sense, further, that the literary learning of the "boceras" is similarly regarded as that far beyond the social (as well as intellectual) reach of priests. At the same time as the computist veers off on abstruse rhetorical tangents, he just as frequently hints at, yet resists, a fuller explanation of the book-lore he is alluding to. Thus, as in Book III of the *Enchiridion,* which provides a particularly rich discussion of rhetorical figures, one finds a tantalising introduction to the figure called "dialyton". This, as Byrhtferth notes, is the figure which "þolað þæs stæfgefeges þe boceras cigeað *coniunctiones*" ("does without the syllables that book-men call conjunctions").[362] In launching into this description,

[359] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 92-3 (II.1.491-3).
[360] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 92-3 (II.1.493-5).
[361] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 92-3 (II.1.496-7).
[362] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 168-9 (III.3.117-8).

however, the computist quickly pulls back from his incipient explanation, noting that, "fela we mihton ymbe þissum þingum maðelian, ac we asittað þæt þa boceras ascunion þæt we ymbe heora digolnyssa þus rumlice sprecað" ("we could say a great deal about these things, but we are afraid that book-men will hate it that we speak so amply about their secrets").[363] Here one gains a powerful sense of the hermeneutic, monastic shibboleths underpinning a contemporary conception of Benedictine book-learning. This ideological portrayal of books and "boceras", as emphasised throughout the *Enchiridion,* provides a striking sense of the representative importance of the book as it was portrayed in relation to "second generation" monastic identity.

§6) Conclusion

The representation of the book in the Benedictine Reform provides an extraordinarily rich series of insights into the ideological basis of the movement in the tenth century. As the foregoing discussion has shown, the depiction of the codex is found in a variety of contexts, from the "proto-Reform" of the 940s and 950s, to the evolution of the movement in its "second generation". Books, depicted in both texts and images, recur across the period, found not only as an incidental reflex of reformist piety and learning, but as a determinate theme. These portrayals, as we have seen, reflect a clear programme of depictions, developed and cultivated by the reformers in support of the authority and legitimacy of the movement.

In tracing the development of the book depiction and its symbolism in the Reform, we have also uncovered more specific ideas about the meaning of the Benedictine codex. One of the most striking, and important, findings in this regard relates to the reformers' careful scrutiny of books. Monastic books, such as Benedict's *Regula* and volumes of the Anglo-Saxon "golden age", were not only studied and copied by the Reform party, but were subject to careful representation. Aldhelm's "hermeneutic" elevations of the codex as a "biblus" suffuse Benedictine writings of the tenth century, from early reformist poems such as the macaronic "Aldhelm" to Godeman's magisterial prologue to the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold. These portrayals, echoed in early visual sources such as St. Dunstan's Classbook, point to the reformers' conception of the codex as a powerful focus of devotion. This focus, predicated on the sanctity of Benedictine and divine volumes, casts the contemporary book in a markedly exalted, salvific light.

[363] Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* 168-9 (III.3.120-2). For further discussion of the portrayal of rhetorical figures in this passage, see James J. Murphy, "The Rhetorical Lore of the *Boceras* in Byrhtferth's *Manual*", in *Philological Essays,* ed. Rosier, 124.

In tandem with these ideas, as we saw in the early part of the discussion, one finds a distinctive focus on the place of the book in the monastic experience. The book is not only that cultivated and deployed as part of Benedictine worship, but appears, in tenth-century manuscripts, as itself a direct reflection on the pervasive role of the book in monastic observance. The depictions of St. Benedict found in the Tiberius and Arundel manuscripts offer evocative re-imaginings of the book at the centre of the monastic life, portraying the codex as the visual fulcrum of both the manuscript book and the visual imagery. Such imagery, often featuring multiple books and depictions of the codex in scroll-form, highlights the liturgical and meditational role of the codex in Anglo-Saxon monasticism. In some cases, such portrayals of the book, or the book-scroll, are markedly unusual, appearing to literally bind monastic protagonists within the commands of the Rule. Such new, Æthelwoldian, iconography of the book appears to reflect, as we saw in the first section, the monastic conception of the codex as like an encircling "yoke" that infiltrates every aspect of a monk's devotional and intellectual experience.

These innovative portrayals of the book in contemporary sources are yet, as we have noted throughout the discussion, inherently bound up with more political, and topical, concerns. The Tiberius manuscript, in foregrounding a distinctively monastic portrayal of the Benedictine codex, also preserves the famous "scroll portrait" of King Edgar, shown, along with Dunstan and Æthelwold, as the "author" of the *Regularis concordia.* Edgar's portrayal in the New Minster Charter, that charter-codex so instrumental in demonstrating the legitimacy of the Reform at Winchester, has long been identified as another powerful depiction of a "bibliophile king" such as those found in the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan. Such imagery, in depicting books and land-books in relation to the royal role, might, as we found earlier, be read as enhancing the sanctity of the contemporary codex, casting Edgar as a type of Benedict, David or Christ in demonstration of the powerful book-symbolism of the Reform. At the same time, however, drawing on our careful readings of book imagery in Chapter One, we noted the distinctive nature of Edgarian book imagery. Such portrayals, depicting Edgar and his books as a "type" of scriptural or abbatial authority, seem anchored firmly to an ecclesiastical, rather than royal, conception of the book and its meaning. As designed and promulgated by the reformers themselves, the depiction of the royal book in the tenth century seems indicative of the strategic, political cache of the codex in demonstrating the legitimacy of the Benedictine movement.

Such conclusions, as we saw in the second section of the chapter, are reinforced with particular power in the multiple portrayals of the "land-book" in the mid tenth century. This distinctive, Anglo-Saxon, conception of the documentary "boc", appeared, as we found in the first chapter, in association with the political symbolism of the royal diploma. Notwithstanding King Edgar's magnificent portrayal in the New Minster Charter, contemporary "land-books" were drafted, and depicted, by the reformers less to demonstrate Edgarian authority than to underscore the holy legitimacy of monastic land-holdings. Contemporary descriptions of charter ceremonies and the symbolic transformation of the single-sheet diploma into a magisterial codex shed some light on this sanctification of the legal "boc". More intriguingly, as we explored at some length in the second section, the reformers reimagined the "land-book" as an attribute of saintly authority, casting the codex as that which is "booked" by right to the patron saint(s) of a foundation. Even more striking, as we saw in some suggestive depictions associated with Æthelwold's Peterborough and Ecgwine's Evesham, are portrayals of the "land-book" as a sacred relic, either of the monastic "golden age" of the seventh and eighth centuries, or, as in the latter example, of the miraculous appearance of a holy protagonist herself.

This conception of the book as a holy, and specifically monastic, symbol indicates the devotional and political centrality of the codex to the Benedictine worldview. Sacred codices, subject to extraordinarily elevated description and lavish portrayal, were marshalled both as the authoritative basis for Benedictine devotion and as justification for the reformers' political activities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, powerful prelates such as Bishop Æthelwold sought to capitalise on their personal relationship with lavish codices, exemplified, as we saw in the third section of the chapter, in the bishop's ornate benedictional. By the later tenth century, books and learning were no longer being deployed as sacred symbols of monastic legitimacy alone, but as part of the collective self-image of Benedictine monks. As we found in the final part of our discussion, the "second generation" of Reform saw the extraordinary flourishing of these, ideological, portrayals. The (now sainted) monastic leaders were portrayed, in the *vitae* of Wulfstan Cantor and B., as exerting a quasi-supernatural power over books. Moreover, as we found in our discussion of Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion,* late tenth and early eleventh-century monks were themselves coming to assert their status as "boceras". This group, defined explicitly through their superior learning and knowledge, marshalled the book as that which was ideologically key, both in their separation from other clerics and in demonstrating their unparalleled authority over the late Anglo-Saxon "boc".

Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, we asked several questions about the representation of the book in Anglo-Saxon England. First, and most simply, we inquired into the nature of the book in contemporary sources, asking how far the concept of "the book-within-the-book" could be identified as a coherent theme. Second, following traditional scholarly discussions of "textuality" or "literacy" in relation to Anglo-Saxon book-culture, we asked how far one might evaluate the specific symbolism of the *book* in contemporary texts and images. More broadly, given the seeming ubiquity of the codex in scriptural and early Christian sources, we asked to what extent portrayals of the book might be read in relation to specifically Anglo-Saxon themes in the ninth and tenth centuries. Underpinning the study, overall, has been one key research question: how might one interpret the meaning and symbolism of the "boc" and its representation in the late Anglo-Saxon period?

§1) The Symbolism of the Book in Anglo-Saxon England: Common Themes

In the discussion that has followed, we have identified Anglo-Saxon depictions of considerable diversity and complexity. If the codex is portrayed with particular subtlety and power in the individual contexts and sources we have considered throughout the two main chapters, we have also, over the course of the study, identified some recurrent themes. Perhaps the most important of these, in contrast with prevailing scholarly approaches to the Anglo-Saxon book, is the contemporary preoccupation with the holistic symbolism of the "boc" and *boclic* experience. Our detailed analysis, further, has allowed us to draw out some more specific connections, from the key ideological relationship between land and book in late Anglo-Saxon sources, to the increasingly sophisticated portrayal of the codex in relation to themes of power, status and identity in the late ninth and tenth centuries. These themes, developed across a diverse range of sources, encode, moreover, some powerful Anglo-Saxon reinterpretations of traditional scriptural and patristic bibliographic tropes.

The Book and the Body

One of the more intriguing motifs to emerge from our analysis is the portrayal of the book in relation to material and corporeal themes. The materiality of the codex, an idea more frequently explored in relation to the literal production or transmission of contemporary codices, is found with marked regularity in late Anglo-Saxon representations of the book. The complex corporeal symbolism of the codex recurs in several contemporary portrayals, from Asser's

depiction of Alfredian books in the *Vita Ælfredi,* to the pervasive role of the book in the material, spiritual and intellectual experience of a Benedictine monk. These powerful images of the book encode a particular set of ideas about the role of the book in early medieval piety and learning.

As we found in both chapters, the Anglo-Saxon portrayal of books is often surprisingly focused on the evocative materiality of the codex. Books, as represented in Æthelstan's inscriptions and Godeman's poem in the Benedictional, are frequently figured in terms of an evocative materiality, in which themes of book-making and material adornment are paramount. The rhetorical conjuration of the material fabric of the book from within the book, offers, as we saw in Æthelstan's books, a highly reflexive meditation on the processes of material and intellectual experience. The pervasive, and sometimes riddling, interplay between corpus and codex is reiterated, further, through rich metaphors for the book and its role in the period, from the gathering of books like flowers by bees in Alfred's *Life* and the *Regularis concordia,* to the earthy imagery of the hunt in the *Pastoral Care* and Æthelstan's donations. These motifs, familiar from the patristic and Carolingian traditions of book metaphor that we discussed in the Introduction, are deployed by late Anglo-Saxon authors to particular effect, repositioning the devotional symbolism of book and body in relation to the material power of royal protagonists.

Even more powerful, as we found throughout the discussion, is the evocation of the codex as itself part of "embodied" experience. The book, as we found in poems such as "Rex pius Æðelstan" and the *Solomon and Saturn* poems, is frequently portrayed in relation to richly evocative motifs of consumption, whether "tasting"; "eating" or "drinking" from books. These representations, if often read as reflecting a base, materialistic approach to the book, seem rather to encode a sophisticated understanding of the codex as that which mediates between several levels of affective and devotional experience. These depictions, derived from similar motifs of codicological "consumption" in the scriptural book of *Revelation,* hint not at the corporeality of books alone, but rather at some more sophisticated ideas, in which the book itself, as both material artefact and "vessel" for knowledge and ideas, is a holistic symbol of material and intellective themes.

In the corpus of texts associated with King Alfred, as we saw in Chapter One, these ideas are explored with especial power, framing the interplay between books and bodies as an essential feature of the human subject's experience. The narrative of Alfred's "literacy", as we found in our close reading of Asser's *Life,* depends not on an understanding of the king's

technological facility with Latin learning, but rather on a symbolic vision of the codex in relation to corporeal and cognitive experience. The king's biography, as we have seen, draws heavily on Alcuin's apian imagery for book-gathering, and, moreover, on the Augustinian idea of spiritual inscription in the "book of the heart".[1] The king's education, presented in Asser's distinctive, idiosyncratic style, offers not merely a spiritual "allegory of literacy", but rather a sustained meditation on the holistic processes of knowledge, devotion and belief. The materiality of the book, and the symbiotic relationship between Alfred's body and the body of his books, suffuses the *Life,* situating the book and its "embodied" symbolism at the heart of the biography. This focus, repeated throughout the royal translations, is predicated not on a transcendent movement away from the material frame of the book, but, as we saw in our discussion of the *Soliloquies* and *Boethius,* on the role of the codex in processes of seeing and believing. At stake in these portrayals are insights into the late Anglo-Saxon philosophy of learning and spiritual knowledge, in which the book becomes the focal point for a complex of ideas about the organisation of self and world.

Land and Book

A further key theme to emerge from the study comes in the recurrent Anglo-Saxon portrayal of the "boc" in relation to land, landscape and territory. These representations, predicated on the multifaceted set of meanings attached to the book in the period, recur throughout the corpus. The contemporary understanding of the book as both "codex" and "charter" forms a pervasive focus in late Anglo-Saxon sources, from Alfred's evocation of land-books and book-land in the *Pastoral Care* and the *Soliloquies,* to the sophisticated strategies for representing monastic and divine landscapes in the Benedictine Reform. The book-as-codex and the book-as-charter are repeatedly, and reflexively, invoked in contemporary sources, situating the "boc" as that which mediates, and legitimises, ideas about local, regional, and eternal, space.

Some of the most powerful and sophisticated ideas about land and book, as we saw in Chapter One, occur in the corpus of King Alfred. Alfred's representation of his books in his texts, if often interpreted as offering a literal portrait of literacy in the late ninth century, do much more subtle ideological work, offering a compelling image of the "boc" in relation to the space and place of the *Angelcynn*. Alfred's books, described in the preface to the *Pastoral Care* as being directed across the West-Saxon kingdom, situate the king's codices within a complex of ideas about terrestrial and divine location(s). These books, as revealed in the spatial

[1] For Augustine's use of this trope, see the Introduction, p. 30, above.

dialectics of the *Pastoral Care* and the "book-house" of the *Soliloquies,* are playfully described using the language and imagery of contemporary charters, offering a portrait of the codex framed through a series of puns on books and "book-land". More intriguingly, Alfred cleverly fuses these descriptions of legal and spiritual space with broader configurations of the "book" in the landscape, drawing on scriptural and patristic motifs such as the idea of the world as a book found in *Revelation 6:14,* and the Isidorian conceit of the book as both "book" and "bark".[2] In this complex reinterpretation of the relationship between land and book, Alfred exploits a series of familiar tropes, linking the Anglo-Saxon "boc" both to the Created landscape and to the vast "book" of God's plan. Furthermore, as we discovered in Chapter One, the king marshals these diverse images of the book to political purpose, indexing the (still fragile) boundaries of the late ninth-century landscape to the eternal promise of the "ecan hame" and God's plan for His Creation.

This overlap between land-books and the authority of the holy codex is reiterated throughout the period, in ways which blend material, rhetorical and iconographic themes. Perhaps the most striking, and sustained, mediation on this relationship occurs in the corpus of depictions linked to King Æthelstan, in which the borders and boundaries of each inscribed gift are used both to delineate the nature of each book and to cast it in the lexis of a contemporary "land-book". The book, in this schema, is deployed, and represented, in relation to real and imagined space, whether the literal ecclesiastical space of recipient institutions, or, as in the frontispiece of Corpus 183, into a sacred, idealised landscape bridging court and Church. Similar ideas, as we found in Chapter Two, occur in Benedictine-era portrayals such as the New Minster Charter, in which the material presentation of a charter as a codex is framed through the textual and iconographic portrayal of Edgar's "land-book" as a book with a clear visual relationship to the holy *libri vitae* of Christ and St. Peter. The biblical trope of the "book of life", recurrent in Alfredian, Æthelstanian and Benedictine book metaphor, and a familiar topos in contemporary charters, is deployed here to particular effect, collapsing scriptural imagery, legal sanction and Anglo-Saxon codex into a powerfully symbolic portrayal of the numinous power of the book.

More intriguingly, as we found in the portrayals of books in relation to terrestrial and heavenly landscapes in the Reform, such images of the book could be marshalled in support of more overtly political aims. Late Anglo-Saxon hagiographic portrayals of saints, queens and

[2] For discussion of these tropes, see pp. 28-9 and p. 31, above.

books foreground powerful visions of land and book, in which monastic "book-land" is legitimised by the appearance of a holy codex. In other contexts, such as the Annunciation miniature in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, the transactional interplay between hands, books and heavenly territory presents monastic space amidst some rather suggestive ideas about terrestrial and heavenly "property". In this, the oft-noted reformist sanctification of the "land-book" in liturgical codices seems indicative of much broader conceptual ideas, in which land and book are woven together across several different interpretative registers. The sanctity of the holy book, the *liber vitae* and the Anglo-Saxon "land-book" seem inseparable in such portrayals, situating land and landscape, as well as the human subject, within the cosmological framework of the divine "book of life".

Identity and Status in Books

Closely linked to these ideas, a further prevailing theme of the discussion has centred on the role of the book in articulating, and shaping, late Anglo-Saxon identity(ies). If the book has often been broadly interpreted as a symbol of "authority" or "power" in the medieval period, our close analysis of specific sources has identified the nuances and subtleties of these ideas in an Anglo-Saxon context. Royal books, as we found across both chapters, were deployed in support of the bibliographic self-image of kings, an image predicated on shifting ideas about royal learning and status in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The symbolism of the book, as we saw in Chapter Two, was used in the period, moreover, as a textual and visual marker of monastic status, identity and community.

Perhaps the most significant expression of this theme is found in the contemporary relationship between kings and books in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Royal books, though more frequently evaluated as material symbols of gift-giving and patronage, emerge as a discrete corpus of representations, in which the multifaceted identity of rulers – as patrons, warriors, and "bookers" of land – are articulated with especial power. Tenth-century portrayals, furthermore, appear increasingly concerned with the bibliographic image of kings in relation to royal and divine authority. Æthelstan's books, in which the voice of the king is marshalled from within the material and rhetorical frame of his donations, are represented in support of an image of the king as one who mediates between his subjects and holy (or saintly) books. Edgar's charter-codex, as we saw in the New Minster Charter, is portrayed in direct relation to Christ's *liber vitae* and the holy codex held by St. Peter. In this, the king is identified not merely as a literate patron or donor of books but as a quasi-divine figure, whose piety and sanction of

the Reform casts him as a "type" of David, Benedict or Christ himself. Of particular significance, in the lavish frontispieces associated with both Æthelstan and Edgar, are the powerful Anglo-Saxon adaptations of traditional iconographic contexts for the sacred book. Corpus 183, with its subtle repurposing of the "donation portrait" famous from Carolingian and Ottonian contexts, offers an image of king and book that significantly reinterprets the devotional role of the ruler in relation to sacred bibliography. The New Minster Charter, fusing the donor image with the traditional iconography of the "liber vitae" in portrayals of Christ in Majesty, likewise foregrounds a visually striking "triad" of volumes, linking Edgar's red and gold charter-codex with the almost identical books carried by Christ and Peter.

As we found in Chapter Two, these ideas about identity and status in portrayals of the book are found with special emphasis in relation to the Benedictine reformers and their followers. The ideological power of the movement, predicated on close scrutiny of the books of the Psalter and the Rule, was one driven by the image of the book as a symbol of monastic devotion, worship and spiritual legitimacy. The portrayal of monks with books (or book-scrolls) in contemporary texts and images serves to highlight the key role of the codex, not merely in individual monastic devotions, but as the symbolic fulcrum of the movement, around which monks, their leaders, and St. Benedict himself, were united in prayer. Further, as we found in individual portrayals such as Godeman's poem and the "bishop blessing" scene in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, this relationship could be invoked to augment the status and (episcopal) identity of individual prelates, whose role within the monastic hierarchy was increasingly predicated on the ownership and patronage of luxury books.

Towards the end of the period, as we saw in the works of the "second generation" reformers, this relationship between monastic identity and the book developed in new, and sometimes intriguing, ways. In the *vitae* of Dunstan and Æthelwold, books emerged as a recurrent textual motif, indexed not only to ideas about the learning and piety of the reformers, but also to the miraculous sanctity of books and Benedictine protagonists. In perhaps the most fascinating development of these ideas, one finds, in the work of Byrhtferth of Ramsey, an unparalleled emphasis on the bibliographic identity of monks, in which Benedictine scholars are cast as elite "boceras" or "book-men". The "boceras", explicitly defined according to their facility with books, are those whose self-image is constructed around the "boc", both as a measure of their learned status and as indicative of their communal spiritual identity. In this, one finds, for the first time in Anglo-Saxon sources, a clear and unequivocal portrait of the "boc" as a symbol of intellectual, social and political identity.

§2) The Political and Ideological Portrayal of the Book in Late Anglo-Saxon England

Overarching the contexts and themes discussed above is a further key idea: the intrinsically political connotations of the codex in the late Anglo-Saxon period. If we drew attention, at the beginning of this study, to Richard Marsden's ideas about the potentially political nature of the book in the ninth and tenth centuries, our investigation has more than borne out this ideological reading of the "boc". The image of the book, as we have seen, is one closely bound up with political and topical ideas, whether expressed in relation to royal or monastic authority, or indexed to the power of kings and monks over earthly or heavenly landscapes. The "boc", as both charter and manuscript, is repeatedly related to both devotional and administrative concerns, concepts which, across Alfredian, Æthelstanian and Benedictine portrayals, were carefully and strategically deployed by contemporaries in support of broader political aims.

At times, as we have also discovered, these representations offer an ambiguous, and sometimes competing, set of perspectives on the nature of power and authority. If we reinterpreted the *Solomon and Saturn* poems as texts offering a nuanced perspective on books and bodies, we also observed their topical, and sometimes satirical, portrayal of kings and books. Composed sometime between the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan, these monastic poems might be read as offering a distinctly ambiguous set of reflections on the nature and uses of books by kings in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Elsewhere, as in the carefully stage-managed portrayals of Edgar's books by Bishop Æthelwold, one finds a distinctly monastic interpretation of the codex in relation to "royal" power. The bibliographic self-image of kings, deployed with such flair and originality by Alfred and Æthelstan, appears rather more muted in Edgar's reign, when Benedictine prelates were carefully controlling and deploying the image of the book as a symbol of monastic status and legitimacy. By the early eleventh century, as we saw in the "second generation" of Reform, the monastic imagery of the book was both political and possessive, defining the "boceras" not merely in terms of scholarly capability or religious devotion, but, crucially, in direct opposition to secular, and secular clerical, figures outside the bibliographic shibboleth.

At stake in these findings, overall, is an image of the book with distinct relevance and importance to late Anglo-Saxon politics, religion and culture. The book depictions that we have explored across the late ninth to the early eleventh centuries, if reflecting traditional Christian ideas and motifs about the book and its sacred symbolism, have specific significance within an early English context. If Alfred's books offer a clever and nuanced portrayal of the king as a translator and "book-er" of volumes, his representations gain power from the contemporary

role of the codex in symbolizing (and constructing) late ninth-century idea(l)s about divine protection, unity and communication across an expanded realm. Benedictine volumes, in which books are portrayed as multivalent markers of monastic legitimacy, land-ownership and identity, function within a burgeoning tenth-century cultural economy, wherein the book, and its production, was implicated in wider networks of royal patronage, European scholarship, and intra-monastic collaboration. Such portrayals of the book may accordingly be said to appear on the cusp of wider changes, when the shifting nature of Anglo-Saxon governance and the increasing wealth of the kingdom was giving rise to broader social and cultural shifts.

The nature of these changes and their implications for the "boc" might be read, in further research, in relation to the much greater cultural and political shifts of the later tenth and early eleventh centuries. The corpus of Ælfric of Eynsham, though outside the scope of this discussion, offers representations of the book of considerable diversity, foregrounding the "boc" as a rhetorical and thematic focus on close to a thousand occasions. Scholarly treatments of Ælfric's books, if focused on the homilist's recurrent concern with scribal copying, might productively be nuanced by an approach to Ælfric's anxious, and sometimes contradictory, ideas about the spread of *boclar* and its transmission within an increasingly powerful late Anglo-Saxon elite. Later in the period, in the corpus of books and book depictions associated with King Cnut, such ideas become even more acute, framing the book and its symbolism within contested ideas about monastic spirituality and the tensions of cultural patronage. The book, in such sources, might usefully be read not merely as a rhetorical or material expression of literacy or devotion, but, following the models advanced in this thesis, as a *depiction,* attached to a broader set of ideas about the meaning and importance of the book in contemporary society.

In these prospective contexts, as in the discussion above, one finds a representation of the codex with key conceptual importance to late Anglo-Saxon protagonists. To wield power over the image of the book in the late Anglo-Saxon period was to demonstrate authority, express devotion, and, more importantly, to shape discourse. This discourse, as we have seen, goes far beyond traditional interpretations of books as conduits of learning and literacy, and, indeed, beyond a reading of the book as a material artefact in the early medieval world. It points us to an understanding of the symbolic importance of the book as image and idea(l) at a crucial moment, or series of moments, in late ninth and tenth-century history. In this, the book and its symbolism emerges as a key theme in late Anglo-Saxon sources, evocative of power, piety, and the place of the Anglo-Saxons within the terrestrial and cosmological "book" of the divine.

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