Textual Community and Linguistic Distance in Early England

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Centre for Medieval Studies
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Abstract

This dissertation examines the function of textual communities in England from the early Middle Ages until the early modern period, exploring the ways in which cultures and communities are formed through textual activities other than writing itself. I open by discussing the characteristics of a textual community in order to establish a new understanding of the term. I argue that a textual community is fundamentally based on activity carried out in books and that perceptions of linguistic distance stimulate this activity.

Chapter 1 investigates Bede (c. 673–735) and his interest in multilingualism, coupled with his exploration of the boundaries between the written and spoken forms of English. Picking up on an element of Bede’s work, I argue in Chapter 2 that Alfred (r. 871–899) and his grandson Æthelstan (r. 924/5–939) found new ways to make textuality the defining quality of the emerging West Saxon kingdom.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the intralingual distance in the textual community surrounding the works of Ælfric (c. 950–1010) and Wulfstan (d. 1023). I also discuss the role of contemporary or near-contemporary manuscript use in forming a textual community at the intersection of ecclesiastical and political power.

In Chapter 4, I examine the activities of a textual community in the West Midlands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By glossing Old English texts and rethinking English orthography, this textual community both renewed the work of Anglo-Saxon writers and enabled the activity I discuss in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5 argues for a more constructive rationalization of the curatorial and editorial activities of Matthew Parker (1504–1575) than has been presented hitherto. I argue that Parker’s cavalier methods of conserving and editing his books in fact represent responses to the textual models he found in those manuscripts. An appendix presents the text and translation of the preface to Parker’s edition of Asser’s *Life of King Alfred*.

I close with a discussion of the production and use of books, followed by an illustration of the ongoing importance of textual community in England by highlighting the layers of use in a single manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20) that links together the chapters of this dissertation.
Acknowledgments

I must thank first of all the members of my advisory committee, all of whom contributed widely differing, yet equally useful, comments on my work from the preparations for my major field exam through to my thesis defense. Alexandra Gillespie and David Townsend pushed me farther towards intellectually challenging rigour than I would ever have gone by myself, and Andy Orchard was an exemplary supervisor, both astonishingly generous with his time and painstakingly careful in his reviews of my work, even when he read successive drafts of my dissertation for several weekends in a row. Carol Percy and Ian McDougall both brought helpfully new perspectives to my final oral examination and proved themselves to be both sharp-sighted and generous examiners. I owe particular thanks also to Professor Murray McGillivray, not least because he made the trip to Toronto to be present as the external examiner at my oral exam. His kind words and challenging, insightful criticisms have already left their mark on my dissertation, and they will continue to influence my future work. A number of my fellow students kindly took the time to read chapters of this dissertation: Peter Buchanan, Danièle Cybulskie, Michael Elliot, Emma Gorst, and Tristan Major all helped me to find weaknesses that I have done my best to shore up. In addition, George Rigg offered detailed and illuminating comments on my translation of Matthew Parker’s Latin, and James Carley caught errors and shared insights related to my work on sixteenth-century antiquarians. In this project, as in all else, I owe thanks to my family for their interest and unquestioning support.
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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Copenhagen, Arnamagnæanske Institut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANQ</td>
<td><em>American Notes and Queries</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td><em>Anglo-Saxon England</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>London, British Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add.</td>
<td>London, British Library, MS Additional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>London, British Library, MS Cotton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harley</td>
<td>London, British Library, MS Harley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodley</td>
<td>Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCC</td>
<td>Cambridge, Corpus Christi College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL</td>
<td>Cambridge, University Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEMF</td>
<td>Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile</td>
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<tr>
<td>EETS</td>
<td>Early English Text Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>o.s.</td>
<td>original series</td>
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<tr>
<td>s.s.</td>
<td>supplementary series</td>
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<tr>
<td>EHR</td>
<td><em>English Historical Review</em></td>
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<td>ES</td>
<td><em>English Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatton</td>
<td>Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEGP</td>
<td><em>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Junius</td>
<td>Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSE</td>
<td><em>Leeds Studies in English</em></td>
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MGH  Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA    Auctores Antiquissimi
PLMA  Poetae Latini Medii Aevi
NM    Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
NQ    Notes and Queries
OEN   Old English Newsletter
PMLA  Publications of the Modern Language Association
RES   Review of English Studies

sig.  signature

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Introduction
Forming Textual Communities

All but one of the major Anglo-Saxon authors catalogued by Michael Lapidge in his survey of Anglo-Saxon libraries cite at least one (but generally far more than one) work by Augustine of Hippo.¹ Conversely, Lapidge lists 74 works of Augustine that were probably known either directly or indirectly in Anglo-Saxon England, based on Lapidge’s inventories of books from Anglo-Saxon libraries, books from Anglo-Saxon missions to Germany, and textual citations by Anglo-Saxon authors.² Through the continued circulation of Augustine’s works and through the indirect transmission via the activities of textual communities like those examined in this dissertation, Augustine’s thought remained current throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period,³ and this enduring influence makes his work an appropriate place to begin a discussion of textual community. Writing of the importance of signs for the study and teaching of scripture, Augustine suggests in De doctrina Christiana that the purpose of signification is to enable communication and bridge distance between individuals: “Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et traiiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit qui signum dat.”⁴ Shortly afterward, Augustine asserts that words have to come to predominate among signs used by humans to express ideas,⁵ so that language has become

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² Ibid., 282–91. We must be cautious, however, of relying too heavily on the exact count provided, as the example of Aldhelm’s citations of Augustine illustrates: Four of the ten Augustinian works referenced by Aldhelm (see Lapidge, p. 179) appear solely in a single list of Augustinian works in Aldhelm’s De metris, ed. Rudolph Ehwald, Aldhelmi Opera, MGH AA 15 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919), 81.


⁴ “There is no reason for us to signify something (that is, to give a sign) except to express and transmit to another’s mind what is in the mind of the person who gives the sign.” R. P. H. Green, ed. and trans., Augustine: De Doctrina Christiana (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), book II, chapter 3, pp. 56–9.

⁵ DDC II.6, pp. 58–9.
fundamental to the bridging of distance and thus to the formation of community. Nevertheless, if language allows us to bridge the distance between minds, it also creates other kinds of distance:  

\[\text{Aliter enim Latine ira dicitur, aliter Graece, aliter atque aliter} \]
\[\text{aliarum diversitate linguarum: non autem Latinus aut Graecus est} \]
\[\text{vultus irati. Non itaque omnes gentes intelligent, cum quisque} \]
\[\text{dicit: iratus sum, sed Latini tantum; at si affectus excandescentis} \]
\[\text{animi exeat in faciem vultumque faciat, omnes sentiunt qui} \]
\[\text{intuentur iratum.} \]

(For anger is designated by one word in Latin, by another in Greek, and by others again in the various other tongues; but the expression on the face of an angry man is neither Latin nor Greek. Thus it is that not all nations understand when a man says: \textit{Iratus sum}, but Latins [\textit{sic}] only; but if the feeling present in his mind as it kindles to white heat comes out upon his features and gives him a certain look, all who see him understand that he is angry.)

As this dissertation will show, linguistic distance of various sorts was a concern in England throughout the medieval period, but Augustine’s statements on the subject demonstrate that this concern did not originate in the Middle Ages.

Spoken language may allow speakers to bridge the distance between them, but it can only do so when they are geographically proximate and only for the interval of time when they are speaking together:

\[\text{Sed quia verberato aere statim transeunt nec diutius manent quam} \]
\[\text{sonant, instituta sunt per litteras signa verborum. Ita voces oculis} \]
\[\text{ostenduntur, non per se ipsas, sed per signa quaedam sua.} \]

\[\text{---} \]

\[\text{6 Joseph Patrick Christopher, ed. and trans.,} \textit{De catechizandis rudibus} (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1926), chapter 2.3, pp. 18–9.} \]

\[\text{7 DDC II.8, pp. 60–1.} \]
But spoken words cease to exist as soon as they come into contact with the air, and their existence is no more lasting than that of their sound; hence the invention, in the form of letters, of signs of words. In this way words are presented to the eyes, not in themselves, but by certain signs peculiar to them.)

Text becomes, in Augustine’s scheme, a more lasting way of bridging distance, by preserving and presenting the signs of words to the eyes of readers, both contemporary and more temporally distant. In this way, text allows for communal interactions that occur both across the minutest divisions of time or space and across gaps of centuries. The ties formed in these communal interactions may be called a textual community, and thus, textual communities can function diachronically, as well as synchronically, but this is only possible because of the “text-ness” of the texts, because they have been written down and “presented to the eyes … by certain signs peculiar to them.”

At several points in this dissertation, we shall see that the particular signs used can sometimes matter almost as much as the words presented by those signs. If writing can push words forward through time, then it can also be used to point backwards. As humanists had copied texts in imitation of the “litterae antiquae” they believed to be Classical scripts but which were in fact much later Carolingian hands, Matthew Parker (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1559–1575) and other sixteenth-century antiquarians imitated Anglo-Saxon scripts both by hand and in typefaces used to print medieval texts. For the eighth-century scriptorium at Wearmouth-Jarrow, on the other hand, the choice of scripts was based at least in part on the need to swiftly produce copies of the works of Bede (c. 673–735), already popular on the Continent within just a few years of his death. In both of these cases, this attention to the manner of writing or printing texts was part of the larger pattern of activity within their respective textual communities.

After Brian Stock’s work on reforming and heretical religious movements of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the term “textual community” is not new to medievalists, but rather than

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8 See pp. 162–8 in Chapter 5.
9 See p. 30 in Chapter 1.
discussing a “threshold of literacy” past which the interpretation of a text was agreed on and sufficiently internalized that the text no longer needed to be read out to the community, the current dissertation examines textual activity that remains focused on and indeed generated by physical books. Where Stock demonstrated that a written version of a text was not always necessary to the preservation of an interpretive community and that a new orality could emerge “as a superstructure of an agreed meaning,” this dissertation argues, as in the discussion in Chapter 3 of Wulfstanian manuscripts that both reflect and encourage habits of aural sensitivity and oral composition, that there was a symbiotic relationship between written copies of texts and oral manifestations of textual community, including oral performance.

Stock specifies that a textual community is “a group that arises somewhere in the interstices between the imposition of the written word and the articulation of a certain type of social organization. It is an interpretive community, but it is also a social entity.” A group thus formed may perpetuate itself beyond the time of its initial formation (as when a religious order is founded, for example), but the textual community, as defined by Stock, has its origins in synchronous interactions between individuals. This dissertation, by contrast, examines not the ways that groups coalesce around texts, but the ways in which texts express or inspire a sense of community, even between people who have not ever or cannot ever meet. Just as genealogy captivates many who are surprised to feel a deep emotional response to documents relating to their family members, or just as we may feel a rush of excitement at the discovery of handwritten notes in a used book, the texts discussed in this dissertation allow their readers to be in touch with both contemporary and long-dead colleagues. This dissertation does not treat fanfiction, but the wish to interact with an otherwise distant reality that underlies much of fanfiction also lies behind the communal, often nostalgic responses to the past that are discussed at certain points in this dissertation, notably in Chapters 2 and 5.


11 Ibid.

12 See pp. 91–101 in Chapter 3.

Like Stock, Stanley Fish is focused on interpretive communities, but his approach is rather along the power of the interpretive community to generate meaning and to determine “the shape of reading.”

Textual communities, as understood here, do generate meaning, but this happens in the generation of glosses, commentaries, or other fresh copies—in short, in interactions with and in the generating of books. The textual communities under examination in this dissertation, then, are possible only through the use of books, and the discussion will focus not only on the ways that texts have enabled and shaped communities, but also on the ways that communities have continued to shape texts through various kinds of textual activity.

Taking the term in a “broader receptionist sense” than Stock, Martin Irvine has explained textual community in terms of a grammatical mentality that provides the foundation for models of textual and literary activity and produces textual communities. With a two-pronged theory of textual archaeology (investigating both the broader cultural significance of the physical forms of manuscripts and the cultural systems that give meaning to texts), Irvine argues for a hybrid textuality in Old English literature, a textuality that still presupposes Latin texts and, in addition, a corps of readers and writers educated in Latin grammar and related disciplines. Irvine is the first of the theorists named here who does not begin with the assumption of an identifiable community that subsequently interprets texts. Instead, Irvine begins as I do, with texts and books that enable communal interactions and thereby foster textual community, but his definition of “textual community” still implies the existence of a recognizable group of people who gradually built up “a received canon of texts and an interpretive methodology articulated in a body of commentary which accompanied the texts and instituted their authority.”

Rather than focusing on an “ongoing interpretive debate” around a set of texts claimed by a group as canonical, this dissertation addresses the power of texts and the physical books in which they are preserved to

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16 Ibid., 272–298 and 405–60.
17 Ibid., 15.
enable and invite the kinds of activities outlined above, such as glossing, translating, and reproducing.

Irvine is also the first of these theorists to address the question of multilingualism or, more specifically, multilingualism in England, noting also Bede’s sense of linguistic identity as fundamental to national identity. In this, Bede echoes Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), who was himself widely read throughout the medieval period: “Ideo autem prius de linguis, ac deinde de gentibus posuimus, quia ex linguis gentes, non ex gentibus linguae exortae sunt.” (We have treated languages first, and then nations, because nations arose from languages, and not languages from nations.) With expressions of linguistic identity placed at the heart of national identity, Alfred the Great (r. 871–899) then becomes, in Irvine’s analysis, the “king who writes”—and writes, moreover, in English. In causing texts to be written, Alfred clears the ground for the utraque lingua culture on which the English prose and Grammar and Glossary of Ælfric (c. 950–1010) rely.

The processes of producing and reading texts are influenced both by linguistic concerns and by the physical forms of texts, so any theory of textual community put forward in this dissertation must account for both of those aspects of community formation. A textual community is understood here as a site where it is possible to arrive by textual means at a recognition of national, linguistic, or other identity; of past time (through linguistically or palaeographically distant texts or books); and of cultural capital in the form of texts and languages mastered. The activities that signify textual community fall into four broad categories: production of text, mark-up of text, compilation, and production of books. Production of text includes composition and translation, while mark-up of text encompasses activities like glossing, annotating, and

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18 Ibid., 276.
21 Irvine, 415–18. See also pp. 72–3 in Chapter 2. For the text of Ælfric’s Latin Preface to his Grammar, in which he explicitly lays claim to a benefit arising from both languages (utraque linguam), see Jonathan Wilcox, *Ælfric’s Prefaces* (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1994), 114.
recopying. Compilation may occur on the level of the text itself or within a book as it is copied in a scriptorium or elsewhere. The formation of a library is also a compulsory activity, mirrored in the idea that a text could itself be a library of other texts. Compilation is also always shadowed by the destructiveness of selection and the discarding of unused books or unused text. The production of books is a communal activity insofar as books are made to look like other books, through the development of scripts or styles of book production and binding.

These activities that signify textual community all have the effect of bridging distance, of drawing forth and casting across (ad depromendum et traiciendum), in Augustine’s words, that which is subsequently held in common. As we have already seen in the quotations from Augustine, there are different kinds of distance related to texts and languages, and so there are correspondingly different reasons for wishing to cross those gaps. When Bede was concerned to further the apostolic mission to spread the Faith, he exemplified the need to disseminate text and proselytize, but such dissemination quickly becomes an attempt to draw in what has been dispersed, just as the miracle of the Pentecost and the ongoing translation of scripture and other spiritual texts would unite many nations in a single Christian community. For Bede, the dispersal is of the human family and of their languages, but for Alfred and for Parker, it is a dispersal of lost knowledge that must be gathered anew through remastery of specific linguistic skills. The reasons for such losses of knowledge are sometimes, but by no means always, due to a rupture or breach in the political, religious, or social framework of a culture. The Norman Conquest and the new changes in the English language that it brought placed the Tremulous Hand and Matthew Parker on the far side of such a breach from the books they studied, and for Parker in particular the use of pre-Conquest books was directly tied to an attempt to repair dramatic political and religious rupture in England.

22 See pp. 45–8 in Chapter 1.
23 See pp. 61 and 73 in Chapter 2 and pp. 171–5 in Chapter 5.
24 See pp. 154–63 in Chapter 5.
The connections that bind up a textual community may be similarity of script; quotation, translation, or imitation of text; identity of author; geographic proximity; or any other resonances. A textual community may function within a relatively limited geographic and temporal proximity, as in the case of the scholarly circle at Alfred’s court, for example, but it is sometimes useful to speak of a single textual community that unites activity spanning many centuries and perhaps some geographic drift. In this way, it may be most productive to speak of a Wulfstanian homily that has been recopied in a later form of English as displaying the traces of multiple layers in a single, diachronic textual community.

The example of a homily recopied to reflect later linguistic norms is a useful reminder that perceptions of linguistic distance stimulate textual communities. It is the tension of linguistic difference that propels such activity forward, although it is important to recognize that this is not equivalent to the statement that the textual activity under discussion represents an attempt to erase or suppress the tension produced by linguistic difference or distance. Rather, a productive space is opened up by the linguistic or palaeographical distance displayed in texts, and it is in this space that textual communities take shape, even across geographical and chronological divides. Bede’s theology takes shape in the context of a complicated multilingual environment, and it is the wish to extend the miracle of the Pentecost to an ever widening circle of nations that drives his participation in and shaping of a textual community in seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria. In the late ninth century, it is out of concern over the state of learning in England that Alfred gives an explicit justification for his program of translation from Latin into Old English, hoping that it will allow him and the entire kingdom to follow the traces of his predecessors (her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæd).29

26 See pp. 93–9 in Chapter 3.
27 See p. 30 in Chapter 1 and pp. 82–3 in Chapter 3.
28 See the discussion of the West Midlands in Chapter 4.
Wulfstan (d. 1023) and Ælfric (c. 950–1010) both composed texts in both Latin and Old English, and in fact, part of their correspondence was based on the translation of some pastoral letters into English. Even when they both wrote in English, they adhered to their own distinctive lexical sets, and Wulfstan’s use of Norse vocabulary and Ælfric’s equally well known preference for the so-called Winchester words serve as a reminder that linguistic distance can occur even synchronously within a single language.\textsuperscript{30} Chapters 4 and 5 give examples of intralingual distance arising from diachronic change within the English language. First, the Tremulous Hand and other twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscript users in the West Midlands gloss or adapt Old English texts to reflect more contemporary norms by attempting to unravel the semantic value of Old English words and determine an appropriate orthography. In Chapter 5, Parker makes his attempts to reach back to Anglo-Saxon texts, particularly those in Old English, a central part of the justification and support for the new Anglican Church. Like Alfred, he offers an explicit articulation of his purposes and specifically addresses the linguistic divide that he hopes to span.

These last two examples demonstrate one of the most important contentions of this dissertation, namely, that a textual community can function diachronically. The objects of the textual activities of both the Tremulous Hand and Matthew Parker were books that were sometimes centuries old by the time they received the attention discussed here. More importantly, these books provided the only available entry into the study of Old English, speakers of that language being, so far as we know, nonexistent by the time the Tremulous Hand was working in the early thirteenth century, to say nothing of Matthew Parker’s distance in the mid-sixteenth century from speakers of Old English. Even the textual community around the works of Wulfstan had a diachronic aspect: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 343 is a late twelfth-century copy of a number of Wulfsstanian homilies that show significant orthographical and morphological updates but almost no lexical substitutions. Roughly contemporary with Bodley 343 is the *Ormulum*, a now-incomplete but still lengthy series of homilies composed by the Augustinian friar Orm around 1180. At two places in the *Ormulum*, the same snippet of Wulfsstanian material is echoed, although unlike the work of the Tremulous Hand and Matthew Parker, the *Ormulum* borrowings

\textsuperscript{30} See pp. 85–6 in Chapter 3.
seem to reflect rather an orally transmitted fragment for which Orm may not have known of a specific source.  

The implication of all of these examples of textual community is that cultures and communities are formed by textual activity beyond writing itself (whether it be composing or recording), including reading, glossing, adapting, translating, selecting, and preserving. Judging by the array of texts to which he must have had access, Bede must have been exercising a great deal of selectivity in the composition of his exegetical and historical works, but we have explicit statements on selectivity from Alfred, who sought out the books “most needful for all men to know” (niedbedeærfostra sien eallum monnum to wiotonne), and from Parker, who participated in a discourse that cast desirable “monuments of antiquity” in opposition to less salubrious “monuments of superstition.”

Every time Wulfstan adapted the work of Alcuin, Ælfric, or any other author, he was engaging in this type of cultural formation. Wulfstan, the Tremulous Hand, and John Joscelyn (Parker’s Latin secretary) all annotated Old English manuscripts, and this glossing, commenting, and even correcting represents communal interaction with the manuscripts and their texts. The compiler of Bodley 343 or its exemplar performed a kind of translation on Wulfstan’s Sermo Lupi, and this too serves a communal purpose by making the text accessible to new readers who might have struggled with the original Old English. In the sixteenth century, Parker printed editions of Old English texts with facing translations into early modern English, with both the printing and the translating adding different kinds of accessibility.

In a somewhat different way, the imitation of Anglo-Saxon script by Joscelyn (by hand in his notebooks) and by Parker (in a printed typeface used in his publications) shows how readers can become shapers of textual community, responding in a more visual and literal way to the same sense that Augustine had of writing as bridging a gap in a more lasting way than spoken words. So, the library is as formative a space as the scriptorium. Community and meaning are shaped in

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31 See pp. 96–8 in Chapter 3.
32 Lapidge, Anglo-Saxon Library, 34–7.
33 Sweet, 7.
the library in various ways. The conscious selectivity of early modern collectors like Parker is actually the selection of books that will serve as the basis for a textual community, both among early modern readers (or later readers who make use of these early modern collections) and as a way of reaching back to interact with medieval or Classical texts.

Readers and even listeners also shape textual communities through imitation, as when short fragments of Wulfstanian homilies appeared again in the twelfth-century *Ormulum*. Unlike Ælfric, whose works enjoyed wide circulation in England and on the Continent into the twelfth century, Wulfstan seems to have reached the peak of his currency in the eleventh century.³⁴ So, this late borrowing in the *Ormulum* is striking, but even in Wulfstan’s day, there may already have been imitators circulating texts similar to Wulfstan’s own. Some of the texts that have been attributed to Wulfstan in the last century may even have been the work of Wulfstan imitators, but there is no firm evidence of this, other than an indication that Wulfstan’s stylistic reputation was established well within his lifetime.³⁵ Wulfstan is unusual among the examples in this dissertation in that his works also show signs of oral circulation and oral reformulation, but one of the most interesting features of certain manuscripts of his works is the way that their written texts reflect the oral performance of the homilies and simultaneously anticipate both future copying and future reciting.³⁶

In order for readers to shape textual communities, they must necessarily have access to books that may be read. In other words, it becomes important to know where or how to find and access books. They may be collected into a single room, as was the case with Parker’s collection after it was given to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and subjected to severe maintenance restrictions. It is more difficult to provide clear examples of such an arrangement during the medieval period, but plausible possibilities include Wearmouth-Jarrow at the time of Bede, Winchester as Ælfric knew it, and the collection at Worcester Cathedral Priory consulted by the

³⁶ See pp. 91–101 in Chapter 3.
Tremulous Hand. Alternatively, books may be scattered through some network of readers, as seems to have been the case in the environs of late medieval Ripon and may have been the case with manuscripts of the Ancrene Wisse Group or perhaps even the manuscripts used at Alfred’s court. A would-be reader may be guided to and through texts and books, as Asser tells us that Alfred was guided by scholars like Grimbald, John, and Asser himself (assembled for the purpose from Saint-Bertin, Saxony, and Wales), but when there is no guidance offered or when there is a hindrance to the finding and gathering of books, some would-be users are vocal in their criticism. In his The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, John Strype reviles Lanfranc and the supposed Catholic neglect of Anglo-Saxon books that John Bale, Stephen Batman, and others were thus forced to seek out following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century.

It is only when both the physical proximity and the memory of how to find books have been lost that rescue operations like that of the sixteenth century become necessary, but consulting books in a library or searching out lost and dispersed books is often a way of reclaiming a particular past for the purposes of the present. Nostalgic desire to find a connection with the past is sometimes exploited by those giving shape to textual communities, as when Alfred and Parker specifically frame their textual projects in terms of a return to an earlier kind of textuality that has since been lost in England.

Such a return, or indeed any kind of textual community, is enabled by the books and texts on which it is founded. Books point the way towards textual community, and it is their inventive and diachronic potential that invites the activity that constitutes and signals a textual community. The blank space on the page allows the Tremulous Hand and other annotators to interact with the text and record their interpretations for later readers to see in tandem with the main text. In fact, for the Tremulous Hand, as for Matthew Parker and other antiquarians, the only access to the textual culture of Anglo-Saxon England was through the books that survived. Once there are signs of intervention, whether they be annotations like those made by the Tremulous Hand,

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corrections entered by the scribe of the main text, or simply the wear and tear of use, these signs are an indication of continuing use of the book. So, John Joscelyn not only read the Tremulous Hand annotations in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 12, but he copied some of them into Hatton 20, amongst the glosses entered by the Tremulous Hand himself.  

Beyond the glossing, the content of the texts often serves as a model for or an invitation to a textual community. The Vulgate account of Ezra, on which Bede wrote a lengthy commentary, characterizes him alternately as “Priest” and “Scribe,” validating Bede’s vocation as a textual scholar pushing for reform. Bede’s commentary, in turn, may have given Alfred reassurance in his efforts to become a reforming king working via texts. Meanwhile, Alfred’s interest in following the spor of his predecessors and his vivid metaphors for the process of gaining knowledge and wisdom not only inscribe a record of his own attempts to develop a textual community in Wessex,  

Parker’s Preface to his publication of Asser’s Life of King Alfred demonstrates that one reader at least took up the invitation and saw the potential for community building.  

As we shall see in Chapter 2, the composition of Asser’s Life of King Alfred mirrors the textuality that it reports of Alfred’s libellus and also of his court circle, both of which were bent to the service of his drive to seek out the texts “most needful for all men to know.” Asser’s Life compiles various sources in the same way that the libellus brings into proximity a range of texts that Alfred found compelling, and both of these compilations are reflected in the large-scale project of education, translation, and fortification through textuality that Alfred enacted in his kingdom. Even without the survival of Alfred’s libellus, we have a model of the workings of this project, thanks to Asser’s Life, just as the Life also provides a model of the kingdom Alfred sought to create.  

Later rebindings are also indications of communal activity, and this prompts us to ask why a book has been rebound or why certain materials have been assembled together. Matthew Parker is famous for his rearranging and rebinding of medieval manuscripts, as we shall see, and his 

40 See pp. 56–8 and 73–4 in Chapter 2.
willingness to refashion them as his own is a sign of his communal engagement with not only their content, but also their form. In the case of the manuscripts that have been associated with Wulfstan because they contain texts either attributed to him or related to topics in which he seems to have taken an interest, it would appear that there is reason to believe that Wulfstan himself ordered their assembly, but with no evidence to support this supposition, greater caution is necessary. Instead, we must ask who else might have wished to assemble such a compilation of texts reflecting Wulfstan’s sensibilities and whether that wish was linked to an interest in Wulfstan himself or simply to a similar set of preoccupations. It is conceivable that a layman might have taken an interest in both legal and homiletic texts, but it seems more likely that another bishop or archbishop might also have felt political pressures (perhaps from serving with the witan who advised the king) on top of his pastoral and episcopal duties.

Relying on a different communal strategy, a binding may imitate or reference other bindings, as does the binding on the late seventh-century Northumbrian Stonyhurst Gospel (London, British Library, Loan 74) with its use of Coptic, Byzantine, and Islamic techniques of sewing and decoration. Likewise, deciding whether or not to bind a book may indicate other participation in a textual community. Asser relates an episode that illustrates one way that Alfred was using his libellus: In this case, Alfred is struck by something that Asser has just read to him, and he asks Asser to enter the passage into his libellus. So, it seems that, even if we cannot be sure of Wulfstan’s creation of a “commonplace book,” Alfred was using his libellus at least partly as a repository for texts that he encountered with the guidance of the scholars at his court. When Asser finds that there is not room to copy the passage into the libellus, he proposes to prepare a fresh quire (foliumcula) and keep it separate (segregasse gaudebimus) so that more text may be added to it. The new “handbook” or “en chiridion” (manualem librum) grows to nearly the “size of a psalter” (magnitudinem unius psalterii) as Alfred continues his studies, so it appears further

41 See pp. 165–7 and 174–7 in Chapter 5.


that if the foliuncula were bound, then they were bound in a way that was sufficiently flexible to allow for the insertion of more parchment to accommodate Alfred’s burgeoning library of excerpts. The binding of the manualis liber must have accommodated an ongoing program of reading and copying among Alfred and his court circle, as well as making practicable Alfred’s habit of carrying the book always on his person (in sinum suum or ad manum).\footnote{Stevenson, chapters 88–9.}

Instead of learning about the possible forms of books from the use they received, this dynamic is reversed when later ideas about books, arising from Renaissance humanism, influence scholarly assessments of the manuscripts known now as Wulfstan’s so-called commonplace book. Rather than taking our cues from the medieval manuscripts themselves or from other indications of the use they saw, we have used other, later books as indications of how to understand the manuscripts associated with Wulfstan and Wulfstanian texts. Perhaps a more productive dialogue for future work would be set up between these Wulfstanian manuscripts, on the one hand, and Alfred’s libellus and his manualis liber on the other hand.

All of these indications of textual community took place throughout the medieval period and into the early modern period. Of all of the changed circumstances during the nearly one thousand years spanned by this dissertation, one of the most obvious is the advent of printing, but this is misleading. It was not the ability to have books printed that prompted a sixteenth-century archbishop of Canterbury to position himself into a diachronic textual community within the English church and to cast himself and other Elizabethan churchmen as the heirs of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Printing may have opened up one strategy in a different way than manuscript books had done, but it was not the genesis of Parker’s project. Indeed, well before the advent of print, communities were sketched out and pieced together in and around books: Michelle Brown has written of an emerging Northumbrian sense of identity and self-definition shaped and expressed in linguistic, palaeographical, and decorative features of manuscript production in the early Anglo-Saxon period.\footnote{Michelle P. Brown, The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe (London: British Library, 2003), 227–30.} Writing of late medieval manuscripts, Ralph Hanna has elucidated the “extensive webs of connection among literate people” around
fourteenth-century Ripon, among whom vernacular books circulated and may have been produced. Similarly, the Anglo-Saxon mission headed by Boniface (c. 675–754) and Lull (c. 710–786) requested that books be sent to Germany and, in transmitting the works of Aldhelm and Bede to the Continent, helped to fuel a wider demand for copies of those works.

Likewise, this dissertation examines textual communities that expressed complicated relationships of linguistic and national identity, collaboration, disputation, imitation or emulation, alteration, and dissemination. In the early Anglo-Saxon period, we have less evidence of annotation and other use of books, but the period is rich in surviving manuscript productions, especially from Northumbria. The palette of distinct languages in use in Britain was also larger than in later periods, bringing greater complexity to the multilingual aspects of the textual communities at work in the early period. Unfortunately, we have little more than textual traces, rather than physical survivals, on the basis of which to assess the contents and layout of early Anglo-Saxon libraries.

Moving into the later period, the shift is towards a definition of literature from England in terms of a dichotomy between English and Latin or in terms of different forms of English. We also see more examples of secondary written activity in the form of annotations and production of new copies for dissemination in altered forms, like the morphologically updated linguistic forms in Bodley 343 or the printed text with facing-page translation in Parker’s *A Testimonie of Antiquitie*.

I begin my dissertation with an investigation of Bede and his concern, on the one hand, with the boundaries between distinct languages and, on the other, with the boundaries between the written and spoken forms of a single language. I situate this linguistic thought in the context of centres of royal power and textual production in seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria and argue that Bede’s stance is tied to his theology, which acknowledges the importance of multilingualism in religious history. His sense, encouraged by Old Testament and patristic texts, of the fundamental importance of reform and redemption compelled Bede to participate in a textual community that

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embraced multilingualism in fulfillment of the miracle of the Pentecost. Even Augustine does not
go out of his way to condemn the circulation “far and wide” (longe lateque) of divine scripture in
various languages: 48

Quam legentes nihil aliud appetunt quam cogitationes
voluntatemque illorum a quibus conscripta est invenire et per illas
voluntatem dei, secundum quam tales homines locutos credimus.

(The aim of its readers is simply to find out the thoughts and
wishes of those by whom it was written down and, through them,
the will of God, which we believe these men followed as they
spoke.)

The mixture of languages represented at the Pentecost implied, for Bede and others, an apostolic
mission to carry the faith throughout the world, necessitating the mastery of numerous national
languages, including Bede’s own Old English.

In my discussion of Northumbrian Christianity and textual production, it becomes clear that there
are significant links between monastic and royal power. This emphasis on royal power continues
in my second chapter, which focuses on the textual activities of Alfred the Great (r. 871–899)
and his grandson Æthelstan (r. 924/5–939). Both Alfred and Æthelstan, having gathered courtly
milieux of scholars representing a variety of linguistic backgrounds, used the composition,
translation, copying, and distribution of texts to consolidate royal power. Alfred was especially
articulate in using his textual activities to define royal oversight of both secular and religious life,
but it was Æthelstan who perfected the art of giving and receiving books in order to maintain
close ties with Ireland, Brittany, other parts of the Continent, and various regions within Britain.
I argue in my dissertation and elsewhere that Bede and his Old Testament exegesis may have
strongly influenced Alfred’s choice of texts and approaches to his program of translation,
including Alfred’s willingness to use the vernacular to write about religious material. For both
Alfred and Æthelstan, these textual measures were intended to contribute directly to the political
well-being of the kingdom, in addition to the intellectual or spiritual health of its citizens.

48 DDC II.9, pp. 60–1.
The interplay between textual and political power is also in force in the ecclesiastical sphere inhabited by the foremost prose stylists of late Old English, Wulfstan of York and Ælfric of Eynsham, both of whom were connected with powerful and prominent members of the secular elite. Aside from the lasting influence of their homilies in English, Latin, and Norse, their textual activities include correspondence, reworking of material, and translation. Wulfstan, in particular, is known for his high standing in both ecclesiastical and secular circles, having been instrumental in the composition of a number of law codes of the time, and for his associations with several manuscript compilations of texts of various genres. An invitation to later textual activity lies in a series of short and seemingly incomplete homiletic texts in CCCC 201. Wulfstan’s rhythmical and aurally attuned style of speaking enabled a more improvisatory compositional style, and the presentation of Wulfstan’s texts in this manuscript, especially their careful punctuation, seems designed to highlight the aurally effective features of his homiletic addresses. The short and apparently deficient homiletic texts in CCCC 201 could have been used as introductions to various homiletic topics as extensions of which a preacher could craft complete addresses. 49

The West Midlands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the site of a vibrant textual community in which a variety of transitional forms of English were cultivated, both in the glossing or updating of Old English texts (notably by the so-called Tremulous Hand of Worcester) and in the composition of new texts, such as the Ancrene Wisse. As with Matthew Parker, who is the focus of my fifth and final chapter, these West Midlands readers and compilers responded to a sense of linguistic distance within English itself. A late manuscript of Wulfstanian and other homilies, copied in the late twelfth century, displays frequent updating of morphological elements of words but almost no lexical substitutions, while the early thirteenth-century glosses of the Tremulous Hand are intended to elucidate both the morphological form and the lexical value of words in the Old English texts they accompany. In early manuscripts of the devotional and hagiographical texts of the Ancrene Wisse Group written in the so-called AB language, we see a concerted effort by multiple scribes to resolve ambiguities in Old English orthography and to create a coherent and consistent system of representing their spoken English

49 See pp. 105–08 in Chapter 3.
on the pages of manuscripts.\textsuperscript{50} For all of these West Midlands readers and writers, this activity with Old English manuscripts was fueled by a consciousness of linguistic distance within English itself. In all three cases, the morphological and orthographical structures of the English language were at stake.

For Matthew Parker, the stakes were also religious and political, rather than simply linguistic, but much as Bede and Alfred were able to convert seemingly non-textual occurrences into textual events, Parker carried out his project as a linguistic and textual rescue effort. Parker is famous for amassing one of the largest collections of medieval manuscripts of the sixteenth century and for editing, annotating, and rebinding those manuscripts in ways that would appall a modern conservator. Since most of the collection is still housed in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, where it has recently undergone digitizing,\textsuperscript{51} it is possible to track these alterations in a systematic way. Much of what has been written about Parker has focused on his seemingly barbaric treatment of his manuscripts, but it is possible to offer a more constructive theory of Parker’s bibliographic activities by asserting that he understood his curatorial and editorial project as allowing him to position himself and other prominent members of the young Anglican Church within a textual community stretching back to Anglo-Saxon England.\textsuperscript{52}

Compared to the Tremulous Hand and other late-medieval readers of Old English manuscripts, Parker and his circle faced a greater distance and thus a greater hurdle to their study of Old English, but they proved extremely active users of medieval English manuscripts, which they exploited in support of the Church of England and the power of the Elizabethan state. Parker and his circle took their bibliographic cues from earlier textual activity, such as that carried out by Ælfric, Wulfstan, and the Tremulous Hand of Worcester, but their textual activities culminated in the creation of an Anglo-Saxon typeface for the printing of Old English and even Anglo-Latin texts, thus demarcating and claiming an Anglo-Saxon heritage for their own activities. Parker

\textsuperscript{50} See pp. 144–9 in Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{51} Information on the project and images of the manuscripts are available through Parker Library on the Web at http://parkerweb.stanford.edu.
\textsuperscript{52} See pp. 177–83 in Chapter 5.
claimed that his Anglo-Saxon typeface would “renew for you the memory of that ancient and once familiar language.”

One of the medieval manuscripts used (and annotated) by the Parkerian circle provides a fitting conclusion for this dissertation. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20 contains a late ninth-century copy of the Alfredian translation of Gregory the Great’s *Cura pastoralis*. The intellectual inheritance claimed by Alfred in the use of Gregory’s text and the annotations left in the manuscript by later readers tie together all five chapters of this dissertation and exemplify the linguistic and formal influences on the creation and shaping of textual community both synchronously and across a gap of many centuries.
Chapter 1
Language, Textuality, and Theology: Bede’s Redemptive History

By the time the Venerable Bede (c. 673–735) reached adulthood, Northumbria was already animated by a textual community that left more traces than any other we can detect in Anglo-Saxon England before the late ninth century and the scholarly circle at the court of Alfred the Great (r. 871–899). Consequently, we have a much fuller picture of the workings of this textual community than we do for any others from this period. Much, though certainly not all, of this information comes from Bede’s own Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum, completed in 731. In addition to Bede’s information about individuals and institutions, a number of books produced or used in this milieu can be identified, some of which survive and others of which are now lost to us. From an inventory of Bede’s sources alone, it is clear that the library (or libraries) at Wearmouth-Jarrow as Bede knew it was the largest in Anglo-Saxon England, including even the eleventh-century libraries from which inventories survive, containing something like 250 titles in as many as and possibly more than 200 volumes. The fact that little is known of the later whereabouts of these books mirrors the fate of the other major libraries of early Anglo-Saxon England.

What distinguishes Northumbria, and especially Wearmouth-Jarrow, in the seventh and eighth centuries is that it is not only possible to identify books that were products of Northumbrian scriptoria, but to fill in a more detailed and notably interconnected history for these books, such as the Codex Amiatinus, intended for St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, and its two sister pandects, which were meant to remain at Wearmouth and Jarrow but which are now lost. Produced before Ceolfrith left for Rome in 716, the Codex Amiatinus and other texts produced during Ceolfrith’s abbacy may then have provided a direct model for the script and other decorative features of the Lindisfarne Gospels. This would mean that the Lindisfarne Gospels were likely produced during or after the editorial and scribal activity of Ceolfrith’s abbacy, pushing the date of production

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1 See pp. 49–52 in Chapter 2.
2 Lapidge, Anglo-Saxon Library, 37.
3 Ibid., 31–42, discusses each of the sizable Anglo-Saxon libraries individually.
past the traditional 698 and into the eighth century, and we might wonder which other manuscripts were influenced by this seemingly busy site of production.

Much of this increased visibility of the activities of the textual community may be due to the influence of the Irish Church, already solidly established, on Northumbria. The Irish, who were among the first non-Romance speakers to study Latin, brought a strong tradition of writing in both Latin and their own vernacular. The relatively high concentration of monastic foundations in the north of England or Scotland either established by the Irish or located in heavily Irish territory provided the critical mass for more large-scale, collaborative activity than was feasible south of the Humber. Lindisfarne, founded in 635 by Aidan and known also as Holy Island, is famous for the Viking attack of 793, but it had been the centre of the mission to Northumbria after Aidan was brought in by Oswald to evangelize and serve as bishop. The success of the original foundation of St. Peter’s at Wearmouth by Benedict Biscop in 674 led to the foundation of its sister house, St. Paul’s at Jarrow in 681. Under the leadership of Abbot Ceolfrith, the double house achieved an impressive stature as a producer of high-quality books and the home of the equally impressive Bede. His reputation was already great enough that Eadfrith, bishop of Lindisfarne, commissioned Bede to rewrite the prose Life of Cuthbert in 720. Iona, founded off the western coast of what is now Scotland in 563 after Columba left Ireland, mainly served the Irish kingdom of Dalriada and was not Northumbrian territory, but by the time Augustine arrived in Kent in 597, two English Christians were already living at Iona. In addition, Iona is probably where Oswald and Oswiu spent at least part of their exile during the ascendancy of King Edwin (r. Deira 616–33), and Aldhelm and Aldfrith also appear to have spent time there, as we shall see.

The alphabetical poem, Altus Prosator, was probably composed at Iona by Columba in the late sixth century or by another Iona monk in the late sixth or seventh century, and it displays the

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4 Michelle P. Brown, “In the Beginning was the Word”: Books and Faith in the Age of Bede, Jarrow Lecture 2000 (Newcastle upon Tyne: J. and P. Bealls Ltd., 2000), 15–19. Brown, Lindisfarne Gospels, 53, has since suggested that the Lindisfarne Gospels were made at Lindisfarne c. 710–21, when Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne and Bede “seem to have been actively collaborating in determining the future direction of the cult of St. Cuthbert as part of a broader religious and political agenda.”


fondness for foreign and exotic vocabulary that characterizes “Hisperic” Latin, including the *Hisperica famina* and the works of Aldhelm.  

Much of what we know about the linguistic situation and about the relationships between speakers of different languages in Northumbria at this period is gleaned from the works of Bede, especially the *Historia ecclesiastica*. In the seventh century, royal succession in Northumbria was frequent, and frequently contested. Aside from internal strife, the Picts remained on the edges of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, pushed farther north, but not destroyed—in fact, Bede mentions the Picts a number of times in the course of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, including his account of Nechtan’s wish to reform the religious observance in his kingdom and the lengthy reply from Ceolfrith on the dating of Easter.  

The Irish also remained on the scene, especially in monastic foundations or as missionaries. Consequently, the languages spoken in Northumbria included Anglo-Saxon, Pictish, and Irish, with Latin used in liturgical contexts and, of course, for texts like Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*. So, the textual activity described above took place in a complex linguistic environment where speakers of multiple vernacular languages interacted with each other and with Latin, which saw most of its daily use in liturgical contexts or for documents like land-charters.

Books tell us a great deal about the varied cultural influences at work in Anglo-Saxon England and especially in Northumbria, where Irish influence was strong. What Michelle Brown has called “cultural cross-references” appearing in books and other artefacts reveal both the wide-ranging influences at work in Anglo-Saxon England and the Anglo-Saxon culture that cultivated

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these contacts and allowed their influence to take hold to varying degrees. The Irish greatly influenced Anglo-Saxon scriptoria in the codicological aspects of book production, such as pricking, ruling, and the arrangement of leaves in quires, but the images in Northumbrian manuscripts show a debt to Italian, Coptic, and other wide-ranging influences. Likewise, the Irish script system was heavily influential in Anglo-Saxon England, but individual Roman scripts had their own impact, as in the distinctively Anglo-Saxon use of rustic capitals as a display script. Although some of the Irish missionaries are more famous, Anglo-Saxon missionaries such as Willibrord (658–739) and Boniface (c. 675–754) also brought Insular influence to Continental scriptoria.

The details of the script and decorative features of the Lindisfarne Gospels lay bare a variety of influences from all corners of the Christian world, but in their combination and the innovations introduced, Michelle Brown detects an expression of political and linguistic identity emerging in Northumbria but positioning itself within the wider Christian “ecumen.” In other Northumbrian books, it is codicological features that reveal the breadth of cultural contacts in this period. The Stonyhurst Gospel (London, British Library, Loan 74) retains its original late seventh-century binding, which betrays Mediterranean influence in its sewing pattern drawn from the Coptic/Egyptian/Byzantine tradition. The decorative features on the goatskin cover, on the other hand, have been taken to show Islamic influence, making the book unique, certainly among surviving Northumbrian productions, in this combination of structural and decorative influences.

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11 Michelle P. Brown, Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 11–12, offers a concise account of the best known Insular missionaries and the houses they founded or worked in while on the Continent.


The most prominent sites where or for whose use books were produced are the monastic foundations already mentioned: Wearmouth-Jarrow produced the Codex Amiatinus and its two sister pandects, as well as copies of Bede’s works. Lindisfarne probably produced its famous gospel book and certainly commissioned Bede to rework the anonymous prose life of St. Cuthbert, a Lindisfarne bishop of the late seventh century. This is only one of a number of examples of collaboration between Wearmouth-Jarrow and Lindisfarne. Michelle Brown, upsetting the traditional consensus on the production of the Lindisfarne Gospels, produces evidence that its exemplar may have come from Wearmouth-Jarrow and may in fact post-date the beginning of Abbot Ceolfrith’s “editorial and scribal campaign” of the late seventh and early eighth centuries, when the Codex Amiatinus was produced.\(^\text{14}\) Books were also moving between other sites in Northumbria at this time. The Durham Gospels, for instance, were produced at a Columban foundation, probably either Melrose or Lindisfarne, around 700 but brought to Durham in the early Middle Ages, most likely in the wake of Viking attacks.\(^\text{15}\)

It has often been noted that there is a sharp distinction in the surviving evidence of writing from the early Anglo-Saxon period, with the Northumbrian survivals mostly books or fragments of books of a scholarly or ecclesiastical bent, whereas the survivals from the south of England are almost exclusively land-charters or law codes.\(^\text{16}\) The Northumbrian church did produce land-charters, and Liudhard, the chaplain who accompanied Bertha when she married Æthelberht, may well have taken some books with him, which would mean that books were being used in Kent even before Augustine’s arrival.\(^\text{17}\) So, the discrepancy is intriguing. Susan Kelly suggests that the Irish, with their deep sense of bilingualism (as non-Romance speakers who learned Latin), may have been especially adept at training Anglo-Saxons (more non-Romance speakers)

\(^\text{14}\) Brown, “\text{In the Beginning was the Word,}” 14–19.
\(^\text{15}\) Brown, \text{Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age}, 10–11.
\(^\text{17}\) \text{HE II.5}. 
in “literacy skills,” thus giving literacy a deeper foundation through the Northumbrian church. Richard Emms, on the other hand, wonders if Kent was already in possession of a sufficient number of imported books for churches and monasteries to function without necessitating significant scribal production. There is evidence of the importation of books by Liudhard in the late sixth century and by Augustine in 597 and 601, but the main evidence of production is the survival of Æthelberht’s laws and the presence of a notary at the Council of Hertford in 672. In fact, it is reasonable to suggest that the scriptorium at Wearmouth-Jarrow did a great deal on its own to shift the balance of survivals from Northumbria, producing not only books for liturgical use at its own and other churches, but also supplying copies of the works of Bede. At least eight surviving manuscripts are written in the same uncial script used during the abbacy of Ceolfrith to complete the Codex Amiatinus, but by the mid-eighth century, Wearmouth-Jarrow had shifted to an Insular minuscule script to copy the works of Bede, possibly in response to an increasing demand on the scriptorium for copies of Bede on the Continent.

Bede’s value as a witness of early Anglo-Saxon textual community should not overshadow the influence of other scholarly figures from the period. Ceolfrith and Benedict Biscop are responsible for the creation and development of the library at Wearmouth-Jarrow, which dwarfed all contemporary Anglo-Saxon libraries, and for the cultivation of the highly influential scriptorium at Wearmouth-Jarrow. That both men traveled to Rome, where Benedict Biscop acquired books and other treasures for the monastery and where Ceolfrith was delivering the Codex Amiatinus when he died in 716, testifies to a textual culture that is anything but what is now meant by the somewhat disparaging use of the term “insular.”

Aldhelm (c. 640–709/10) is best known for his ornate and erudite Latin style, but he was closely connected with the West Saxon royal family and may even have been the son of King Centwine (r. 676–85). Michael Lapidge’s analysis of Aldhelm’s place in the West Saxon royal family

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18 Kelly, 39.
19 Emms, 26.
21 Ibid., 106–8.
suggests that the ties between Wessex and Northumbria were closer than we are sometimes apt to suppose. From the *Historia ecclesiastica*, it is clear that individuals, at least those who were either strongly motivated or well placed, such as missionaries or members of a royal family, moved between different parts of Anglo-Saxon England. It may also be that the monastic house at Malmesbury was founded in order to provide Aldhelm’s father, King Centwine, with a place of retirement and that Aldhelm’s appointment as abbot might have been a way of removing any threat to Ceadwalla’s ascendancy to the West Saxon throne. As if to solidify the arrangement, Ceadwalla’s successor, Ine, himself another kinsman of Aldhelm, endorsed the papal privileges brought back by Aldhelm for the monasteries at Malmesbury and Frome.

The case of Malmesbury is especially apt because it reminds us also that the ties between royal power and monastic power were strong. That Bede dedicated his *Historia ecclesiastica* to Ceolwulf (King of Northumbria, 729–737) is hardly distinctive in the context of so many other medieval dedications to kings or other powerful secular figures, but Michelle Brown has even suggested that Ceolwulf, who was a benefactor of Lindisfarne and stayed there in 731, may have been resident at the monastery when Bede dedicated the *Historia ecclesiastica* to him. What is more noteworthy, even in a period when kings could and did enter monasteries for their old age after either abdicating or being deposed, is that both Benedict Biscop (c. 628–690) and his successor as abbot of Wearmouth, Eosterwine (650–686), were at court before becoming monks, and as a monk, Benedict Biscop acted as an advisor to King Ecgfrith (r. 670–685).

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23 Paulinus traveled from Kent to Northumbria so that Æthelburh could marry Edwin (*HE* II.9), then returned with her to Kent after Edwin’s murder (II.20). Wilfrid, who was Northumbrian and served as bishop of York, is credited also with the conversion of the South Saxons after he was driven from his Northumbrian see (IV.13). See also Michael Lapidge’s comments on the close ties between Northumbria and Wessex in “The Career of Aldhelm,” 17–22.

24 Ibid., 65–6.

25 Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, 39, believes that Ceolwulf “continued to exert a major influence in dynastic politics from his base there” from the period of his first stay at Lindisfarne in 731 until he died in 762.

suggests that monasteries may have offered a quieter life to some but were by no means cut off from the affairs of state for those who took an interest in such things.

The production of charters and other royal documents offers more concrete manifestations of these close ties and of their effects on textual communities. It is not difficult to imagine a scenario in which secular influences leave their mark on monastic book production, just as the Barberini Gospels have been shown to reflect the court culture of Mercian Kings Offa and Coenwulf, but it is perhaps less instinctive to acknowledge the influence of monastic or scholarly texts on the business of the court. Nevertheless, charters were usually written in ecclesiastical scriptoria, as opposed to royal chanceries, until the early tenth century, and Simon Keynes has suggested that Aldhelm was a model for the language of English royal charters beginning with Æthelstan (r. 924/5–939). In fact, none of the five charters included by Ehwald in his edition of the works of Aldhelm is now considered to be an authentic document, but at least two of them may have been the work of a later imitator stitching together phrases from Aldhelm’s works. In Chapter 3, we will see examples of both contemporary and later borrowings from the works of Wulfstan. One of the difficulties of Wulfstan scholarship is that the authenticity of a text composed in a distinctive and imitable style is necessarily difficult to prove, and unlike the Aldhelmian charters, no Wulfstanian homilies have as yet revealed other kinds of evidence that might prove or disprove authorship.

Bede and Aldhelm shared an interest in languages other than English, as is shown by Aldhelm’s extensive corpus of Latin writings, which frequently use vocabulary drawn from Greek and Irish, and his likely participation in the “Leiden Glossary,” which was produced at Canterbury. Aldhelm can probably be identified with the so-called Third Rufinus Glossator, who contributed

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28 Kelly, 42–3.
31 See pp. 95–101 in Chapter 3.
the vast majority of the glosses on the text of Rufinus’ translation of the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Eusebius. This is striking in light of Danuta Shanzer’s argument that Rufinus might have influenced Bede’s Latin prose style, with its long and often periodic sentences. Shanzer even suggests that we should be discussing a “Rufinian Renaissance in Northumbrian Latin Prose.” Aside from his use of the *Historia ecclesiastica* translation, we know that Bede used Rufinus’ translation of Gregory of Nazianzen in his commentary on the Pentecost in his *Expositio Actuum Apostolorum*.

Northumbria is far better known for its contacts with the Irish than is southern England, but there are significant southern connections with Northumbria and with Ireland. Aldhelm is known to have spent time somewhere in Irish territory, and Michael Lapidge has recently shown that there is good reason to believe that Iona was the site of his studies. Aldhelm was not the only Anglo-Saxon to study in Ireland, as he makes clear in his letter to Heahfrith, at the opening of which he mocks the Irish lack of initial <p>. The flow of students also went in the other direction, as at the school of Theodore and Hadrian at Canterbury, which drew students from all over England (including Aldhelm) and even from Ireland. The early West Saxon connections with Northumbria and Ireland even led to the use of Insular scripts in Wessex before 700. It would be a mistake to overlook the fact that an “Anglo-Irish intellectual climate” extended into the

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south of England and provided a matrix for both the Anglo-Saxon Aldhelm and the Hiberno-Latin *Hisperica famina* and grammatical texts of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus.38

Even after his death, Bede remained influential, having become hugely popular almost from the moment of his death. Both Alcuin and Boniface lauded his writing and helped to make it known on the Continent,39 and Boniface and his circle also served as a conduit for Aldhelm’s works.40 Malcolm Parkes has argued that Bede’s popularity on the Continent had an effect as far away as in the scriptorium at Wearmouth-Jarrow, leading to changes in palaeographical practice, where the “capitular uncial” developed there was later abandoned in favour of the more swiftly executed Insular minuscule for several manuscripts of Bede’s works, including the St. Petersburg Bede (St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Lat. Q. v. I. 18).41 Through this exporting of copies of Bede and other Anglo-Saxon texts, and also through the missionary activities of individual Anglo-Saxons who went to the Continent, the Anglo-Saxons contributed substantially to the Carolingian renaissance.42 Unfortunately, the actual movement of books is usually very difficult to trace in this period,43 and this problem also complicates our accounting of books imported to England. David Dumville estimates that the books imported to England must have numbered in the thousands, not hundreds, by the end of the seventh century. If correct, this estimate would make the disappearance of so many books striking, and this might lead us to


reassess the effects of the Viking depredations and the dispersal under Henry VIII, or even to posit that significant numbers of books must have been lost in other ways.  

When they emerge from an environment that is so textually productive and so linguistically rich, it is no wonder that Bede’s works should display such a strong belief in the power of both languages and texts. Setting up the miracle of the Pentecost as a mirror of the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, Bede is also able to present it as the “beginning of world Christendom,” the moment at which the apostles established a worldwide evangelizing mission—one which continued when Gregory the Great, who strongly influenced Bede’s views on the Pentecost, dispatched Augustine to England. During the miracle of the Pentecost, the languages of all those present were united, not in form, but in expounding catholic, universal doctrine that was understood by all simultaneously. Seen from this perspective, the diversity of languages, although it arose through human pride, is in fact an invitation to the Holy Spirit to bring about a unity of faith. Bede’s famous opening image of the five languages of Britain as paired with the five books of the Pentateuch thus carries real significance for the entire project of the Historia ecclesiastica.

Bede’s Historia ecclesiastica is arguably more famous for its account of Cædmon and his miraculous start as a poet (IV.24), or for its report of the Synod of Whitby and the resolution of the Easter controversy (III.25), but the Historia ecclesiastica is suffused with an awareness of language as a powerful force in the world. Bede’s views on language are intimately bound up with his views on world history, theology, and what we would now call international relations. In all cases, the question of linguistic difference, whether between distinct languages or between written and spoken forms of a single language, is fundamental to Bede’s treatment of his material. In Bede’s account, being able to navigate linguistic difference bestows power and contributes to the accumulation of cultural capital.

In the early eighth century, Nechtan, king of the Picts, wrote to Abbot Ceolfrith for guidance when he wanted to convert his people to Roman practice in the observance of Easter, promising

that they would adhere to Roman custom as best they could learn it, being “so far distant from
the Roman people and their language” (tam longe a Romanorum loquella et natione segregati;
V.21). The same might have been said of the Northumbrians themselves not very long before, for
the Northumbrians had been just as far removed from the Roman people as the Picts until the
journeys of Benedict Biscop to Rome a century earlier. Indeed, their access to the rites and
writings of the Roman Church rested on the linguistic abilities of certain ecclesiastics, and the
evangelizing mission that had brought them into the fold required the Northumbrians to do
precisely this same favour for the Picts by making the teachings of the Church available to
them.  

Bede records a complete version of the letter Ceolfrith sent back to Nechtan, and it may
be that Bede wrote the original letter itself. This would mean that he was involved in fairly
high-level diplomatic affairs in Northumbria.

In spite of this episode with the Picts, the most prominent gentes in contact with the Anglo-
Saxons in the Historia ecclesiastica are the Irish and the Franks, both brought to the fore by the
monastic and dynastic ties they maintained with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The Irish brought
both spiritual and secular learning to the English (III.27), and more than one Northumbrian king
had experience with the Irish language either through a sojourn in Ireland (Oswald in III.3 and
Oswiu in III.25) or thanks to family connections (Aldfrith in IV.26 and V.15). The Anglo-
Saxons not only accepted Frankish interpreters for the Augustinian mission (I.25) and Frankish
or Frankish-consecrated bishops (Agilbert and Wine in III.7 and Wilfrid in III.28), but their
nobles married into Frankish royalty (Æthelberht and Bertha in I.25) and entered Frankish
monasteries (Sæthryth and Æthelburh, among others, in III.8).

In these situations of contact, Bede is often concerned to make clear who is able to translate for
whom when the need arises, and his accounts also touch on the cultural capital built up by those

46 Michelle P. Brown, The British Library Guide to Writing and Scripts: History and Techniques (Toronto:
University of Toronto Press, 1998), 42–5, notes the frequency with which the development of written vernaculars
occurs alongside an evangelizing mission.


48 For Aldfrith, see also Bede’s Historia abbatum, chapter 15, in Charles Plummer, ed., Venerabilis Baedae Opera
who are able to negotiate these boundaries.\textsuperscript{49} When Bishop Aidan wishes to preach in Northumbria but requires an interpreter, Bede tells us that it was a very beautiful spectacle \textit{(pulcherrimo saepe spectaculo contigit)} to watch King Oswald translating for his ealdormen and thegns (III.3). Oswald has accrued linguistic capital for himself through his ability to exercise the linguistic skills appropriate for the “market” or “field” in which he operates.\textsuperscript{50} In the context of the seventh-century attempt to complete the conversion of Northumbria to Christianity, when the Irish exercised great influence, the vernacular language of greatest conversational utility besides English was Irish. In another field, however, the requisite skill might, more mundanely, be English itself, as when the Frankish Agilbert is made bishop of the West Saxons but begins with his “barbarous speech” \textit{(barbarae loquellae)} to grate on the sensibilities and patience of King Cenwealh, “who only knew the Saxon language” \textit{(qui Saxonum tantum linguam nouerat)}. In response, Cenwealh brings in Wine, an Anglo-Saxon who, though consecrated in Gaul, can certainly be expected to speak the language of the West Saxons (III.7):

\begin{quote}
Cuius eruditionem atque industriam uidens rex roguit eum accepta ibi sede episcopali suae gentis manere pontificem; qui precibus eius adnuens, multis annis eidem genti sacerdotali iure praefuit. Tandem rex, qui Saxonum tantum linguam nouerat, pertaeus barbarae loquellae, subintroductus in prouinciam alium suae linguae episcopum, vocabulo Uini, et ipsum in Gallia ordinatum.

(Seeing his erudition and industry, the king asked him to accept the episcopal seat and remain as bishop of his people, and agreeing to his requests, Agilbert presided over that same people for many years as bishop. At last, the king, who only knew the Saxon language and was wearied with Agilbert’s barbarous speech,


secretly introduced into the province another bishop of his own
language, called Wine, who had also been consecrated in Gaul.)

This episode is somewhat perplexing because Bede gives remarkably little detail on the origins of this rift. If Augustine used Frankish interpreters on his second attempt to enter Anglo-Saxon territory and if Anglo-Saxon clerics could go to Gaul for training and consecration, then the two languages cannot have been completely incomprehensible, unless Bede was mistaken in his account of Augustine’s mission. It is also suggestive that wealth generally carries the sense of “slave” or “foreigner,” whereas wine, the name of Cenwealh’s deliverer, has connotations of friendship and protection. So, between Cenwealh and Agilbert, the problem may have been more to do with expectations about accent, fluency, and knowledge of cultural norms than any real inability to communicate. The telling phrase is “wearied with Agilbert’s barbarous speech,” which suggests that Cenwealh may have felt that the effort required to communicate was too burdensome. Although his irritation over the perceived difficulty of communication is certainly still current, the contemporary concept of communication as a “two-way street” between both employer and employee does not seem to have factored in Cenwealh’s decisions here. I would argue, however, that Bede perceived the relationship between the king and his bishop more along these lines than Cenwealh seems to have done. Bede does not comment on Agilbert’s language palette, but he does note that Cenwealh spoke only Old English. Moreover, his use of subintroduxit, rather than the more neutral introduxit, suggests that whatever the justification for Cenwealh’s frustration with Agilbert’s speech, Bede does not wholly approve of Cenwealh’s method of rectifying matters. It is true that Agilbert comes off looking a bit flat-footed when his lack of fluency in Old English again creates complications at the Synod of Whitby when he has

51 The Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks, for example, provides a framework for the government and other employers to use in assessing the language and communication skills of potential employees who are “newcomers” to Canada, but experts in language assessment and training agree that what much of what newcomers must learn is either to do with cultural norms in communication or part of learning to negotiate their employers’ expectations, which are often different for newcomers to Canada. (Where a linguistic error made by a native Canadian is simply an error, the same mistake from a newcomer to Canada may be taken as a sign of a fundamental lack of mastery.)
to ask Wilfrid to speak on his behalf because, as he puts it, “[Wilfrid] can better and more clearly explain what we believe in the English language than I can through an interpreter.”

This concern with the accuracy of translation is familiar to all who have read Bede’s account of the poet Cædmon, but at the Synod of Whitby, the situation is less clear-cut. Agilbert’s linguistic poverty does not prevent the Roman faction from carrying the day, and rightly so, in Bede’s eyes. In other words, an individual’s linguistic capital (or lack thereof) does not necessarily extend or diminish the legitimacy of an entire faction when it comes to matters of doctrine, such as were at stake at the Synod of Whitby. In fact, Agilbert’s standing in the Roman faction seems to offer him a redemption that cannot be extended to Cenwealh. Both men are handicapped by their lack of appropriate linguistic skills, but Agilbert, in an echo of Job and other Old Testament figures, “died old and full of days” (senex ac plenus dierum obit) after he returned, offended, to Gaul (III.7). Thus, we see that the onus is not only on others to be able to communicate with the Anglo-Saxons in English, but on the Anglo-Saxons to be conversant with the languages surrounding their own. Bede shows no discomfort with the idea of expressing spiritual matters in English; indeed, he praises Cædmon’s ability to produce sweet and moving poems in the English language (uerbis poetici maxima suavitate et compunctione compositis in sua, id est Anglorum, lingua) from holy Scripture (IV.24), no less than Æthelberht’s secular use of the English language in providing laws for the Anglo-Saxons in their own tongue (II.5). Bede writes to Ecgbert that he has been preparing English translations of the Pater Noster and Creed for the benefit of both the laity and those clerics or monks who are not well versed in Latin, and Cuthbert’s Epistola de obitu Bedae claims that at the time of his death, Bede had been working on English translations of part of the Gospel of John and selections from Isidore’s De natura rerum.

So, the English language does not seem to have carried any stigma, in and of itself, but the inability to reach across a linguistic gap does. Participation in this textual community was, for Bede, linked to the apostolic mission to spread the Faith to speakers of all languages throughout the earth.

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52 “Et ille melius ac manifestius ipsa lingua Anglorum, quam ego per interpretem, potest explanare quae sentimus.” (HE III.25)

53 Bede’s Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum is edited in Plummer, Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica, I.405–23, with the relevant passage appearing on page 409. Cuthbert’s Epistola ad obitu Bedae is edited in Colgrave and Mynors, 580–7, with the relevant passage at 582.
Even when he is not writing of situations of contact between speakers of different languages, Bede displays a more theoretical interest in language. The frequency with which toponyms are discussed in the *Historia ecclesiastica* is well known, and Bede’s interest in establishing such etymologies is not out of keeping with his extensive exegetical writings, especially his interest in Hebrew and its significance for an Anglo-Saxon understanding of scripture and doctrine. Language is, for Bede, a touchstone of interpretive power, able to convey fundamental information about concepts and places. The Anglo-Saxon history that he recounts in the *Historia ecclesiastica* establishes itself above layers of other languages used on the island of Britain. Typical passages are the ones where Bede informs the reader that, for example, the West Saxons were once known as the Gewisse (III.7) or that although the English know the City of Legions (Chester) by the name Legacæstir, it is more correctly called Carlegion by the Britons (II.2). The history of the island and of the Anglo-Saxons is always superimposed on the remnants of other languages or peoples.

Ian Wood argues for the importance for Bede’s work of a particular royal site on the lower Tyne, while Nicholas Howe has long advocated the importance of geography in our understanding of Bede and his writings. In fact, both of these positions were foreshadowed in Peter Hunter Blair’s argument about Bede’s seemingly faulty etymology of Old English *Streanæshalh*, which refers to Whitby. Bede notes that the name corresponds to the Latin *sinus fari*, or “the bay of the lighthouse,” as Colgrave and Mynors render it. Elsewhere, Bede uses

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57 Colgrave and Mynors, 298–9, n. 2, refer to Bede’s “attempted explanation,” in spite of which the meaning of the name is uncertain.
farus to refer to a lamp or chandelier,\textsuperscript{58} and Hunter Blair suggests that Bede’s Latin equivalent is in fact a clever piece of exegesis more accurately reflected in the translation “the bosom of light,” a phrase that carries several layers of meaning in the context. It labels Whitby as a cradle of learning in seventh-century Northumbria—the focus of Hunter Blair’s article—and it also refers to the shining necklace worn by Hild’s mother in a dream recounted in the chapter of the Historia ecclesiastica devoted to Hild’s life (IV.23). Moreover, the “bosom of light” has a physical realization in the mother’s role as the nurturer of Hild, who served in turn as the overseer and nurturer of the monastery responsible for so much light, both in terms of general learning and for its role in aligning the English church with Roman practice by hosting the Synod of Whitby in 664.\textsuperscript{59}

Out of the more than twenty instances in the Historia ecclesiastica where Bede glosses or interprets names, the most frequent formulations are “id est” (Heruteu id est Insula Cerui, III.24) and “quod lingua eroum significat” (Alcluith quod lingua eorum significat petram Cluith, I.12) or similar phrases. The mention of Streanaesshalh is the only time when Bede uses the more overtly exegetical phrase, “quod interpretatur,” suggesting that Bede was making a conscious choice to reflect a more exegetical focus in that particular passage.\textsuperscript{60} Hunter Blair’s argument demonstrates not only that geography is important for the narrative events that Bede relates, but that the way that one talks about geography is important.

Linguistic diversity is an essential part of Bede’s theological views and, in particular, of his understanding of the overarching unity of the Church because the miracle of the Pentecost could not have occurred without the earlier division of the languages at the Tower of Babel. As we have already seen, the fact that Bede views linguistic diversity as an element of the fundamental unity or “catholicness” of the Church does not preclude his recognition of the dynamics of power between speakers (or writers) of different languages, nor of the ways in which the balance of power is affected by the varying abilities of those speakers to communicate in languages other


\textsuperscript{59} Hunter Blair, “Whitby,” 7–12.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 11.
than their own. Just as he credits those who have fluency in languages other than their own
native tongues, Bede carves out a similarly multilingual space for his own exegesis and, as in his
discussion of Streanæshalh, his own etymologizing and interpretation of geography. In this case,
it is spiritual stature that is enhanced by the ability to move seamlessly between languages, as
Bede’s shift to Latin opens up a series of interpretations of the name that would otherwise have
remained hidden from his readers.

Language has theoretical force in the Historia ecclesiastica not only through its exegetical
potency but arising from the relationship between the written and spoken forms of English, a
duality that Bede exploits at several points in the narrative. Cædmon’s relationship with the
scriptural texts that inspire his songs is channeled through the summaries or interpretations by
the monks at Wearmouth-Jarrow. From these aural mediations of written sources he composes
his songs, but we have no record that these poems were ever written down. Indeed, the only
written text that survives with a firm link to Cædmon is his Hymn, which depended solely on the
command of the angel, not, according to Bede’s account, on any written source. The
transmission of the text of Cædmon’s Hymn has long been understood as rich with continuing
interactions between written and spoken modes. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe argued for a
“persisting residual orality” in the reading and copying of Old English poetry and that the textual
environment is fundamental to the expression of this residual orality: When transmitted as a
gloss on Bede’s Latin paraphrase, the text of the Hymn seemed to show very little variation, but
when the Hymn is incorporated into the Old English version of the Historia ecclesiastica, there
seemed to be more flexibility.61 More recently, study of the entire manuscript tradition has
revealed extensive contamination between the different versions of the Hymn, and Daniel
O’Donnell notes that the results do not match the prevailing model of oral transmission.62

A much clearer example of the juggling of the written and spoken forms of English occurs in the
account of the miraculous cure of the mute and scabby young man, effected by John of Beverley,
Bishop of Hexham (V.2). In the healing of the scabby youth, which leaves him both with the

61 Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1990), 6; for a discussion of Cædmon’s Hymn and its transmission history, see pp. 23–46.
2005), 187–90. See pp. 98–118 on manuscript filiation and transmission.
power of speech and with clear skin, language appears as a potent force in its own right, not merely as a means of acquiring greater spiritual insight or in terms of the abilities of speakers to accrue linguistic capital by distinguishing their skills and fluencies from those of other speakers. In this episode, the power of the miracle lies in the tension between the written and spoken forms of English. The passage is quoted in full, and major stages in the cure are marked with underlining:

Erat autem in uilla non longe posita quidam adulescens mutus, episcopo notus (nam saepius ante illum percipiendae elimosynae gratia uenire consueuerat), qui ne unum quidem sermonem umquam profari poterat, sed et scabiem tantam ac furfures habebat in capite, ut nil umquam capillorum ei in superiore parte capitis nasci ualeret; tantum in circuitu horridi crines stare uidebantur. Hunc ergo adduci praecepit episcopus, et ei in conseptis eiusdem mansionis paruum tugurium fieri, in quo manens cotidianam ab eis stipem acciperet. Cumque una Quadragesimae esset impleta septimana, sequente dominica iussit ad se intrare pauperem; ingresso linguam proferre ex ore ac sibi ostendere iussit, et adprehendens eum de mento, signum sanctae crucis linguae eius impressit. Quam signatam reuocare in os, et loqui illum praecipit, “Dicito” inquiens “aliquod uerbum; dicitio gae,” quod est lingua Anglorum uerbum adfirmandi et consentiendi, id est “etiam.” Dixit ille statim, soluto uinculo linguae, quod iussus erat. Addidit episcopus nomina litterarum: “Dicito A;” dixit ille “A.” “Dicito B;” dixit ille et hoc. Cumque singula litterarum nomina dicente episcopo responderet, addidit et syllabas ac uerba dicenda illi proponere. Et cum in omnibus consequenter responderet, praecepit eum sententias longiores dicere, et fecit; neque ultra cessauit tota die illa et nocte sequente, quantum uigilare potuit, ut ferunt qui praesentes fuere, loqui alicuq et arcana suae cognitionis ac uoluntatis, quod numquam antea potuit, aliis ostendere, in similitudinem illius diu claudi, qui curatus ab apostolis Petro et
Iohanne exiliens stetit et ambulabat, et intruit cum illis in Templum, ambulans et exiliens et laudans Dominum, gaudens nimirum uti officio pedum, quo tanto erat tempore destitutus. Cuius sanitati congaudens episcopus praecepit medico etiam sanandae scabredini capitis eius curam adhibere. Fecit ut iusserat, et iuuante benedictione ac precibus antistitis, nata est cum sanitate cutis uenusta species capillorum, factusque est iuuenis limpidus uultu et loquella promtus, capillis pulcherrime crispis, qui ante fuerat deformis pauper et mutus. Sicque de percepta laetatus sospitate, offerente etiam ei episcopo ut in sua familia manendi locum acciperet, magis domum reuersus est.

(There was in a village not far away a certain mute youth known to the bishop (for he often used to come before him in order to receive alms), who had never been able to utter even a single word. But he also had so much mange and scabbliness on his head that no hair was ever able to grow on the top part of his head; only rough hairs were seen to stand around it. So, the bishop ordered this youth to be brought and a little hut to be built for him within the enclosure of the same dwelling in which the youth might receive from them his daily alms. And after one week of Lent had passed, on the Sunday following, the bishop commanded the poor man to come in to him, and when he had come in, to put his tongue out of his mouth and show it to him. And taking him by the chin, he imprinted the sign of the holy cross on his tongue, which having been marked, he commanded him to put back in his mouth and to say something, saying, “Say some word; say *gae,*” which is the word of affirming and consenting in English, that is, “yes.” The youth said immediately what he had been commanded, the bonds of his tongue having been loosed. The bishop added the names of the letters: “Say A;” the youth said, “A.” “Say B;” he said this also. And when he had repeated the names of each letter after the
bishop, the bishop added also syllables and words for the youth to say. And when he had responded to all of them in order, he commanded him to say longer sentences, and he did it. Nor did he afterwards cease all that day and the night following, as long as he could stay awake, as those who were present report, to talk and to reveal to others the secrets of his thoughts and wishes, which he had never been able to do before. This in similitude of that one who had long been lame who, having been healed by the apostles Peter and John, stood, leaping, and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising the Lord, rejoicing greatly to have the use of his feet, of which he had been robbed for so long. Rejoicing with the youth in his health, the bishop commanded a physician also to dedicate himself to heal the scabiness of his head. He did as he had been commanded, and with the blessing and prayers of the bishop aiding him, a pleasing appearance of hairs grew along with the health of his skin, and the youth became clear in countenance and quick of speech, with most beautifully curled hairs, he who had previously been unsightly, poor, and mute. And so, happy about his newfound health, the youth preferred to return home, even though the bishop offered to him that he might take a place and remain in his household.

Although the young man’s outward appearance is also affected, the bulk of the narrative is devoted to the loosening of his tongue. The only information Bede gives on the subject of the healing of the young man’s skin is that the bishop has entrusted the youth to the care of a physician and that the bishop has at some point blessed and prayed for him. There is no discussion of how long this process took, nor how deeply the bishop was involved in the outward healing; rather, the focus of his energies, at least in Bede’s version of the story, seems to have been on the healing of the young man’s powers of speech.

The miracle begins when John of Beverley makes the sign of the cross and commands the young man to say gae, which Bede calls the “word of affirming and consenting.” It is not entirely clear to what the young man is meant to be assenting—to the power of the sign of the cross or perhaps
that he has faith to be healed or faith in the church—but as soon as he is prepared to give his
assent, the bonds of his tongue are loosed to allow the rest of the miracle to proceed. This
additional detail makes a notable contrast with another example of the use of the sign of the cross
to produce speech, where the bonds of the tongue are loosed as soon as the sign is made without
mentioning any assenting from the subject.63

Significantly, a word of “affirming and consenting” falls under the heading of *vox* in late Antique
Latin grammars, and this suggests a possible explanation of the bishop’s need to make the sign
of the cross. Given the lengthy and detailed account that follows, the *signum crucis* does not
seem to be functioning as a kind of magical gesture that provides an instantaneous cure. Instead,
Irina Dumitrescu suggests that it has a larger symbolism: rather than being simply a sign of the
Cross, the *signum crucis* is, here, standing in for any such sign so as to introduce the youth “into
a world of signification,” which he will need to master in order to learn to speak.64 So, the word
of affirming and consenting may itself signify a readiness to enter this world.

After he says *gae*, the youth follows it with increasingly large linguistic units, from letters to
syllables, and finally to simple and then more complicated sentences and expressions. This
follows the structural pattern in written Latin grammars, including its opening with that small
word of assent. In his *Ars maior*, Donatus defines *vox* as an audible striking of air (*aer ictus,
sensibilis auditu*), and in particular, a *vox articulata* is a *vox* that can be written down with letters
(*litteris conprehendi potest*). The Latin grammars that were most influential in the Middle Ages
all begin with the *vox* or *vox articulata* before moving on to *littera*, *syllaba*, and longer units of
speech, exactly the progression through which John of Beverley guides the mute youth.65


64 Irina Dumitrescu, “The Instructional Moment in Anglo-Saxon Literature” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2009), 155–7. I am grateful to Irina, who kindly shared with me the relevant portion of her dissertation after learning that I was also working on this episode.

In truth, there is no reason why the youth must learn the alphabet in order to learn to speak. In the twenty-first century, we are accustomed, as adolescents and adults, to learn languages through reading as much as through speaking, often working on the two together if it is a living language. By learning how to pronounce the letters of the alphabet, we learn to read the simple phrases with which we begin to speak the language, but there are fewer obvious inducements to structure this man’s learning of spoken Old English according to the structure of a written grammar, let alone a written grammar of another language altogether. Moreover, while it seems a reasonable surmise, it is no more than a surmise that the language being taught is Old English because the only specific linguistic units that are explicitly named (the letters <a> and <b>) are not sufficient to distinguish between the Latin alphabet and the Latin alphabet as adapted for Old English. Even if we assume that the youth was learning to speak Old English, the alphabet is still problematic: While Old English cannot hope to rival Modern English for its illogical relationship between orthography and pronunciation—few languages could!—ambiguities remain. When the bishop commanded the youth to repeat the names of the letters of the alphabet, was he really just having the youth repeat the names of the letters, rather than the sounds they represent? More to the point, we have no indication of how the bishop handled the pairs of palatal and non-palatal phonemes represented graphically by <c> and <g>. (As we shall see in Chapter 4, it was precisely these ambiguities that later medieval readers of English sought to overcome in the so-called AB language used in some early manuscripts of the Ancrene Wisse.) Nor do we have any way of knowing whether or not the bishop distinguished between thorn and eth. We have no reason to believe that the Anglo-Saxons differentiated them in pronunciation as consistently as speakers of Old Norse did, but these two graphs existed side-by-side as distinct elements of the alphabet. In mathematical terms, there is no well-defined mapping between the elements of written Old English (the graphemes) and the elements of spoken Old English (the phonemes). Nevertheless, it is the written form of the language that supplies the structure for the youth’s acquisition of the spoken form of Old English.

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66 See pp. 145–6 in Chapter 4.
In exploiting the relationship between the written and spoken forms of English, Bede is grappling with a different kind of linguistic boundary than in many other parts of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, but the fact that the process of learning to speak English is mapped onto the structure of a written Latin grammar returns us to an examination of the boundaries between distinct languages. In this episode, Bede shows one way that it is possible to conceptualize English in terms of Latin, as Melinda Menzer has demonstrated that Ælfric does in his *Grammar*. 67 Similarly, as we have seen, the linguistic distance between Old Irish and Latin seems to have coloured the lexical, morphological, and palaeographic usage within Hiberno-Latin. The *Auraicept na nÉces*, an early Irish primer on versification, includes an exhaustive set of paradigms for all conceivable prepositional phrases with nouns in all three grammatical genders, in both Irish and Latin. 68 In this text, the Latin grammatical context by which it is framed inspires a fresh exploration of the possibilities of the vernacular language without in any ways constraining it to adhere to the conventions of Latin paradigms. 69 On the contrary, an episode like Bede’s account of the scabby youth should serve as a reminder not only that Latin provides a matrix for the education in English, but that English provides a framework for conceptualizing Latin. In the context of a work as rich in multilingualism as the *Historia ecclesiastica*, there is as much and more reason for understanding the youth’s instruction in English via Latin grammar as an example of a way in which Latin may be put to the service of Old English. Certainly, the aesthetic norms of Old English literature exert some influence over Latin in the macaronic lines at the end of the *Phoenix* or in some of Alcuin’s and Aldhelm’s Latin writings, where it is clear that Latin is “capable of participating in the patterns of Old English alliteration.” 70


The significance of the Cædmon episode is similarly rooted in its straddling of both the distinction between the Latin of scripture and the Old English of Cædmon’s songs and the distinction between the written text of scripture and the oral performance of Cædmon’s songs. While acknowledging the difficulties of translation, Bede nevertheless praises the “sweet and moving songs” composed by Cædmon on scriptural topics—in fact, the difficulties Bede chooses to highlight are not related to Cædmon’s telling of scripture in English, but to any attempt by Bede, himself a highly skilled linguist, to represent Cædmon’s Old English verse in Latin. Cædmon’s use of scripture is mediated by the monks of Whitby, who interpret the Latin text aloud for him. Again, Bede makes no criticism of the translating, summarizing, or possibly more thoroughgoing interpreting that goes on at this stage. To convey the Word to the world, whether by explaining the content and meaning of scriptural passages to a poet who cannot read them for himself or by composing verses that will draw the spirits of many men (multorum saepe animi) to God in their own tongue, is a responsibility on the faithful that was modeled by the apostles at the Pentecost.

The performative nature of Cædmon’s feats accords with Bede’s own understanding of the miracle of the Pentecost. Bede faced criticism for his commentary on the Pentecost because he suggested that the miracle might have been a hearing miracle as much as a speaking miracle. That is, Bede had quoted in his Expositio Actuum Apostolorum from Rufinus’ Latin translation of a homily by Gregory of Nazianzen to suggest that the miracle of the Pentecost might have been that each hearer perceived the speech of whichever apostle was speaking at the time as if it were in the hearer’s native language. Likewise, at least according to Bede, John of Beverley accesses his knowledge of written Latin grammar to enable a performative, spoken cure in Old English, but one that is nevertheless structured according to the dictates of a written genre. John is vested with ecclesiastical authority, like Christ’s apostles, and as they did, he draws on the redemptive and paradoxically unifying powers of multilingualism to heal an individual under his care.

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71 The passage is quoted and translated in Dekker, “Pentecost and Linguistic Self-Consciousness,” 353. For a broader discussion of Bede’s interpretation of Pentecost and the performative significance of the Cædmon story, see Dekker, 352–56.
Both the Cædmon episode and the healing of the mute young man show a symbiotic relationship in which orality draws on textual resources and simultaneously offers a new life to elements of written culture. As in other passages from the *Historia ecclesiastica*, it is the tension of linguistic difference that pushes Bede’s narrative forward, but in this episode, it is the tension arising from the interaction between the spoken and written forms of Old English, coupled with the pairing of Old English with Latin, that yields the miraculous power to heal the mute young man’s powers of speech. By using the form of a written Latin grammar to structure his account of the young man’s mastery of speech, Bede gives textual definition to a seemingly non-textual event. Bede’s interest in Ezra, as witnessed by his hefty commentary *In Ezram*, may also stem from a fascination with the play between textual and apparently extra-textual activity. Ezra was a priest and scribe who was given permission to lead some of the Israelite exiles from captivity, after which he taught the law and established magistrates over the Israelites. Depending on the specific task he is performing at a given moment, Ezra is variously described in the Vulgate as Ezra the Priest, Ezra the Scribe, or Ezra the Priest and Scribe: Ezra the Scribe is asked to bring the *book* of the law of Moses, but Ezra the Priest brings the law. It is Ezra the Scribe who ascends the podium to read aloud and, later, interprets for them the *words* of the law, but Ezra the Priest and Scribe who exhorts the people at the end of his first reading. Bede similarly claimed for himself a dual role as textual authority and proponent of religious reform, and he may even have filled the role of scribe in copying out emendations he himself had instigated while working on one of the sister pandects to the Codex Amiatinus.

As we have seen, it is important not to over-emphasize the significance of the choice of the Roman observance at the Synod of Whitby because a tradition of cooperation and collaboration

72 Ezra (I Esdrae) 7–10; Nehemiah (II Esdrae) 8, 12.
74 Bede’s letter to Ecgbert deals with the reforms Bede felt to be necessary in the Northumbrian church. See also Scott DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), xxx.
between strongholds of Roman and Celtic observance continued well after the Synod. Michelle Brown has demonstrated the ways in which the monastic and larger theological environment helped to shape textual activities in Northumbria (or, more broadly, what she calls a seventh-century *Irische schriftprovinz*), but we must consider also the political and linguistic setting. We have a remarkably clear picture in Northumbria of the close interactions between powerful royal and monastic figures, from a king who convened and ruled on a synod or one who translated for an evangelizing bishop, to the monk who may have done diplomatic work for a king and those who gave home and education to exiled royalty. Bede shows particular sensitivity to the multilingual nature of Anglo-Saxon society, especially in his own Northumbria, and his recognition of the political and Bourdieusian ramifications of language use is always tied to his theological views on language. From the complicated set of varying linguistic fields in or connected with Northumbria, Bede not only weaves an account of the specific people and occurrences that appear explicitly in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, but he also gives linguistic diversity and the Anglo-Saxon ability to negotiate linguistic boundaries a theological significance in their fulfillment of the promise of the Pentecost miracle.

Bede’s account of the miraculous cure of the mute young man also relies on the bishop’s successful negotiation of the boundaries of oral and textual roles, and it is only the bishop’s ability to make those transitions that allows him to structure the young man’s instruction according to the progression of a written grammar. One appeal of such an approach might simply be that it provides a tidy way of ordering the story, a story that is not necessarily meant to reflect factually accurate details so much as the power of the bishop to bring about the cure, whatever the means. If, on the other hand, this account is taken to represent a theory of language or language learning espoused by Bede, then the telling could be understand as accurate or “true”

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76 Éamonn O’Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2005), 56–7, not only provides specific examples of collaboration between “Roman” Wearmouth-Jarrow and “Celtic” Lindisfarne, but states concisely the fundamental argument of his entire book, namely, that the “Roman versus Celtic” paradigm must be abandoned with reference to the Ruthwell Cross.

77 Brown, *Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age*, 54.

without having to be what we would call factually accurate. That is, if it reflects an underlying conception of what was going on during the miraculous healing, then the account given by Bede is merely displaying what he sees as the fundamental reality of the miraculous occurrence, whether or not that fundamental reality was superficially apparent during the course of the miracle.

More importantly, this episode provides a link between Bede’s interest in reform and redemption, on the one hand, and his zealous textual scholarship, on the other. For Bede, the two pursuits cannot be separated. His understanding of the miracle of the Pentecost places a redemptive burden on Bede (and every other Christian) to extend the reach of God’s language, which transcends human languages, to those who are still outside the fold, but in order to do this, it is necessary to have the ability to reach across linguistic boundaries. Similarly, Bede’s concern to reform the Northumbrian church cannot escape the need for the laity and the religious either to possess the requisite linguistic skills to access religious texts or to be given access to those texts through the linguistic abilities of another, as when Bede sets out to translate the Pater Noster and the Creed. This means that Bede’s textual scholarship must not take place in a vacuum, but must always be focused outward. In other words, this theological position compels Bede to participate in, and shape, a textual community. Just as he binds up his ecclesiastical history with a correspondence between linguistic divisions and textual divisions, opening the Historia with the five languages spoken in Britain and closing it, in an envelope pattern, with a list of his works that includes Historiam ecclesiasticam nostrae insulae ac gentis in libris V, Bede links his textual activities to the effort to draw the inhabitants of Britain, or any other land, into a community within the Faith.
Chapter 2
Crafting a Textual Kingdom in Wessex

From Bede’s sense that multilingualism enables communal engagement and redemptive textual activities, we move now to one of the most concentrated textual programs since the abbacy of Ceolfrith at Wearmouth-Jarrow (690–716), during which Bede flourished. For Alfred, this program of multilingual textual production and use was again centred in a redemptive sense of the pastoral responsibilities of a king over the populace, but we have less material on the basis of which to hypothesize about how Æthelstan did or did not conceive of his own textual activities as a concerted program or as fitting within the framework of an overarching ideology.¹ I would like, nevertheless, to suggest that Æthelstan was conscious of the significance of his textual activities and that he carried out these activities in the enduring context of the Alfredian modes of textuality.

Where it was a Northumbrian monastery that excelled in textual production in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the textual program initiated by Alfred was securely based in Wessex and Mercia. By the late ninth century, the West Saxon kingdom showed far more stability than the other kingdoms in England, or even Europe. Though certainly harassed by Viking incursions, the West Saxon royal line seems to have been less troubled by internal feuds and dynastic rivalries than most other Anglo-Saxon and European kingdoms were at the time.² What rivalries there were in the West Saxon house were largely confined to the one branch of the house where succession had been confined since the days of Ecgbert (802–839).³ The West Saxon courts of several generations of kings probably could not have provided a haven for so many Insular and Continental scholars and refugees if this had not been the case, and it was these cosmopolitan court circles that provided the manpower to carry out the composition, translation, and copying necessary for the textual programs of Alfred and Æthelstan.

Alfred is justly famous for the texts produced during his reign, but establishing his personal involvement in this output is difficult when the participation of the scholars gathered at his court, including Asser, Plegmund, Wærferth, and John the Old Saxon, must have been crucial. The texts that are generally considered to have been translated by Alfred or with Alfred’s input are the *Pastoral Care*,⁴ the *Soliloquies*,⁵ the *Boethius*,⁶ and the Prose Psalms.⁷ Those which Alfred seems to have commissioned from others include the translation of Gregory’s *Dialogues*,⁸ the Old English *Orosius*,⁹ and the Old English *Bede*.¹⁰ The first installment of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is also thought to have been recorded at this time.¹¹ Malcolm Godden has rightly called attention to the difficulty of accepting that a king who was, according to contemporary accounts, incapable of reading either English or Latin for most of his life could have composed the translations that have been ascribed to him in a tradition that extends back to the tenth century,¹² but Janet Bately has argued convincingly that there was probably a single mind behind

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⁹ Janet Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, EETS s.s. 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1980).


at least the *Pastoral Care*, *Boethius*, *Soliloquies*, and *Prose Psalms*. While the question of authorship may prompt intriguing and productive avenues of research, we should be wary of excluding texts from a discussion of Alfredian Wessex based on this criterion alone. There is no need to establish definitively any one author for a given text when we are discussing textual community. A textual community functions by enabling or enriching the textual activities, including the production of texts, of a wider circle than any one individual who may serve as a lightning rod for scholarly critique. In this chapter, all of these texts will be treated as Alfredian in that they are linked, to varying degrees and in different ways, to Alfred’s program of translation and edification and thus to his vision for a textual kingdom.

A noteworthy element of the prodigious textual output of Alfred’s reign is the fact that it all occurred simultaneously with increasing conflict with the Vikings and with West Saxon attempts to gain more control over Anglo-Saxon territories. Alfred was the first king to style himself “King of the Anglo-Saxons,” and we know that Æthelstan also styled himself this way, although a full conquest of all Anglo-Saxon territory by the West Saxon house did not occur until 954 when Eadred, Alfred’s youngest grandson, finally conquered the Viking kingdom of York. Alfred’s reign saw three major Danish invasions of Wessex: 870–871 (including the death of Alfred’s third brother, King Æthelred, who was succeeded by Alfred); 876–879 (with the surprise attack on Chippenham at the end of 877, followed by Alfred’s trudge through the forests and marshes, the fortification of Athelney, and the baptism of Guthrum and thirty other Viking leaders with Alfred as godfather); and 892–896 (given a detailed account in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* recording several years of raids, pursuits, and sea-fights after the Danish army crossed from the Continent back to Kent).

With the Vikings never far away, this might seem like a strange time for Alfred to be so resolutely focused on texts, but Alfred was able to use texts as the vehicle by which he countered

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15 Sturdy, 200–205.
the influence of persistent invasions and established a literary and administrative culture of literacy and stability within Wessex that also helped him to consolidate West Saxon influence or direct control over other parts of Anglo-Saxon England. It may be that “the sense of insecurity ingrained by watching his brothers die one by one and his kingdom suffer repeated Viking attacks, made him uniquely well placed to take risks simultaneously literary, religious, and social.”

Asser writes of Alfred guiding the ship of his kingdom with the sailors replaced by bishops, ealdormen, reeves, and his “dearest” thegns, and it is through these ecclesiastical and administrative officials that Alfred attempts to extend the culture of his court circle to the wider kingdom. David Pratt characterizes local acts of reading as projecting “West Saxon court theatre, conducted at a distance by reading texts alone.”

Some of the inspiration for this textually based approach came from Old Testament figures or from scholars who had previously looked to Old Testament models. I have argued elsewhere that Bede’s exegesis of the prophet Ezra could have influenced Alfred’s interest in the Old Testament and in a particular brand of Psalter exegesis. Bede’s commentary *In Ezram* could also have emphasized for Alfred the importance for a good ruler of self-awareness and the drive to reform imperfect institutions and individuals. Alfred’s interest in Old Testament figures also drew on Carolingian models.

In Chapter 1, we saw the frequent connections between royal power and monastic power or between royal power and textual power in seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria. Alfred, on the other hand, calculatedly used textual activity, not as the beneficiary of an already established political power, but as a force from which to generate and reinforce political power. The push for

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16 Discenza, 121.


reinvigorated educational and literary programs may also have been intended to boost morale and loyalty to the West Saxon house in the face of continuing Viking invasions. A strong sense of responsibility for his subjects also nudged Alfred in the direction of textual activity in the form of his translation and education programs. One of the unifying themes of the texts that are generally accepted as Alfredian is their concern with pastoral oversight and with the attributes of an effective Christian king. Alfred, like Bede, worked on the assumption that it was possible to bring about redemption or to lead people to redemption by textual means.

Alfred’s sense of his own personal sin and of the role of penitence in the lives of individuals and, by extension, kingdoms likely contributed to his textual activities, too. In the context of Christian doctrine and practice, such feelings are frequently conditioned to be textually mediated, especially through the repetition of the Psalter not only in the Divine Office, but in the much slower cycle of the readings at Mass. According to Asser, Alfred entered psalms which impressed him into the *libellus* that he carried with him “day and night,” and he also visited churches at night to pray. Alfred is also said to have carried his relics of saints with him, and both Carolingian models and a devotional response to his extended illnesses in the form of prayer and almsgiving seem to have inspired much of Alfred’s personal piety.

In addition to all of these reasons, there are practical considerations that likely favoured textual means of forming, consolidating, and communicating within communities. In an era when fireside chats could not be broadcast over radio, textual dissemination is an excellent way of reaching large numbers of people, although it seems clear that the administration of a kingdom in the ninth or tenth century remained as much dependent on orally delivered messages as on letters.

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22 Asser, chapter 24.

23 Ibid., chapter 76.

24 Ibid., chapter 104. See also Simon Keynes, “King Athelstan’s Books,” in Lapidge and Gneuss, 144.


carried by agents. As we shall see, Alfred linked his goals for the intellectual and spiritual life of the West Saxon kingdom to the dissemination of written texts.

Alfred was especially articulate in using his textual activities to define royal oversight of both secular and religious life, but it was Æthelstan who perfected the art of giving and receiving books in order to maintain close ties with Ireland, Brittany, other parts of the Continent, and various regions within Britain. Æthelstan followed his grandfather’s example of cultivating textual production and using texts and books as part of his efforts to consolidate the power of the West Saxon ruling house in Wessex, other regions of Anglo-Saxon England, and Europe. We have ample evidence to speak to the military and political achievements of both Alfred and Æthelstan, including the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Battle of Brunanburh, although the reliability of these sources may be limited by what have been identified as underlying agendas of promoting and valorizing the West Saxon house. By contrast, while Asser and the surviving Old English translations attest to Alfred’s literary activity, the corresponding material for Æthelstan’s reign is scanty: several Latin poems are matched only by some royal diplomas issued in his name and a pair of Latin letters directed to him—both from or about Brittany or Bretons.

Scholarly assessments of the reigns of Edward the Elder and Æthelstan have ranged between theories of intellectual and spiritual stagnation after Alfred’s death up until the tenth-century reforms to more generous depictions of Æthelstan as a bridge between Alfred and the

27 Simon Keynes, “Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” in McKitterick, 245.
28 For accounts of the controversy over the authorship of Asser’s Life, see Keynes and Lapidge, 50–1, and Seth Lerer, Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 61–2.
29 For a discussion of the poems and their implications for our understanding of learning and literature at Æthelstan’s court, see Lapidge, “Some Latin Poems,” 49–86.
In either case, Edward is granted little distinction, between comparisons with members of his family (his father Alfred, his eldest son Æthelstan, his sister Æthelflæd) and a lack of documentary evidence for his achievements—only the Parker manuscript (MS A) of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is contemporary with Edward. In spite of this, the fact remains that Edward ruled an expanding Anglo-Saxon kingdom for a quarter of a century. Nevertheless, however much Edward may deserve a fresh assessment, this chapter’s focus on textuality must once again exclude Edward from more detailed consideration.

The reign of Æthelstan may have been less well documented than his grandfather’s reign, but in spite of the relatively scanty evidence, I argue that Æthelstan in fact absorbed much of his grandfather’s attitude towards text and textuality. Some of this assimilation may have come about through Æthelstan’s own experiences at Alfred’s court and through the survival after Alfred’s death of individuals who had participated in the textual community at his court. John the Old Saxon, for example, was invited to England by Alfred (according to Asser), but he stayed on after Alfred’s death and probably survived long enough to witness a charter of Edward the Elder in 904. Although there is no evidence to back up the tempting notion that John the Old Saxon might have taken to England the Old Saxon poem that lay behind the Old English *Genesis B*, there once seemed to be some basis for thinking that he might have been the John who composed an acrostic to Æthelstsan while Æthelstan was still a small boy. If John survived for many years after Alfred’s death, Æthelstan might have had very close ties with him, but even if John did not survive long past 904, such a text written in praise of the young Æthelstan would have left a lasting impression on the older Æthelstan.

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34 Asser, chapter 78.
Unfortunately, this theory is no longer credited, but the acrostic does speak to the importance of textual commemoration and communication, with the older Æthelstan reading a poem written about, but not necessarily to, the young Æthelstan. Lapidge notes also the similarities between this poem and two acrostics written for Alfred, suggesting that John the Old Saxon may have composed the poems to Alfred as well, but with John the Old Saxon’s authorship of the *Adalstan* poem no longer accepted, his responsibility for the poems written for Alfred must also be questioned since those attributions were based on the assumption that John was responsible for the *Adalstan* acrostic. Beyond this, the ceremony mentioned by William of Malmesbury in which Æthelstan was supposedly given arms by his grandfather was once understood as a moment when the young Æthelstan was invested with Alfred’s insignia and, as such, probably modeled on Alfred’s anointing in Rome as a young boy. Wieland, in undermining the attribution of the *Adalstan* acrostic to John the Old Saxon, has also cast doubt on this understanding of the ceremony reported by William of Malmesbury, reminding us that it would have been highly unorthodox for Alfred to have anointed as king with three elder brothers still living and still more unorthodox for Alfred’s grandson to have been anointed while his own father still lived. So, we are left no longer with a relic of the Alfredian court, but the poem is nevertheless a reflex of the textuality of the Alfredian court—and an enduring reflex, if Wieland is right that Æthelstan was older when the poem was written than the four or five years estimated by Lapidge.

Much has been written about Asser’s depiction of Alfred’s textual growth—learning to read first English and then Latin, constantly adding material to his *libellus*, and ultimately taking on the role of *magister* in encouraging schooling for youth and in regulating the linguistic and literary skills required of administrative officials. In Asser’s *Life* itself, as well as in its image of the

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37 Ibid., 65–71.

textual practices at Alfred’s court, compilation and reassembly are valorized as ways of building up authority. Such techniques of acquiring authority are, of course, not limited to the Alfredian court, nor is Asser’s quotation from a variety of sources in the Life, but Asser’s depiction of Alfred’s almost magpie-like compilation in his *libellus* (*erat enim omnino multis ex causis refertus* and *usque adeo protelavit quousque propemodum ad magnitudinem unius psalterii perveniret*) and Alfred’s own vision of selecting the “most needful” books (“Forðy me ḏyncð betre … ḏæt we eac sume bec, ḏa ḏe niedebeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne, ḏæt we ḏa on ḏæt geðiode wenden ḏe we ealle geçnawan mægen”) both suggest that the Alfredian circle valued a wisdom that was assembled out of any sources that came to hand. Paul Remley suggests that there may have been two stages of production of Alfred’s *libellus*, one in which Asser copies passages in consultation with Alfred, and another in which Alfred edits the collection (or has it edited) to form the book that he carries thereafter.

Like Bede with the account of the healing of the scabby young man, Alfred fashioned non-textual events into textual experiences. This may have been part of the appeal for Alfred of the Psalter, one of the texts that Alfred is generally acknowledged to have ordered to be translated into Old English prose. The prayers of the Psalter provide a way of textualizing and fitting words to the experiences of daily life. It may be that a similar sense of a fundamental connection between textuality and daily experiences underlies Alfred’s consistent, even insistent, use of physical metaphors for learning. Learning, claims Alfred, may be understood as a process of

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39 Keynes and Lapidge, 53–6, enumerate many sources, including the *Vetus Latina*, Sedulius’ *Carmen paschale*, Aldhelm’s prose *De virginitate*, the anonymous *Vita Alcuini*, and Einhard’s *Life of Charlemagne*.

40 “It was utterly crammed with all kinds of things” (Asser, chapter 88) and “It grew so much that it nearly reached the size of a psalter” (Asser, chapter 89).

41 “Therefore, it seems better to me … that we should also translate into that language that we all understand certain books which are most needful for all men to know.” Sweet, *Pastoral Care*, 7.


43 The studies in favour of an Alfredian attribution completed by Bately, “Lexical Evidence,” and O’Neill, *King Alfred’s Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms*, have remained influential, but Treschow, Gill, and Swartz, “King Alfred’s Scholarly Writings,” have more recently attempted to disprove this thesis. Godden, “Did King Alfred Write Anything?,” has argued that Alfred’s involvement cannot be proved.
manual exertion. Blending the Christian Latin tradition with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, Alfred greatly extends the few references to hunting in *De consolatione philosophiae*, for example, while his detailed metaphor of wood-gathering and construction in the Old English translation of the *Soliloquia* offers an extended example of the pairing of textuality and physicality. This pairing is also reflected in Alfred’s own activities, which, in addition to his textual program, involved both the design and construction of implements (like the lantern that burned for exactly 24 hours) and the direction of major construction and fortification projects across his kingdom.

Thanks to this same pairing of physical labour with the search for wisdom, Alfred’s innovative use of *craeft* in the Old English *Boethius* accomplished a related set of goals. The repeated use of the word in various contexts gave the word *craft* fresh lexical scope and had the effect of making the text of the *Boethius* more concrete, connecting Alfred’s abstract intellectual and spiritual pursuits with the skills and labour of everyday life, in keeping with Alfred’s preference for concrete, physical metaphors for building up of wisdom. It also helped Alfred to advance his political goals by linking talents and virtues with spiritual, physical, and political power. Alfred seems to have learned this kind of broad use of the term from vernacular poetry, and his use of *craeft* allowed him “to connect moral power with continuous expertise, with additional implications of physical construction.”

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46 Asser, chapter 104.
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A similar mindset seems to have infused other writings from this period. Malcolm Parkes suggests that the story of Alfred’s hallowing in Rome appearing in the annal for 853 need not be read as “crude propaganda,” but as a way of explaining the survival of a sickly boy and the successes of a sickly man.\(^{51}\) Aside from his famed illnesses,\(^ {52}\) Alfred could have had no reasonable expectations of becoming king, not even after the eldest of his four brothers rebelled and was shunted off into the western part of the kingdom. From this perspective, it is astonishing and even miraculous that the youngest of five sons succeeded to the throne while still a young man and was then able to carry out some of the most significant military, literary, and administrative reforms of the period. In such circumstances, it would be desirable to craft the \textit{Anglo-Saxon Chronicle} so as to emphasize the clear line of West Saxon legitimacy inherited by Alfred,\(^ {53}\) but it might also have seemed appealing to find a textual expression of and containment for his illness—a common reaction to life-threatening or long-term illness.

In addition to his production of texts, Alfred is known as a reader and user of manuscripts. The most famous story associating Alfred with any particular book is Asser’s account of the young Alfred’s winning a book from his mother after proving that he had learned all of it.\(^ {54}\) This is the first event in Alfred’s life that explicitly raises the question of the distinction between reading a text and learning a text, but this and related questions persist about all of Alfred’s textual activities. We do not have a clear sense of how well Alfred ever learned to read in either English or Latin, nor of the degree of his personal involvement in the translation and textual productions associated with the late ninth century.\(^ {55}\) Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe has offered a reading of Asser’s \textit{Life} as having been partly structured around the theme of learning to read, a process

\(^{51}\) Parkes, “Palaeography,” 166.

\(^{52}\) Pratt, “Illnesses,” 39–90.

\(^{53}\) West Saxon genealogies make up fully half of the Common Stock genealogies in the \textit{Chronicle}, with the genealogy at 855 for Æthelwulf (Alfred’s father) the last and longest of the Common Stock genealogies. For the politically motivated interest in Alfred’s or, more generally, West Saxon rule, see Bredehoft, \textit{Textual Histories}, esp. 32–3.

\(^{54}\) Asser, chapter 23.

\(^{55}\) See again the conflicting accounts offered by Bately, “Lexical Evidence;” Godden, “Did King Alfred?;” Lerer, \textit{Literacy and Power}; and Treschow, Gill, and Swartz, “King Alfred’s Scholarly Writings,” among others.
culminating in Alfred’s assuming the role of teacher and guide for his subjects as they moved towards their own literacy.  

The intense debate that the question of Alfred’s literacy triggers should not surprise us. Even in recent centuries, it has proved difficult to know how to assess literacy or types of literacy, while the text-speak encroachment on what have been more formal literate modes again raises the question of how to define literacy. Writing of the development from a period where oral transmission and the testimony of witnesses are of first importance to a period of greater reliance on documents, Lowe asserts that even laymen who could not read could, through the clearly verifiable nature of a chirograph (especially when a document or a portion of a document was recorded in the vernacular so that it could be understood when read out), participate in a “literacy event.” Even if there are serious doubts about Alfred’s competence in reading and writing that cannot be removed, it is still possible to speak of a literate mentality for Alfred, regardless of his own ability to read for himself. Alfred kept his libellus to record texts that impressed him, and we know from the Preface to the Pastoral Care that he had given some thought to texts as being “needful.” Even if it is difficult to know what to make of Asser’s claim that Alfred enforced a kind of literacy for his administrative officials, the story is part of the larger narrative of textuality and probably does reflect, if not reality, then at least what Alfred would like to effect or be perceived to have effected. In either case, Asser’s story reflects a valuing of the perception of literacy.

Whatever literate skills he did or did not command himself, Alfred exercised his power in selecting texts for copying into his libellus and for translation into Old English. If Alfred did not know how to read or did not read fluently, then how did he decide which texts were “most needful”? For that matter, even if Alfred did read comfortably, the question stands, particularly

59 Asser, chapter 106.
in view of the frequent Danish incursions into Wessex, to say nothing of the day-to-day duties of a king. The Preface to the Pastoral Care does not seem to suggest that many of the bishops were involved in the process of selecting “most needful” texts, but it may be that members of the witan or others in attendance at court, possibly including some bishops like Wærferth, were reading to Alfred or were delegated to bring back to the king a pre-selected set of texts among which he could make a final determination. Alternatively, it is conceivable that Asser or some other individual took control of at least the preliminary selection process. If either of these scenarios represents anything close to the truth, then the situation is quite different from Matthew Parker’s sole reliance on manuscripts to find texts, study the language, create his typeface, and publish editions of distant medieval texts.

On the contrary, an important similarity between Alfred’s project to revive learning and that carried out by Matthew Parker in the sixteenth century is that the multilingual element of Alfred’s program of translation was vital not only to the execution of the project, but to the statement of purpose. Alfred justified his program of translation on the basis of the supposedly poor Latinity to be found in England in the late ninth century (ða swiðe lytle fiorme ðara boca wiston, forðæmde hie hiora nan wuht ongiotan ne meahton forðæmde hie næron on hiora agen geðiode awritene). As we shall see in Chapter 5, Parker did translate Old English texts into Modern English, but he explicitly framed his project as a recovery of an “ancient and once familiar language.” Alfred tends to get credit for the creation of a literary value or authenticity for prose in English, but he was by no means the first to make a move in this direction. Although Bede wrote most often in Latin, we know that he also translated or desired to see translated into English various religious texts. Alfred is, however, the first person to have given such a complete and coherent picture of the drive to use English in this way. Like Bede, Alfred was closely concerned with the crossing of linguistic boundaries, and he “established a legitimate language that was close enough to current usage for his people to recognize easily what he meant, yet distinctive enough (and close enough to Latin usage) to carry prestige.”

60 Sweet, 5. “They had very little benefit from the books because they were not able to understand anything from them because the books were not written in their own language.”

61 Discenza, 119.
The whole of Alfred’s enterprise is founded on the premise that these texts (or the effort to read them) will give access to increased wisdom, but it is a corporate effort and a corporate wisdom: “ond [hie] woldon ðæt her ðy mara wisdom on londe wære ðy we ma geðeoda cuðon.”62 Not everyone needs to know how to read Latin in order for there to be a benefit for everyone (“wisdom on londe”), but being able to read Latin does seem to bestow greater benefit on the individual who is so skilled. The difficulty with this equation is that the translation program means that the linguistic divide need not be crossed again after the texts have been translated. In learning Latin, which is necessary in order for the translations to be carried out, Alfred or any other individual who participates gains the promised greater wisdom and imparts it to the kingdom, but the fact that a translation exists means that this individual need not be called upon to translate the same text again. In addition, there is no longer the same incentive for the kingdom to foster Latin learning with its attendant increase in wisdom—in Bourdieusian terms, cultural capital has been “spent” on the production of the translation, but symbolic capital in the form of respect for the mastery required to produce the translation has been generated in the spending.63

None of the translations Alfred is believed to have taken a personal hand in or to have commissioned from others would do much to enhance the level of learning in England, except symbolically, if they never existed in wider dissemination outside Alfred’s court circle. What we call the “Preface” to the Pastoral Care is actually a circular letter to the bishops of the kingdom, suggesting that the work was copied and circulated widely, at least among bishops. Simon Keynes raises the analogous question in the secular sphere: If Alfred wished to see his judicial and administrative deputies literate, or at least exposed to “needful” texts, then that behest need not have stopped at texts focused on the spiritual wellbeing of his subjects. Keynes wonders if Alfred’s laws might have been circulated to the judges and reeves who were responsible for their enforcement. Judges and reeves fall among the group of administrative officials enjoined to read

62 Sweet, 5. “And they [our ancestors] wished that the more languages we knew, the greater wisdom there would be in the land.”

63 See Discenza, 6–7, for a useful discussion of Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital as applied to the Old English Boethius.
or be read to,\textsuperscript{64} but as much as they needed spiritual or intellectual guidance, such officials might have preferred to have access to legal texts. Keynes compares the expectation that judges enforce the written text of the law while copies were scarce and written in possibly difficult language to the predicament of sheriffs in the nineteenth-century American West, who operated largely on their own judgment, with little oversight or guidance,\textsuperscript{65} and in a time of serious political threats to the West Saxon kingdom, a king already convinced of the power of text to enhance the spiritual and political wellbeing of his dominions might easily have seen the value of textualizing the enforcement of his laws.

Alfred managed to hold off a Viking conquest of Wessex, but it was for his successors to carry Anglo-Saxon influence back into previously conquered territories. Alfred’s children, Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd conquered between them all Viking territories south of Yorkshire in the years between 910 and 920, while Eadred (r. 946–955), Alfred’s youngest grandson and the son of Edward the Elder, completed the feat by defeating the Viking kingdom of York in 954.\textsuperscript{66} Edward, and later Æthelstan, had all the while encouraged the purchase of land by Anglo-Saxon thegns from areas that had fallen under Danish control.\textsuperscript{67} Edward was accepted in 920 as “father and lord” by the Hiberno-Norse Ragnald, then ruling at York, but by Æthelstan’s reign, the relationship seems to have been one more of alliance than of overlordship, since Æthelstan’s sister was married to Ragnald’s successor, Sihtric. On Sihtric’s death, however, Æthelstan drove out his successor, Guthfrith, and took direct control of Northumbria in 927. This was the first time that a West Saxon king had become the direct ruler of Northumbria,\textsuperscript{68} and as we shall see,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Keynes, “Royal Government,” in McKitterick, 232.
\item Ibid., 244.
\item Sturdy, 216.
\item Whitelock, “Dealings,” III.70–71.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Æthelstan had already taken thought for the textual commemoration of the event before he even traveled north.

Following the decisive victory of Æthelstan and his brother, Edmund, over an alliance of Picts and Hiberno-Norse at Brunanburh in 937, the Old English poem, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, appeared in that year’s annal of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Given the cosmopolitan make-up of Æthelstan’s court and the wider network of contacts he maintained, it is perhaps not surprising that *The Battle of Brunanburh* displays some features of Skaldic verse, although there are few signs of direct influence on the poem.⁶⁹ We may not know exactly how long after the battle the poem was first composed and then copied into the *Chronicle*, but the battle was not the first of Æthelstan’s dealings with northern leaders to be commemorated in a poem. *Carta dirige gressus* was written when Æthelstan went north July 927 and secured a pledge of fidelity from Constantine, King of the Scots, and other northern leaders. The poem is closely modelled on a Carolingian text but seems in fact to have been written immediately after the event, possibly by a scribe named Peter, and speeded on its way “by land and sea” back to Wessex in order to get Æthelstan’s story circulating.⁷⁰

Just as texts could be used to consolidate power, so entire manuscripts could also serve political purposes in their production and dissemination. One way to dispose of manuscripts was to donate them to monastic houses, and both Æthelstan and Alfred are known to have made various sorts of donations to monastic houses. Æthelstan can be shown to have distributed a number of manuscripts within and without England,⁷¹ but manuscript provenance also links Alfred to monastic houses. The Book of Nunnaminster (BL Harley 2965) contains on folio 40v the boundaries of a piece of property in Winchester that was given to Nunnaminster by Alfred’s

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queen, Ealhswith. The book may have belonged to the queen and been given by her to the nunnery, which she founded in 903 after Alfred’s death.72

While Alfred seems to have been more involved in the production of texts, Æthelstan’s bibliographic legacy can be more fully documented when it comes to manuscripts produced at Æthelstan’s behest or sent to him, manuscripts distributed by Æthelstan, and scattered references to Æthelstan in other manuscripts. Characterizing some Anglo-Saxon scribes who worked both in ecclesiastical scriptoria and in royal workshops to produce books and documents as “Æthelstan’s clerici” and “a kind of intellectual comitatus,” Michael Wood cites Asser’s report of the Alfredian rotation of court personnel as an indication that scribes might have followed a pattern of scheduled time at court similar to that followed by secular officials and craftsmen.73 Some of these scribes may even have traveled with the king on occasion, as seems to have been the case when Æthelstan went north to make peace with the Picts.

A group of manuscripts from the second quarter of the tenth century, coinciding with the start of Æthelstan’s reign, show affiliations of scribe, illuminator, and text. The same hand wrote the continuation to 920 (from its original end at 891) of the A-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in CCCC 173 and the text of the Old English Orosius in BL, Add. 47967. A now lost leaf used in the binding at the end of Junius 86 and containing a portion of the Old English Boethius was written in a similar hand,74 as is the Tanner Bede (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 10, a copy of the Old English translation). Junius 27 (the so-called Junius Psalter) shares an illuminator with the Orosius in Add. 47967, and the obits of Alfred and his wife have been added to the calendar in the psalter. This calendar is part of a metrical calendar adapted, apparently in Wessex, from an Irish félire and is found in full, including the royal obits, in Cotton Galba A.xviii. The Galba manuscript contains a Frankish psalter known to have belonged to Æthelstan,

74 N. R. Ker, Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), no. 337, notes that the leaf was detached in or after 1886 and was mislaid before the 1899 publication of Sedgefield’s Boethius. A transcription was printed by A. S. Napier, “Bruchstück einer altenglischen Boetiushandschrift,” Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum 31 (1887): 52–4.
as well as material added in a hand similar to that of a contemporary copy of Aldhelm in BL Royal 7 D.xxiv. This Aldhelm manuscript shares a scribe and possibly an illuminator with CCCC 183, a copy of Bede’s two *Lives of Cuthbert*, given by Æthelstan to Chester-le-Street in the mid-930s.

CCCC 173 brings several other artifacts into the chain: The first scribe of the manuscript also wrote the boundaries added to the Book of Nunnaminster—a fact which may suggest a link with Winchester for this group of manuscripts. Moreover, the first hand copying the laws of Alfred and Ine in CCCC 173 may be the hand that wrote a late Æthelstan charter (S449), while the rest of the text of the laws is written in a hand that shares features of the hand that wrote the personal inscription in a manuscript Æthelstan gave to Christ Church, Canterbury (Tiberius A.ii, f. 15v). Malcolm Parkes sees in these manuscript affinities a process of standardization and makes a case not only for a Winchester link, but for a revived scriptorium with a strong focus on historiography, guided by Grimbald of St. Bertin and modeled on the “flourishing and disciplined” ninth-century scriptorium in Rheims.

This group of manuscripts has strong connections with Alfred and his model of the West Saxon kingdom, as in the Nunnaminster links, the royal obits, and the possible rotation at court of a group of *clerici* along with officials and secular craftsmen. If Malcolm Parkes is right in crediting Grimbald with reviving a scriptorium at Winchester, then this complex of manuscripts owes a debt to the Alfredian circle from the late ninth century. These manuscripts also betray a keen interest in texts that have at one time or another been considered “Alfredian.” Even though the Psalter is hardly a rare text, we know that Alfred felt an affinity for the Old Testament and perhaps the psalms in particular. Not all of the supposedly Alfredian texts appearing in these manuscripts (*Boethius, Orosius, and Bede*) are still ascribed in any direct way to Alfred himself, but they are generally acknowledged to have emerged at about the same time from that milieu or

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76 For more information on this manuscript, see Keynes, “King Æthelstan’s Books,” 147–50.
77 Parkes, “Palaeography,” 156–64.
78 The introductions to the Prose Psalms are focused heavily on David and Hezekiah; see O’Neill, *Prose Psalms*. Pratt, *Political Thought*, 242–63, offers more general background to Alfred’s interest in the Old Testament.
out of the same mindset that Alfred seems to have cultivated in his court. All of this suggests that Alfred’s legacy was still felt strongly during Æthelstan’s reign.

Another significant influence on the textual culture of Wessex during Æthelstan’s reign came from the manuscripts imported by or for King Æthelstan. By the later tenth century, England held large numbers of Frankish and Breton manuscripts, and Æthelstan seems to have been interested in Frankish, Breton, and Irish manuscripts more generally. CCCC 183 may have been influenced by such manuscripts, with English scribes gradually becoming proficient enough to imitate what they found in foreign manuscripts then in England. Tiberius A.ii was written on the Continent in the late ninth or early tenth century and seemingly given to Æthelstan by Otto I, who married Æthelstan’s half-sister, Edith, in 929 or 930. The textual links with the German imperial family continued for another century, and in fact, Æthelweard, one of Ælfric’s patrons, presented his Latin translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to Matilda of Essen, the granddaughter of Otto and Edith.

In addition to learning from books he imported or received from abroad, Æthelstan also sent books from his court to other parts of England or Europe. CCCC 183, containing both of Bede’s Lives of Cuthbert, was itself given sometime between 934 and 937 by Æthelstan to the community at Chester-le-Street, where the cult of St. Cuthbert was celebrated. We have already seen that Æthelstan gave Tiberius A.ii to Christ Church, Canterbury, but he also gave the MacDurnan Gospels (now London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1370) to Christ Church.

Æthelstan’s textual or bibliographic ties are not only within the heartland of Anglo-Saxon power, but also with Brittany, Ireland, and Cornwall. Wessex had already in Æthelstan’s day a long history of ties with Cornwall, including a mention in Aldhelm’s Carmen rhythmicum, repeated references in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and Alfred’s own links, especially Asser’s decision to

include Welsh glosses of some English place-names appearing in his *Life of Alfred*. Moreover, Alfred, Edward the Elder, and Æthelstan all maintained ties with Brittany, and there were also Icelandic connections, at least in Æthelstan’s day, as we shall see.

Both Alfred and Æthelstan also used texts for the consolidation of West Saxon power. The circular letter that prefaces the Old English *Pastoral Care* asserts royal authority and a vision for the future development of the intellectual and spiritual resources of Wessex. The actual effectiveness of this vision over the long run is debatable, but I argue that it was still a major influence on the textual culture of Æthelstan’s England. Like the Preface to the *Pastoral Care*, the laws of Alfred and the earliest installments of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* shore up West Saxon royal authority. By incorporating a large section of the laws recorded in Exodus 20–23, the laws of Alfred lay claim to the textual and spiritual authority of the Old Testament. Similarly, the Common Stock genealogies of the *Chronicle*, which play a major role in the legitimization of the West Saxon royal house, also recall the Old Testament.  

For Æthelstan, it was texts like the *Battle of Brunanburh*, which appears in four manuscripts of the *Chronicle* for the 937 annal, or the poem *Carta dirige gressus*, composed and copied while Æthelstan was still in the north in the immediate aftermath of his successful negotiations with the Picts that were intended to solidify West Saxon authority. *Brunanburh* taps into the West Saxon dynastic overtones of the *Chronicle* with its reference to Æthelstan’s descent from Edward (and thus, Alfred), echoing the Common Stock genealogies of the earliest recensions. This may indicate that the *Chronicle* was the intended home for *Brunanburh.*  

So, Æthelstan makes use of not only the same type of text, but also the very text itself that was used to establish West Saxon credentials during Alfred’s reign. Alfred continues to determine how Æthelstan defines his reign or, at any rate, how contemporaries define and narrate Æthelstan’s reign. Moreover, Æthelstan, like Alfred, continues to process seemingly non-textual events as textual experiences and to use textual means of exerting his influence across England and in parts of Europe. Particularly in Alfred’s hand, this practice is reminiscent of Bede’s connection between a redemptive theological impulse and probing textual scholarship. Alfred’s concern for the *folc* of his kingdom

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83 Ibid., 73.
and his sense of responsibility for the salvation of his subjects reflect a lingering redemptive mindset. In like manner, Alfred chose a text dealing with the pastoral responsibilities of bishops in which to lay out his vision for a renewed educational, scholarly, and administrative climate in England.

Movement across linguistic, ethnic, and dynastic boundaries characterizes the political and textual culture of the courts of Alfred and Æthelstan. As we have already seen, Alfred seems to have absorbed something of Bede’s advocacy for English and other vernacular languages as legitimate vehicles for religious instruction and the transmission of spiritual learning. Intriguingly, an Old English genitive plural inflectional ending appears in the middle of a Latin inscription in the MacDurnan Gospels (London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1370):

“Æthelstanus Anglosæxna rex et rector,”

rather than the wholly Latin regnal style *Angul-Saxonum rex* used by Asser throughout his *Life of Alfred*. In fact, the Old English version of the regnal style appears in several other documents of the late ninth and tenth centuries.

The British neighbours of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms are often silent in the historical record and in literature, but the reigns of Alfred and Æthelstan provide at least a limited picture of their interactions with two of the earliest “Kings of the Anglo-Saxons.” Of more significance for the shaping of the West Saxon kingdom was Alfred’s interest in Carolingian models of political and textual activity. Most famous is Alfred’s wish to be seen as another *novus David*, like Charlemagne, but even after Alfred’s death, Winchester in the late ninth and tenth centuries, for example, seems to have looked to the Frankish royal house at St. Denis as an example to be imitated, and the CCCC 173 compilation, as it stood in the mid-tenth century, resembled a ninth-century compilation from Rheims.

Similarly, Asser’s account of Alfred may be read as a

85 Asser, chapter 1 *et passim*.
86 Maurizio Lupoi, *The Origins of the European Legal Order*, trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 147–53, compiles a list of 96 different royal titles from the period, but Lupoi does not claim that it is comprehensive.
literary construct influenced by Einhard’s depiction of Charlemagne.  
Æthelstan, on the other hand, provided a home for Louis, the exiled son of Charles the Simple. Grimbald of St. Bertin was present at Alfred’s court and may have been responsible for promoting the revision and transmission of historical texts at a revived scriptorium at Winchester. If this is true, then Grimbald had an influence both on the contents and on the palaeography of these manuscripts.

Two of the three poems discussed by Michael Lapidge as evidence for the reign of Æthelstan are also evidence for the presence of foreign clerics in England during Æthelstan’s reign. Israel the Grammarian, ―one of the leading scholars of the earlier tenth century,‖ came, in spite of his Hebrew moniker, from a Celtic background. Although he has sometimes been identified as Irish, he was probably Breton and went to England during the political turmoil that drove so many Bretons to England. In fact, it was not unusual at this period for Celtic ecclesiastics to adopt Hebrew names, and this also seems to be the explanation for Asser’s unusual name. While at Æthelstan’s court, Israel seems to have concocted with a Frankish colleague a board game based on the canon tables for the Gospels and known as Alea euangelii (―Gospel Dice‖), which is recorded in a book that made its way to Ireland shortly afterwards.

Thanks to this episode, we have evidence that the Irish bishop of Bangor, Dub Innse, was also present at the court of Æthelstan, for it was he who took the Alea euangelii to Ireland, where it was later recorded in a twelfth-century Irish book, now Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 122. At some point in his career, Israel also assembled a dossier of materials on the study of Greek, and given the dossier’s transmission primarily in English manuscripts, it may be that it was

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92 Keynes and Lapidge, 48–9, note that the name derives from As(h)er, the name of Jacob’s eighth son in Genesis 30:13. Asser means “blessed” or “blessedness,” as does the Welsh name Gwyn, and this has sometimes been taken as an indication of Asser’s original name, but there is no evidence to support this assumption.
originally assembled while Israel was in England at Æthelstan’s court. After Æthelstan’s death, Israel made new Continental contacts and a life there for himself, partly on the basis of the Greek dossier and other texts he had begun to work on during Æthelstan’s reign.

Æthelstan’s ties with Brittany go beyond the acquisition of Breton manuscripts, and the king gave his protection to Breton refugees in the turmoil of 919–936 after the 919 Scandinavian invasion of Brittany. Alan II, Duke of Brittany, was fostered in Æthelstan’s court. Radbod, prior of the community of St. Samson of Dol, mentions in his letter the help that was given by Æthelstan’s father, Edward, to the community. Cotton Tiberius A.xv, which may have undergone its final compilation at Christ Church, Canterbury, in the opening years of the eleventh century, contains on fols. 157r–158r an anonymous letter in Latin to introduce a miles (warrior) from Brittany who wants to make a pilgrimage after having sought and obtained Æthelstan’s aid in establishing himself as a religious in England. Æthelstan apparently received Breton relics and personnel into English churches, while Asser records that Alfred gave gifts to Breton churches.

Æthelstan also cultivated some friendly contacts with Scandinavians. Egil Skallagrímsson, known for his precocious tendencies towards drunkenness and murderousness, spent some time in England in the service of Æthelstan, as reported in Egils saga. Hákon, the son of Harald

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94 Ibid., 103–104.
96 Ibid., 53.
97 Ibid., 43–4.
98 Ibid., 46–8.
99 Insley, 27–8.
100 Sigurður Nordal, ed., Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar, Íslenzk fornrit 2 (Reykjavik: Hið Íslenzka Formritafélag, 1933), chapters 50 and 61–3. See also the English translation by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards, Egil’s Saga (London: Penguin, 1976). Æthelred II (r. 978–1016) may also have patronized an Icelandic poet, Gunnlaugr Ormstunga, at his court: Gunnlaugs Saga Ormstungu contains part of a drápa supposedly composed by Gunnlaugr for King Æthelred; see Peter G. Foote and Randolph Quirk, eds., Gunnlaugs Saga Ormstungu (London: Nelson,
Fairhair, king of Norway, was also sent to be fostered at the court of Æthelstan and was later known in Scandinavian sources as Aðalsteinsfóstri.\textsuperscript{101} It is unclear whether this should be regarded as a way of gaining political patronage for the Norwegian crown or whether Hákon was in some sense a hostage at Æthelstan’s court. Hákon was given a Christian education, and later historical and saga literature portrays him as the first Norwegian ruler to encourage Christianity, although evidence of any evangelizing activity is lacking. It does appear that there are fewer heathen-type burials after about 950 on the southern and western coasts of Norway, where Hákon and his successors, the sons of Erik Bloodaxe, who were raised in England and allegedly Christian, ruled.

Alfred and Æthelstan, by their textual programs, laid the foundation for much of the English literary and bibliographic activity that came after. Alfred’s program of translation and education helped to set the stage for later works in England, especially prose works, of which there are few examples in Old English before Alfred’s reign.\textsuperscript{102} Alfred established the Anglo-Saxon vernacular as a language of literary achievement, without setting aside the Latin learning on which this achievement depended. (Whether the higher achievement is that the Anglo-Saxon vernacular could be the vehicle for this learning or that it might facilitate a greater degree of individual literacy is open for debate.) Æthelstan’s preservation of the textual mentality that had prevailed at Alfred’s court thus played a crucial role in this process. The three poems discussed by Lapidge show Æthelstan at three different stages of his career: a child or young man receiving praise and happy predictions of future accomplishments; a mature victory in Northumbria; and a donation towards the end of life, feeling conscious of the state of his soul.\textsuperscript{103} In this, the textual modes of interpreting events encouraged during Alfred’s reign endured. Æthelstan and his

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Lapidge, “Some Latin Poems,” 85.
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household are again emulating the Alfredian circle, with the first poem perhaps providing an especially vivid model for the young Æthelstan.

In this way, Alfred helped to enable the Benedictine Reform and the subsequent generation of prose writers, spearheaded by Ælfric and Wulfstan. There is a direct connection with Wulfstan via the *Chronicle* poems (some of which were perhaps composed by Wulfstan, including those in the annals for 959 and 975), but more generally, both sets of *Chronicle* poems speak to a shared willingness to mix verse or verse-like passages into the prose of apparently quite disparate genres. For Wulfstan, this also included laws, letters, and homilies. Ælfric, on the other hand, attended to the linguistic concerns Alfred had shared, and he too composed or translated religious literature into English, although Ælfric was less sanguine about the ability of vernacular translations (or their translators) to accurately transmit religious learning and instruction than Alfred was.

Alfred’s own sense of following the *spor* of earlier scholars and readers pointed the way for his successors to emulate him—and the *ieldran* he claimed to be following. As we shall see in Chapter 5, this resonated with the sixteenth-century Parkerian circle, for whom Alfred provided a particularly apt model of how a political and religious project could be accomplished by textual means. In fact, Alfred owes much of his modern fame to the reputation he gained among sixteenth-century antiquarians like Parker. Alfred and his court provided an example of a circle of people working together (or at least on parts of the same project) to effect through textual activity changes with a wide-reaching impact on society. Both Alfred and Parker created nostalgia narratives to justify and frame their textual projects, Alfred with his *spor* and Parker with, among other things, his quotation from Jeremiah on those who refuse to walk in the “olde way.” For Alfred, it was a narrative of drawing Latin wisdom into Old English for the service of the kingdom and the spiritual wellbeing of its inhabitants. Parker’s project, on the other hand,

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104 See Discenza, 127–8, for useful references on the reformers’ debt to Alfred.

105 See pp. 87–9 in Chapter 3.

106 See pp. 85–7 in Chapter 3.

was predicated on a narrative of the rescue and importation of Old English wisdom (now refashioned as Anglican wisdom) into early modern English.

At the Alfredian court, gaining wisdom became linked with *craeft* and the physical metaphors associated with Alfred’s use of the term. Alfred’s apparent interest in physical construction and his love for books (notably, the one he received from his mother and the “handbook” or *enochridion* he carried on his person), remind us that textual mediation of wisdom and knowledge is ultimately bibliographic mediation of that wisdom. Alfredian manuscripts or, more generally, manuscripts containing works that originally date to Alfred’s reign continued to be influential throughout the Middle Ages and into the sixteenth century. Notable in this regard are the *Pastoral Care* copies in Hatton 20 (a copy contemporary with Alfred) and CCCC 12 (a tenth- or eleventh-century copy), both of which were marked up by generations of later readers. Hatton 20, in particular, received a great deal of later attention, and all subsequent chapters of this dissertation may be directly tied to Hatton 20. As we have seen, a close and communal arrangement seems to have governed the production of a group of early tenth-century manuscripts that often show links both to Continental scriptoria and to the Alfredian textual program. CCCC 173, which contains an early copy of the first installment of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, betrays very active use (in the form of augmentation and rearrangements) in the ninth and tenth centuries, then again in the seventeenth century.

If Æthelstan is harder to paint as a specific model for Parker or others than his grandfather is, it is nevertheless true that he absorbed enough of Alfred’s court culture to participate in the same kind of textual community that Alfred had created at his own court. Æthelstan understood the significance of the physical metaphors for the process of gaining wisdom, and thus he

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109 See pp. 200–204 in the Conclusion.

appreciated the usefulness of the codices that allowed him to bind up a West Saxon sphere of influence. Æthelstan still cultivated the cosmopolitan and scholarly court milieu that his grandfather had utilized, but rather than setting out a new vision for the future of Wessex and the rest of England, Æthelstan built outwards on that foundation to strengthen his foreign contacts and to consolidate his influence, even control, over areas of England and Europe.
Chapter 3
Ælfric, Wulfstan, and the Use of Manuscripts

Ælfric (Abbot of Eynsham, 1005–?) and Wulfstan (Bishop of London, 996–1002, Bishop of Worcester, 1002–1016, and Archbishop of York, 1002–1023) have often been treated as inhabiting diametrically opposed extremes of career trajectory and prose style, with Ælfric usually seen as more learned and more refined, while Wulfstan seems the better politician, to the advantage of his ecclesiastical and secular career but at the expense of his erudition.1 In fact, Ælfric and Wulfstan deserve, like Elizabeth Bennet, “neither such praise, nor such censure.” Even in the relatively unified linguistic environment of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, both Ælfric and Wulfstan were well aware of the power of language and the import of the linguistic choices they made. In the first two chapters of this dissertation, we saw Bede consciously reacting to a multilingual environment and then Alfred and Æthelstan carving out a space for Old English textual production and distribution. In the final two chapters, we will see manuscript users from the twelfth to the sixteenth century grappling with the changing face of the English language, but the manuscripts associated with Ælfric and Wulfstan bear witness to a contemporary textual community realized in composition, copying, and translation.

The textual community under discussion here had a strongly synchronic function, while still engaging with earlier textual activity and laying the groundwork for future communal interaction. From within the monasteries at Winchester, Cerne, and Eynsham, Ælfric sent out a variety of homiletic, scriptural, grammatical, and pedagogical texts that quickly saw wide circulation in England and on the Continent. We know of no manuscripts that are particularly associated with Ælfric himself, but the situation is reversed with Wulfstan, who left a relatively small corpus of texts but, as we shall see, a complicated legacy of manuscript production and use. Wulfstan operated out of the dioceses of London, Worcester, and York, rather than out of monasteries, though Ely, the site of his burial, did maintain a cult of Wulfstan for a time. Wulfstan was also extremely active in politics on a national level, serving as an advisor to and drawing up law codes for both Æthelred II (r. 978–1016) and Cnut (r. 1016–1035). The

correspondence between Ælfric and Wulfstan bears witness to a communal activity surrounding texts, even if the correspondence was not always carried out with much community spirit, Ælfric’s replies often being markedly cool.² The letters that passed between Ælfric and Wulfstan have often been taken as an indication that Wulfstan was using Ælfric as a sort of research assistant or to produce preliminary drafts of preaching texts, but it now appears that Wulfstan got most of his Ælfrician material from pre-existing collections.³ Wulfstan is the more consistent adapter and recycler of his own (and others’) material in varying contexts, but Ælfric’s concern over the reception of his translations and the accuracy of scribal copying also speaks to an awareness of a community of readers and preachers who repeatedly read, performed, or listened to his homiletic or scriptural texts. By their very nature, preaching texts invite this kind of later use and revision, but in some cases, the contemporary treatment of the manuscripts also invited later engagement. Wulfstan’s own revisions, for example, are visible in surviving manuscripts where Neil Ker has identified the archbishop’s hand in additions, corrections, and annotations.⁴

Wulfstan’s works may not have circulated as widely as Ælfrician texts did, but there are other indications of his involvement in the textual development of other European regions. Anglo-Saxon missionaries had begun traveling to the Continent by the time of Bede, but in the late tenth century, the Anglo-Saxon church also began to exert itself on behalf of the fledgling churches of Scandinavia, where Christianity had not been established for long.⁵ There is abundant evidence


³ The letters written by Ælfric to or for Wulfstan are edited as Briefe 2 (pp. 35–57), 3 (pp. 58–67), II (pp. 68–145), III (pp. 146–221), and 2a (pp. 222–7) by Bernhard Fehr, ed., Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in altenglischer und lateinischer Fassung. Reprint with a Supplement to the Introduction by Peter Clemoes (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966). For discussion of Wulfstan’s use of Ælfric’s writings from pre-existing collections, see Godden, “Relations,” 365–70, and Andy Orchard, “Wulfstan as Reader, Writer, and Rewriter,” in The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation, ed. Aaron J. Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 335.


⁵ For a useful account, see Lesley Abrams, “The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia,” ASE 24 (1995): 213–49. In spite of missionary activity beginning in the seventh and eighth centuries, archdioceses in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were only established in the twelfth century, for which see Abrams, 238.
that individual Anglo-Saxon homilies in both Latin and Old English, and perhaps entire
manuscript collections, were influential in the composition of homilies in the first centuries of
Scandinavian Christianity. An early eleventh-century manuscript produced at Worcester and
known as the Copenhagen Wulfstan Collection (Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Gl. Kgl.
Saml. 1595, 4°) was probably assembled in its current form before Wulfstan’s death in 1023, and
although we have no hard evidence, the manuscript may have been completed by 1022,
when Gerbrand was consecrated by Æthelnoth (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1020–1038) to the
see at Roskilde and could have taken it to Denmark, where it seems to have spent most of its
history. The contents of this manuscript are in Old English and Latin, not Danish, but the
provision of preaching or reading material to the Danish church in this manuscript demonstrates
how such a process might have worked more generally across Scandinavia.

Meanwhile, royal power continued to reach into both the ecclesiastical hierarchy and monastic
foundations for political and legal ends. Both Ælfric and Wulfstan were closely linked with some
of the most powerful secular figures of the day: Wulfstan’s contributions to the law codes of
Æthelred and Cnut are well documented, while Ælfric enjoyed the patronage of Æthelweard and
his son, Æthelmær, who both served as ealdormen of the western provinces. During the tenth-
century Benedictine Reform, the link between the royal house and the monasteries of England
was made explicit (and close) in the Regularis concordia, the document that codified the

6 Christopher Abram, “Anglo-Saxon Homilies in their Scandinavian Context,” in Kleist, ed., The Old English
Homily, 425–44. For a more general introduction to Old Norse-Icelandic homilies, see Thomas N. Hall, “Old Norse-

7 Wulfstan’s hand appears in every quire, which is not proof in of itself, but Johan Gerritsen, “The Copenhagen
has been redone, it seems to have carefully reused the original holes and preserved the original text block and
binding. Moreover, Wulfstan’s final punctus versus on fol. 66v has offset onto the first recto of the next quire,
confirming not only that he closed the book before the ink had fully dried, but that these quires at least were in their
present order when he annotated the manuscript.


9 Patrick Wormald, The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Volume One: Legislation and

10 Mechthild Gretsch, “Ælfric, Language and Winchester,” in A Companion to Ælfric, ed. Hugh Magennis and
Mary Swan (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 130–31, and for a fuller account, Catherine Cubitt, “Ælfric’s Lay Patrons,” in the
same volume, 165–92.
practices to be followed in English monasteries.\footnote{Thomas Symons, ed. and trans., \textit{Regularis concordia Anglica nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation} (London: Nelson, 1953). See also Mechthild Gretsch, \textit{The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 125–7.} Ælfric’s \textit{alma mater}, Winchester, was a major centre in the Benedictine Reform, and judging by the frequency with which Ælfric mentions his training there, this intellectual inheritance must have been very important to him.\footnote{Gretsch, “Ælfric, Language and Winchester,” 110–14.} One of Ælfric’s patrons, Æthelmær, retired to the monastery he had founded at Eynsham (possibly in response to changes at court that culminated in the so-called palace revolution of 1006), where Ælfric was made abbot in 1005.\footnote{Cubitt, 178–9. See also Simon Keynes, “An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12,” \textit{ASE} 36 (2007): 160.} In spite of all this, in his version of the \textit{Regularis concordia} (known as the “Letter to the Monks of Eynsham”), Ælfric draws back somewhat from the original’s embrace of royal patronage, all the while cultivating his own contacts with both bishops and prominent laymen.\footnote{Helmut Gneuss, \textit{Ælfric of Eynsham: His Life, Times, and Writings} (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 27–32.}

There are few firm dates or dated documents around which to form a picture of Ælfric’s life, but he himself emphasizes repeatedly his association with the Old Minster at Winchester, where he was taught by the reformer Æthelwold (d. 984). Ælfric must have reached Winchester by about 970,\footnote{Ibid., 5.} but we know nothing else about his life until he was sent, already in priest’s orders, to teach the monks at Cerne Abbey in Dorset in the late 980s. This was the beginning of Ælfric’s long association with Æthelmær, the benefactor of Cerne Abbey, and again in 1005, Æthelmær took Ælfric to another foundation of his, this time as abbot at Eynsham, north of Oxford. Judging by the evidence of the surviving charters, Eynsham does not seem to have been among the foremost religious houses of Æthelred’s reign—these included Abingdon, Cholsey, Ely, Glastonbury, Malmesbury, Peterborough, and the New Minster at Winchester.\footnote{Keynes, 169.} Even so, Eynsham, especially as Æthelmær’s home in his retirement, probably had a higher profile than
Cerne Abbey. In his “Letter to the Monks of Eynsham,” Ælfric makes specific mention of the king and his sons eating in the refectory, which is not only unusual for laypeople but without source in the *Regularis concordia.* So, it appears that King Æthelred and the æthelings may have been in the habit of visiting Eynsham, possibly giving Æthelmær and Ælfric a certain influence, even without being present at court.

The traditional view of Ælfric’s life is that he remained at Cerne from the time of his first posting there until he left for Eynsham in 1005, and this would certainly account for his writing a set of canons in 998 as a pastoral letter for Wulfsige, Bishop of Sherborne, the diocese in which Cerne then lay. On the other hand, he need not have been still resident within the diocese, having once established himself there, to have felt free to compose a pastoral letter for its bishop. In fact, Helmut Gneuss argues that there is little evidence that Ælfric remained at Cerne for an extended period, whereas the indications are that he had access to a large library of the sort that would be unlikely to exist at a small and newly founded house like Cerne Abbey. Since there is also no evidence that Ælfric visited or borrowed books from the library at Winchester, while Ælfric mentions Cerne Abbey as his residence only once, Gneuss suggests that Ælfric may actually have returned to the Old Minster in between a stay at Cerne and his move to Eynsham. If he did stay at Cerne Abbey for nearly twenty years, this would lead us to wonder what kept him there and whether there might have been at least a competent scribe present at Cerne. Whether or not he stayed at Cerne, most of Ælfric’s works were probably composed during that unaccounted-for period between 987 and the early eleventh century.

Ælfric is best known as a homilist, principally for his two series of *Catholic Homilies* and for the hagiographical texts known as the *Lives of Saints.* Ælfric also completed scriptural translations,

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including an Old English version of Genesis,\textsuperscript{21} at the request of Ealdorman Æthelweard, who is also known for his own Latin translation of the \textit{Anglo-Saxon Chronicle}.\textsuperscript{22} In the Preface to his translation of Genesis, Ælfric expresses concern at the idea of translating texts that may be misleading (\textit{gedwolsum}) to those who are not experienced in reading Latin.\textsuperscript{23} He is less famous for this accomplishment than for his homiletic output, but Ælfric has the distinction of having composed the first grammar of Latin written in a vernacular language.\textsuperscript{24} Like Bede, Ælfric was able to conceive of English in terms of Latin grammar,\textsuperscript{25} but in his recognition that his \textit{Grammar} might help students master \textit{utramque linguam} (that is, both Latin and English),\textsuperscript{26} Ælfric demonstrated that English could take its place in the grammatical tradition. In this assertion, Ælfric prefigured Matthew Parker’s sense that linguistic proficiency is not necessarily limited to the language in which it is first acquired.\textsuperscript{27} Ælfric’s \textit{Grammar} may even have influenced

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Alistair Campbell, ed., \textit{The Chronicle of Æthelweard} (London: Nelson, 1962).
\item \textsuperscript{23} Marsden, 7, lines 100–103, and translated by Wilcox, \textit{Ælfric’s Prefaces}, 118. For more on Ælfric’s concern over error (\textit{gedwyld}), see Scott De Gregorio, “Ælfric, \textit{Gedwyld}, and Vernacular Hagiography: Sanctity and Spirituality in the Old English Lives of Saints Peter and Paul,“ in \textit{Old English Newsletter Subsidia}, vol. 30, Ælfric’s Lives of Canonised Popes, ed. Donald Scragg (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2001), 75–98.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Julius Zupitza, ed., \textit{Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar} (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1880). The \textit{Auraicept na nÉces}, an Irish grammar of the seventh century, focuses on the Irish language, though it refers to relevant aspects of Latin grammar. For an edition with translation, see Anders Ahlqvist, \textit{The Early Irish Linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of the Auraicept na nÉces with Introduction, Commentary and Indices} (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983).
\item \textsuperscript{25} See pp. 38–44 in Chapter 1.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Wilcox, 114, or Zupitza, 1. The corresponding passage in the Old English preface reads “ac heo byð swaðeah sum angyn to ægðrum gereorde, gif heo hwam licað;“ see Wilcox, 116, or Zupitza, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{27} As we shall see on p. 171 in Chapter 5, Parker claimed that his typeface based on Anglo-Saxon minuscule would help his readers learn to read Irish, as well as Old English.
\end{itemize}
Icelandic grammatical thought through the first section of the Third Grammatical Treatise, written by Óláfr Þórðarson around 1250. Moreover, Ælfric’s homily De falsis diis was translated in the early fourteenth century into Old Norse in Hauksbók.

Within England, Ælfric’s rise to prominence is something of a mystery. Until he became abbot at Eynsham, the only position we know him to have held after completing his schooling is that of mass-priest and teacher at Cerne, a position that would not, in of itself, bring him to the notice of his ecclesiastical superiors unless someone of greater prominence was advertising Ælfric’s abilities more widely. Recent speculation on Ælfric’s possible upbringing on the estates of Æthelweard and Æthelmær could offer an answer to the puzzle of Ælfric’s continued links with the ealdormen and his rise to intellectual prominence that was never matched in ecclesiastical rank. In the aftermath of the “palace revolution” of 1006, which shortly followed Æthelmær’s retirement from court to the monastery at Eynsham in 1005, the implication from Ælfric’s “Letter to the Monks of Eynsham” that King Æthelred and the Æthelings might have frequented the monastery at Eynsham is tantalizing. With no firm evidence that such visits actually took place, the greater danger is to assign too much significance to the possibility, but if Æthelmær was still in contact with the royal family, then that might also have given Ælfric a position of greater influence than would otherwise appear. We know of no time when he held an ecclesiastical position that reflected his scholarly and textual abilities, but as abbot of Eynsham, he may have exercised unofficial influence, particularly since Eynsham was not exactly an isolated site for Æthelmær’s retirement.

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28 A grammatical text in AM 921 III 4° (dated s. xiv but probably a copy of an earlier manuscript) draws directly on Ælfric’s Grammar, which may also have served as a model for the grammatical terminology employed in the Icelandic Third Grammatical Treatise, written by Óláfr Þórðarson around 1250. See Kari Ellen Gade, “Ælfric in Iceland,” in Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World, ed. Judy Quinn, Kate Heslop, and Tarrin Wills (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 321–39, esp. 331–4.


More generally, Ælfric always seems to be standing behind and in a supporting role for more public and more obviously powerful figures, like Æthelweard and Æthelmaer or Wulfstan and the other bishops and archbishops for whom he composed texts in Latin and Old English, including Wulfsige (Bishop of Sherborne, c. 993–1002) and Sigeric (Archbishop of Canterbury, 990–994). Nevertheless, we must not forget that Ælfric felt free to lecture his ecclesiastical superiors when he saw the need, and in this, he stood in line with a long-standing tradition of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical criticism from respected figures like Bede, Boniface, and Alcuin (c. 735–804). Ælfric may have seen himself in the role of a recognized, undisputed authority who was entitled to write confidently and sometimes critically to powerful members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Wulfstan, for one, seems to have been less learned, though not necessarily less canny, than Ælfric. Ælfric may, however, have been quite clever in his cultivation of patronage, especially in sending his Catholic Homilies to Sigeric, who was in a position to promote them far more than Ælfric could as an ordinary monk in a small house, and he certainly enjoyed a different kind of advantage over most of his ecclesiastical superiors: Wulfstan is the only one who can rival Ælfric’s textual output, but even his corpus is dwarfed by...

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33 Fehr, Briefe 2 (pp. 35–57), 3 (pp. 58–67), II (pp. 68–145), III (pp. 146–221), and 2a (pp. 222–7).

34 Like Wulfstan, Wulfsige seems to have been seeking advice from Ælfric, and even more than with Wulfstan, the question of how a superior in age, experience, and ecclesiastical rank—Wulfsige was, in fact, Ælfric’s own bishop for a time—came to be inquiring of a younger monk is fundamental, as Godden notes in “Relations,” in Townend, ed., Wulfstan, 357. Ælfric’s Old English pastoral letter for Wulfsige is edited as Brief I by Fehr, I–34, and see also D. Whitelock, M. Brett, and C. N. L. Brooke, eds., Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, A. D. 871–1204 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964–1981), I.191–226.


36 Ælfric warned Sigeric on the perils of drunkenness (CH II.2) and reminded Wulfsige of his duty to oversee clerics (Brief I, p. 1, ll. 3–12). Godden, “Relations,” 356–7, gives other examples of this phenomenon from Anglo-Saxon England, such as Bede writing to Egberht on the state of the Northumbrian church or Alcuin’s correspondence with several English bishops and archbishops. Simon Keynes, “Between Bede and the Chronicle: London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, fols. 104–9,” in O’Brien O’Keeffe and Orchard, I.59, notes Boniface’s letters to King Æthelbald (r. Mercia 716–757) and Archbishop Cuthberht (740–760), in which Boniface criticized abuses he saw as too prevalent in England.

37 Godden, “Relations,” 353–74, follows the traditional view that Wulfstan’s requests for information from Ælfric show him to have been ill-informed or even insecure, but Joyce Hill, “Archbishop Wulfstan: Reformer?,” in Townend, ed., Wulfstan, 314, argues instead that Wulfstan was astute enough to recognize the importance of clarifying the authoritative positions before taking official action in sensitive matters and to occasionally make Ælfric admit to a lack of information.
Ælfric’s body of work, as is the circulation of his texts. Ælfric’s works existed in larger circulation than those of any other author or any other vernacular work in Europe at the time, and his works were still reused and circulated long after his death. This is not, however, sufficient to explain the prestige he seems to have enjoyed while still a mere “monk and mass-priest,” as he styles himself in the Old English Preface to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*, although even an unsolicited submission of a work on the scale of the *Catholic Homilies* to the Archbishop of Canterbury would surely have helped to catapult its author to some degree of notoriety.

Like Ælfric, Wulfstan also has unclear origins. The first certain date we have in Wulfstan’s life is his consecration as Bishop of London in 996, followed by his translation to the diocese of Worcester and the archdiocese of York in 1002. From 1016, he seems to have either given up his seat at Worcester or installed a suffragan. The *Liber Eliensis* records his death on Monday, 28 May 1023, and he was subsequently buried at Ely among the other Anglo-Saxon “benefactors.” From just this scanty information, Wulfstan already appears to have lived a more peripatetic life than Ælfric, and this is before we consider that Wulfstan served as one of the *witan* (councilors) of King Æthelred and is thus likely to have been present at councils held in various parts of England. Wulfstan was based in London in the late 990s; then he took responsibility for the sees of Worcester and York. It is difficult to know just how much time he spent at Worcester,

38 Gneuss, *Ælfric*, 9–11.

39 For the use of Ælfric in the twelfth century, see especially Mary Swan, “Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies* in the Twelfth Century,” in *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62–82. In the same volume, Jonathan Wilcox, “Wulfstan and the Twelfth Century,” 83–97, discusses the rather different afterlife of Wulfstan’s homilies, which were far more popular in the eleventh century than in the twelfth, although some Wulfstanian lines recur in the *Ormulum*.

40 Leofsige, Abbot of Thorney, was made Bishop of Worcester in 1016, but Wulfstan continued to issue leases after that date, implying that Wulfstane may only have been a suffragan. See Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, 3rd ed. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1963), 9, and Patrick Wormald, “Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder,” in Townend, ed., *Wulfstan*, 12.


42 See, for example, Keynes, “An Abbot,” 170–71 and 177–80, on Wulfstan’s presence at meetings of bishops or at councils where new law codes were promulgated.
though the apparent dissatisfaction of the monks there suggests that he may not have spent much
time there or may have appeared heavy-handed when he was present.\textsuperscript{43} Wulfstan’s possession of
the see in plurality is usually rationalized according to the considerations of financial support for
the relatively impoverished archbishopric at York and of ensuring Wulfstan’s continuing loyalty
to the king by keeping him safely within the king’s sphere of influence.\textsuperscript{44} After some years in
York, Archbishop Wulfstan I (931–956) seems to have lent his support to Olaf Guthfrithsson in
the 940s, and Æthelred may have been taking steps to prevent another incident of such
embarrassment and danger to the crown.

The connection with Worcester may have been contentious during our Wulfstan’s episcopate,
but a large portion of the surviving manuscripts associated in one way or another with Wulfstan
come from or survived at Worcester. Whether this stems from an eagerness in Worcester to
preserve Wulfstanian material (either for its own qualities or because of its association with
Wulfstan) or whether it comes about as a corollary of Worcester’s prodigious manuscript
production and well-stocked library is uncertain. Another factor may be the importance at
Worcester of the cult of St. Wulfstan (Bishop of Worcester, 1062–1095), who may have been
Archbishop Wulfstan’s nephew and godson and who seems to have regarded him highly.\textsuperscript{45} St.
Wulfstan may have, if he admired the works of his predecessor, promoted or even used them
himself. A short-lived cult was devoted to Archbishop Wulfstan at Ely, which caused some
friction with Peterborough, where Wulfstan had also maintained ties.\textsuperscript{46} According to the \textit{Liber
Eliensis}, Wulfstan visited Ely at an unspecified time (\textit{quodam tempore}), and his miraculous

\textsuperscript{43} Archbishop Wulfstan was remembered as \textit{reprobus} (reprobate) by the monks at Worcester; see Emma Mason, \textit{St.

\textsuperscript{44} Joyce Hill, “Archbishop Wulfstan: Reformer?,” 312.

\textsuperscript{45} Mason, 24, notes that St. Wulfstan is said to have admired Archbishop Wulfstan’s writings. In fact, St. Wulfstan,
according to Mason, 30, was probably named after Archbishop Wulfstan, but Nicholas Brooks, “Introduction: How
Do We Know about St. Wulfstan?,” in \textit{St. Wulfstan and His World}, ed. Julia S. Barrow and N. P. Brooks (Aldershot:
Ashgate, 2005), 19–21, acknowledges that St. Wulfstan may have been the son of Wulfgifu, the sister of Archbishop
Wulfstan, but he believes that the more probable identification of St. Wulfstan’s mother is with the Wulfgifu to
whom Archbishop Wulfstan leased a Worcester property.

\textsuperscript{46} For details of the cult at Ely, see John Crook, “‘Vir optimus Wlstanus’: The Post-Conquest Commemoration of
Peterborough, see also Wormald, “Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleven-Century State-Builder,” in Townend, ed.,
experience there is said to have determined him to endow the monastery with gifts, attest its charters, and resolve to be buried there after his death. These gifts, as well as the miracles said to occur at his tomb, inspired the brief devotional attention given to Wulfstan.

The politics of language use have often been deployed in comparing Wulfstan and Ælfric. Wulfstan is famous for an idiolectal usage, which is often one of the factors in the attribution of a Wulfstanian text, but Ælfric also adheres to a particular set of lexical norms—in this case, the so-called Standard Old English. It is often remarked that Wulfstan favoured Norse lagu (“law”) over Anglo-Saxon æ, but his possible involvement with the St. Brice’s Day Massacre should qualify any suggestion that Wulfstan was especially open to Norse influence. Aside from that, his vocabulary is not so overwhelmingly infused with Scandinavian lexical items as to suggest that he was pandering to a Norse audience at York. Rather, his usage, while distinct from Winchester usage, is basically West Saxon, and he seems simply to have been more avant-garde than Ælfric in adopting vocabulary that was already beginning to catch on in late Old English.

One exception to this is Wulfstan’s preference for the older drihten, by contrast with Ælfric’s adherence to the Winchester term hælend. Ælfric himself incorporates the Old Norse forms of the names of pagan gods into the Old English text of his homily De falsis diis, perhaps to

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48 Jonathan Wilcox, “Wulfstan’s Sermo Lupi ad Anglos as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond,” in Townend, ed., Wulfstan, 377, notes that Wulfstan was promoted to York in 1002, the same year as the massacre.


50 Loring Holmes Dodd, A Glossary of Wulfstan’s Homilies (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1908), 48 and 115. Mabel Falberg Dobyns, “Wulfstan’s Vocabulary: A Glossary of the Homilies with Commentary” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), is generally more reliable because, unlike Dodd (who relied on Napier without distinguishing between genuine and spurious homilies), Dobyns restricts her material to that contained in Bethurum’s edition. Dobyns, however, omits both drihten and hælend.
separate continuing Norse paganism from the former Anglo-Saxon paganism.\textsuperscript{51} If his use of Norse vocabulary may have had little to do with enriching the English language, Ælfric was nevertheless conscious of the ways in which translation could either be limited by or supplement Old English vocabulary.\textsuperscript{52}

Wulfstan, on the other hand, never explicitly addresses the question of translation, but with both Latin and Old English homiletic texts attributed to him, he must have been conscious of the implications of composing texts in different languages. His Latin is believed to have been competent, though not at the scholarly level achieved by Ælfric, and it is a debated question whether or not he was steeped in the Latin rhetorical tradition.\textsuperscript{53} He asked Ælfric to translate the pastoral letters into Old English, and on at least one occasion, Wulfstan asked another person to do some translation work for him, but this may have been related to the busy life Wulfstan led.\textsuperscript{54} Wulfstan seems in several cases to have first composed Latin homilies and then adapted them into Old English (as with Bethurum Homilies Ia and Ib; VIIIa and VIIIb; Xb and Xc; and XVIa and XVIb),\textsuperscript{55} but new work is also showing that he may have been more comfortable operating in Latin registers than was previously thought and that not all of his Latin homilies were necessarily “perfected” in English.\textsuperscript{56}

If we compare their known movements on a map, Wulfstan seems to be running circles around Ælfric, and this may go a long way towards explaining Ælfric’s far greater textual output. From this perspective, it is almost more astonishing that Wulfstan ever had the time to compose

\textsuperscript{51} Matthew Townend, \textit{Language and History in Viking Age England: Linguistic Relations Between Speakers of Old Norse and Old English} (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 143.

\textsuperscript{52} Ælfric discusses translation in the Latin preface to his \textit{Grammar}, edited by Wilcox, \textit{Ælfric’s Prefaces}, 114–15, with a translation on page 130.

\textsuperscript{53} For references on both sides of the question, see Andy Orchard, “Crying Wolf: Oral Style and the \textit{Sermones Lupi},” \textit{ASE} 21 (1992): 239, nn. 2–3.

\textsuperscript{54} Whitelock, “Note on the Career,” 464.


\textsuperscript{56} Hall, 109.
anything, let alone to devote hours to annotating his manuscripts and updating his works. The demands on an archbishop’s time are heavy under any circumstances, but it is noteworthy that Wulfstan presided over his sees (and his contributions to the *witan*) at one of the most turbulent periods of Anglo-Saxon history. In fact, Wulfstan shows remarkable staying power. The *Liber Eliensis* reports that he was beloved of Æthelred, Edmund Ironside (r. 23 April–30 November 1016), and Cnut: *quibus singulis eque amabatur ut frater, eque honorabatur ut pater.* In spite of the almost hagiographical tone of the account in the *Liber Eliensis*, Wulfstan’s sizable body of legal and ecclesiastical work shows that he did manage to maintain a position of prominence and trust at both the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Danish courts.

Wulfstan is well known, especially after an influential article by Dorothy Whitelock, as a homilist, but generic divisions do not seem to have troubled him. In fact, the basis of attribution for his law codes and other works is often the same prose style that is used to identify his homiletic texts. His homiletic output is minuscule next to Ælfric’s, but the editorial confusion is greater. The two major editions are those of Napier and Bethurum, but Jonathan Wilcox has added still more texts or fragments to Wulfstan’s corpus. Napier’s edition included all of the texts that he thought might be connected in any way with Wulfstan, but he never completed

57 Wormald, “Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder,” 11 and 21, quotes scholars who have concluded that Wulfstan could have done little but dictate from the saddle based on material provided to him by a secretary, but Wormald rejects this view.

58 Blake, *Liber Eliensis*, 156. “By each of whom he was equally loved as a brother and honoured as a father.” (Translation is my own.)


60 Orchard, “Crying Wolf,” 247, counted, including all variants from Bethurum’s edition, just over 28,000 words, approximately 20% of which come from the three *Sermo Lupi* versions. Orchard, “Wulfstan as Reader,” 320–1, estimates Wulfstan’s active vocabulary at 2043 head-words in Dobyns’ glossary of the homilies edited by Bethurum, contrasting it with a count of 5056 head-words used by Ælfric, according to Godden, *CH*, EETS s.s. 18, 671.


the second volume, in which he had intended to establish which texts were genuinely the work of Wulfstan. Bethurum’s edition excised a large number of Napier’s texts as being non-Wulfstanian, but her edition is problematic in many ways, not least of which is the fact that Wilcox has since restored many of the excised items to Wulfstan’s corpus. The other disadvantages of Bethurum’s edition (now the most readily available) include her questionable treatment of glosses in general and those of the Tremulous Hand of Worcester in particular, her division of texts (which often ignores manuscript rubrication), and occasional errors.

In addition to his homiletic texts, Wulfstan may have composed the introductions for the Old English Benedictine Office, a work giving commentary and partial texts of the canonical Hours. Wulfstan is also credited with the composition of non-religious texts, including a number of law codes associated with Æthelred and Cnut, and he bridges the gap with the work Jost edited as the Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical. It has even been suggested that Wulfstan may have been involved in the production of the “Northern Recension” of the Anglo-Saxon

67 The example of Bethurum XIII is discussed below, pp. 105–08.
68 Orchard, “On Editing Wulfstan,” 314, n. 16; 315, n. 20; and 318, n. 33, points out several errors such as incorrectly listing pages on which a homily appears, mixing up variants from different versions of a homily, and mistaken readings. We will see below that Bethurum’s text of her Homily XIII stops in the middle of CCCC 201, p. 22, although Bethurum states in her apparatus that the homily runs from p. 19 to p. 25 in this manuscript.
If he did not compose much poetry, Wulfstan certainly seems to have appreciated it, judging by his own rhythmical and often alliterative prose style. Since we do not know the precise circumstances of the compilation of these manuscripts, we cannot, of course, know whether Wulfstan himself ordered the inclusion of poetic texts in Wulfstanian manuscripts such as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121 or CCCC 201, but the compiler recognized their consonance in both theme and style with the Wulfstanian texts that surround them. In BL, Cotton Vespasian A.xiv, a Latin poem in praise of Wulfstan appears on fol. 148v, while three lines of verse playing on Latin parallels for the elements of Wulfstan’s name (lupus and lapidem for wulf and stan) appear on Cotton Tiberius A.xiii, fol. 101v. Wulfstan could certainly have been the scribe of the Vespasian poem, whether or not he also composed it.

In contrast, Dorothy Bethurum suggested that “there is something anti-poetic in Wulfstan’s temperament and interests” and asserted that he shies away from heroic modes, but the evidence of the Wulfstanian manuscripts suggests rather that he was interested in poetry, as do the stylistic tendencies of Wulfstan’s work acknowledged by most scholars, including Bethurum herself. While Richard Dance notes that Wulfstan rarely uses vocabulary that can only be found

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73 Orchard, “Wulfstan as Reader,” 332–4, comments on a passage from Bethurum VII that parallels several lines from Christ C, though he notes that this shared content is probably from a common tradition, rather than direct imitation. See also the discussion of Wulfstanian phrases in the Ormulum, pp. 96–8 below.

74 William Robins, “Ancient Romance and Medieval Literary Genres: Apollonius of Tyre” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1995), 96–103, notes that even the seeming generic and topical contrast brought by the Apollonius may, like the other texts in CCCC 201, be understood to represent a response to the charged political atmosphere in early eleventh-century England with Scandinavian, Norman, and Flemish influences all vying for dominance.

75 Both poems are edited and discussed by Orchard, “Wulfstan as Reader, Writer, and Rewriter,” 328–32. N. R. Ker, “Handwriting,” 326–7, believes that Wulfstan was the scribe of the poem on Vespasian A.xiv, fol. 148v.

76 Bethurum, Homilies, 48, cites the “unsure” scansion and “highly irregular” alliteration of the Chronicle poems Wulfstan is believed to have composed, in addition to differences in vocabulary between the poetic versions of the Gloria, Pater Noster, and Credo, on the one hand, and Wulfstan’s homilies on the other. Bethurum, 94, cites Homily V, ll. 102–107, as the best example of verse-like writing in the homilies, but notes that it cannot be arranged into regular verse lines.
otherwise in poetry and also that the constraints on Wulfstan’s prose are different than those on poetic verse, he also acknowledges that “Wulfstan’s traditional, formulaic style, his rhythm and in particular his liking for echoing pairs of words, naturally lends itself to compounds in a way that is similar to that in which poetry responds to its own metrical and syntactic pressures.”

Don Chapman draws a similar distinction between Wulfstan’s use and creation of compounds and the similar poetic construction of compounds, but he concludes his discussion by noting that “[s]uch corresponding uses of compounds in prose and poetry point to yet another convergence of the two styles in the late Anglo-Saxon period.” Chapman emphasizes elsewhere that Wulfstan’s use of rhetorical techniques, particularly echoing compounds, need not be seen as either a device from native, oral tradition or a learned Latin technique from a literate tradition. Instead, Chapman argues that Wulfstan’s familiarity with the Latin grammatical and rhetorical tradition would strengthen the vernacular tradition we usually associate with poetry, rather than swallowing it up. Surely it is possible to assert that Wulfstan wrote in a style that was often poetic without also suggesting that he was setting out to write verse lines such as would appear in poetry.

The attribution of a particular work to Wulfstan is often based on stylistic grounds. Fundamental to Wulfstan’s style is the use of alliterative or rhyming doublets and other sorts of sound-play. These doublets are often redundant, as in the common pair magan 7 motan, providing emphasis and colour, rather than new information. Texts attributed to Wulfstan are littered with intensifying adverbs, such as georne or even swiþe georne, that again convey relatively little semantic information. The rhythmical nature of the prose of these works is also fundamental to the stylistic identifications. A related feature of the manuscript witnesses of many of the works is their very careful punctuation that breaks sentences into smaller, more regular aural and sense units. It is not immediately clear whether this practice should be attributed to the homilist, some intermediary, or the scribes of the surviving manuscripts, but the importance of manuscript

punctuation in editing Wulfstan’s homilies is clear when we consider the consistency with which it highlights the rhetorical structure of the homilies. Even non-homiletic texts in the manuscript are carefully punctuated, including the pastoral letter that precedes Bethurum XIII in CCCC 201 on p. 19, ll. 31–36, which is pointed several times within most manuscript lines:

Wulfstan árcebisceop · greteð freondlice · þegnas on ðéode · /
gehadode 7 læwede · ealle gemænelice · þa ðe him betæhte sindon · /
for gode to wissianne · 7 ic bidde eow for godes lufan · þæt ge þises /
gewrites giman 7 on hwiltidum hit on gemynde habban · forðam þeah /
ðe hit leohlic :: :: :: :: mînegung þince · hit is þeah þearflic · /
gime se þe wille · /

The religious verse in CCCC 201 provides a very early example, possibly the earliest example, of pointing for purely metrical reasons in Old English manuscripts, and the system of punctuation is similar to the somewhat less formal system followed by the same scribe in the copy of the Regularis concordia that appears at the beginning of the manuscript, providing us with yet another link between the prose and poetic traditions. If we rearrange the text of the Wulfstan letter into mostly four-stress lines, as in Old English verse, then we produce the following:

Wulfstan árcebisceop · greteð freondlice ·

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81 I have normalized word separation according to the conventions of modern editions of Old English texts, and I have also replaced each wynn with a w. “Archbishop Wulfstan greets kindly the thegns among the people, ordained and lay, all universally who are entrusted to him to direct for good. And I bid you for the love of God that you heed this writ and at times hold it in your mind because although it seems like an inconsequential warning, it is nevertheless necessary. Heed it he who will.”

82 Approximately five letters were first expunctuated and then scraped away. The ruling was then traced in ink to connect leohlic to mînegung.

þegnas on ðeode · gehadode 7 læwede ·
ealle gemænelice · þa ðe him betæhte sindon · /
for gode to wissianne · 7 ic bidde eow for godes lufan ·
5 þæt ge þises / gewrites giman
7 on hwiltidum hit on gemynde habban ·
forðam þeah / ðe hit leohlic :: :: :: ::
mínegung þince · hit is þeah þearflíc · /
gime se þe wille · /

Every manuscript line corresponds to roughly 1.5 quasi-metrical lines. Here, it is clear that the pointing in the manuscript occurs where the metrical half-lines would fall in more disciplined verse. The large erasure in line 7 of the rearranged text covers one of the two places where a metrical line ends without the benefit of a punctus, so we cannot be sure that there was not originally a point to mark the metrical line-ending. Two of the three times when the punctus is “missing” in between the two half-lines come at the ends of their respective manuscript lines (in the middle of the current lines 5 and 7). As the letter is laid out in the manuscript, the first five lines all run past the vertical double-ruling into the outer margin of the folio, but there is still room (though only just, in the case of forðam þeah) for punctus to be added in the margin. So, it is unclear why the scribe has neglected or chosen not do so. The other missing mid-line punctus (current line 6) seems simply to have been omitted between hwiltidum and hit, perhaps forgotten after the suspension mark was added at the end of hwiltidum.

In addition to these features of style, the very choice of words seems to set Wulfstanian material apart from even texts that are chronologically or generically close to his homilies. To refer to Christ, for example, Wulfstan overwhelmingly preferred the martial-heroic borrowing drihten
(Lord) over the more directly relevant hælend (Saviour, from hælan, “to heal”), and as we have seen, he also favoured the Norse lagu over the English æ (“law”). Wulfstan’s use of such Norse vocabulary has often been cited as evidence of links with East Anglia or of his sensitivity to a York audience, but just as recent work on poetic vocabulary has qualified previous statements, recent study of Wulfstan’s Norse vocabulary has shown that there is no significant correlation between Wulfstan’s time at York and his use of Norse-derived vocabulary, which is present from early on in his career, as far as we can tell. Dorothy Whitelock associates Wulfstan with the laws of Cnut partly on the basis of this idiolect, particularly the unusual compounds that are so common in Wulfstan’s homilies. Whitelock particularly mentions some of Wulfstan’s “favourite” words: woroldlagu (secular or civil law), weofodþegn (priest, from “altar-servant”), and ægylde (without compensation), which are unusual combinations limited to works that seem to be within Wulfstan’s sphere of influence. It must be noted, however, that these words appear only rarely, even in Wulfstan’s works, perhaps calling into question the use of a term like “favourite.”

Wulfstan’s penchant for repetition not only within individual works but across his corpus is often overlooked. For instance, while his habit of returning to earlier material on a large scale, as in the surviving versions of the Sermo Lupi, is well known, the repetition of individual forms in Wulfstan’s corpus easily dwarfs the corresponding rates in both prose and lengthy poems like Beowulf. Repetition and the other elements of Wulfstan’s style have aural properties that make them especially useful for an orally performed genre like preaching. Repetition, alliteration,

84 Dodd, 48 and 115. As noted above, Dobyns is generally more reliable because she restricts her material to that contained in Bethurum’s edition, but Dobyns omits both drihten and hælend.

85 Dobyns, 79. Dodd, 3 and 136.

86 For an analysis of Wulfstan’s Norse-derived vocabulary and its sources, Pons-Sanz, Norse-Derived Vocabulary, esp. 199–203.


88 Dobyns does not even list woroldlagu and weofodþegn, while Dodd, 227 and 236, counts only one instance of weofodþegn and only three of woruldlagu. According to Dobyns, 18, ægylde appears nowhere except in the medium and long versions of the Sermo Lupi.

sound-play, and rhythmical lists all help a congregation to remember the phrases in which they appear, while Wulfstan’s often fiery rhetoric is nothing if not attention grabbing. At the same time, Wulfstan uses large-scale structural markers in his homilies, frequently opening and closing sections of his homilies with recognizable formulae that provide his listeners with a kind of aural punctuation to catch hold of in the flow of the homily. This technique might also be a useful way of realigning the preacher’s discourse with his original topic, if he found himself straying.

A useful example of this large-scale aural punctuation comes from the copy of Napier 22, corresponding to lines 53–106 of Bethurum XIII, in CCCC 201, pp. 21–22. The text opens with a common formula, Leofan men, followed by a string of phrases that parallel each other in their use of the hortatory verb uton (Bethurum, lines 53, 55, 57, 63, and 65). After several long lists in Wulfstan’s characteristic echoing, rhyming, and alliterating style, three more uton phrases appear in the space of six lines (Bethurum, lines 98, 100, and 103, corresponding to lines 10, 11, and 15 of CCCC 201, p. 22) to bring both the text of Bethurum XIII and that of Napier 22 to an end. These elements of aural punctuation serve as points at which the flow of the sermon may be anchored—no doubt a useful function for both the congregation and the preacher, like the various turns and cadences of a recitation tone that signal different stops in a chanted reading. These aural punctuation marks allow the preacher to pause for breath, both literally and figuratively, while the congregation also has a chance to digest the material.

These punctuating phrases and the other aural and rhetorical habits outlined above also suggest a particular compositional method where once a new topic is established (after one of Wulfstan’s characteristic opening formulae, no doubt), the discussion may be elaborated according to the patterns of speaking that Wulfstan has already established in other homilies. Unfortunately for those who wish to attribute works to Wulfstan, the very suitability of this style of rhetoric for the kind of composition and performance a preacher would be called upon to carry out makes it

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90 Bethurum, 89; Dance, 55–6; and Ida Masters Hollowell, “Linguistic Factors Underlying Style Levels in Four Homilies of Wulfstan,” Neophilologus 61 (1977): 287–96, all discuss the so-called plain and high styles of Wulfstan’s homilies.

91 In Napier’s edition, the homilies are labeled with Roman numerals, but to distinguish them more clearly from Bethurum’s now more familiar text, I will use Arabic numerals for Napier’s homilies.
dangerous as a method of identification of Wulfstan’s corpus. The features that make it so effective and so distinctive also render the style imitable, so that it is hard to rule out the possibility that another person could have been aping Wulfstan’s style while composing a given text. Doubt has even been thrown on some attributions because the texts are deemed “too Wulfstanian” to have been the work of the archbishop himself. In fact, Donald Scragg has argued that Wulfstan was capitalizing on a technique of using pairs of words and phrases in a way that had already been proven effective in tenth-century texts, whereas Jonathan Wilcox has identified fifteen composite sermons in nine eleventh-century manuscript collections that draw on Wulfstan’s homiletic works.

In this analysis of the afterlife of Wulfstan’s homilies, Worcester emerges as fundamental to their later transmission, while Canterbury is a strikingly unimportant site of transmission, given its relatively large collection of manuscripts during this period. This is in contrast to its major role in the dissemination of Ælfric’s homilies, where Winchester plays a surprisingly minor role, given Ælfric’s oft-recalled connection to the site. The fact that Sigeric saw or at least was sent copies of the Catholic Homilies may have stimulated the production of Ælfrician manuscripts at Canterbury. In contrast with the history of Ælfric’s homiletic writings, which were copied many times, often in larger collections of his texts, another important point that emerges from Wilcox’s analysis is that many of the Wulfstan borrowings take the form of short clauses that could easily have been preserved by memory. This suggests that Wulfstan’s style did serve its aural purposes by allowing listeners to internalize his phrases to such an extent that they

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93 Ibid., 7–12.
95 Ibid., 214–15.
98 Joyce Hill, “Ælfric: His Life and Works,” in Magennis and Swan, 47, lists the instances of this and speculates on the reasons Ælfric might have felt compelled to make constant reference to the school of Æthelwold.
were later worked into a number of homiletic texts that are often preserved only in single manuscripts.\textsuperscript{99}

One such manuscript will serve to illustrate a large point about the textual community in which Wulfstan worked. Junius 1 is the unique manuscript of the \textit{Ormulum}, which contains at lines 9316–24 and 10200–208 several substantives from a characteristically Wulfstanian list in Bethurum V, lines 102–04.\textsuperscript{100} First, I quote the text of Wulfstan’s homily from CCCC 201, page 70, line 40, to page 71, line 1, divided once again into quasi-metrical lines. Parallels with Orm’s text are indicated in bold.

\begin{quote}
Eac sceal aspringan \textcdot \ 7 side\textcdot

\textit{sacu} \textcdot \textit{7 clacu} \textcdot \ hol \ 7 hete\textcdot

\textit{7 ripera reaflac} \textcdot \ here \ 7 hunger\textcdot

brine \ 7 blodgite \ 7 stirnlce stirunga\textcdot

stric \ 7 storfa \ 7 fela ungelimpa.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

The two passages from the \textit{Ormulum} are both drawn from a homily on the Gospel of Luke, and they betray another Wulfstanian reminiscence by the small variations introduced into the passage in its second appearance. These variations are indicated with underlining.

\textbf{[a] Lines 9316–24}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Yiff} \textit{batt} \textit{3e} \textit{wel} \ 3uw lokenn

Fra \textit{clake} \textit{7 sake}, \textit{7} fra \textit{batt to\textsuperscript{p}}
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{\textsuperscript{99} Wilcox, “Dissemination,” 216.}
\textbf{\textsuperscript{101} “Also will arise, far and wide, \textit{conflict and injury}, slander and malice, and \textit{plunder of robbers}, devastation and famine, burning and bloodletting, and harsh disturbances, plague and pestilence, and many misfortunes.”}
\end{flushright}
If you carefully secure yourself from injury and strife, and from that appetite that follows gluttony, that steals from the common people, and robs them and plunders, and if you consider it enough that the King finds you, then you will be able, with a clean life, to help your souls very much.
Just as Wulfstan himself, or any Wulfstan imitator, made frequent use of repetition with variation, Orm has done the same, whether or not he was aware of the origin of his echoed phrases. Orm has echoed phrases used by Wulfstan, and he has done so in an imprecise way that suggests that it was an aural memory he drew on. Orm’s reuse of his own phrases later in the homily shows similar flexibility and reflects the oral and communal environment in which these written texts also operated. The manuscripts containing Wulfstan’s text punctuate the homily so as to emphasize in writing the features that are most likely to be remembered from an oral performance.

The anonymous writer of a 1002 letter directed to Wulfstan and preserved in Vespasian A.xiv, fol. 179r, declines to carry out some translation for him, ostensibly because Wulfstan’s style is too wonderful to live up to: *sed reuera postmodum diligenter dulcissimam eloquii uestri considerans sagacitatem, decenterque dispositae narrationis prolixitatem, simulque profunditatem, me ad haec transferenda nullam reputo habere facultatem.* Whitelock takes this as evidence against the existence of Wulfstan imitators, but there are other reasons on account of which this author might have refused Wulfstan’s request. Wulfstan seems not to have been as well educated in Latin as some of his contemporaries, including Ælfric, and it may have been irksome to more skilled Latinists to see a less educated man nonetheless exercising great sway while remaining to some extent dependent on the abilities of his less famous counterparts for some of his material. Whitelock is right, however, in noting that this letter demonstrates that Wulfstan’s reputation as a prose stylist was well established by 1002, the date of his translation to Worcester and York.

103 “If you carefully secure yourself from injury and strife, and from that appetite that follows greediness, that steals from the common folk, and robs them and plunders, and if you consider it enough that the King finds you, then you will be able, through a clean life, to help your souls very much.”

104 Bethurum, *Homilies*, 377. See also Whitelock, “Note on the Career,” 464. “But in truth, after carefully considering the sweetest shrewdness of your eloquence and the breadth and likewise the depth of your properly arranged narrative, I do not think I have the ability to translate these things.” (Translation is my own.)

If there were Wulfstan imitators already by 1002 or after Wulfstan’s death, this need not greatly alter the way we discuss the texts that we associate with Wulfstan, largely on stylistic grounds. In the same way that we can speak of Alfredian texts, whether or not Alfred himself had a hand in all of them, it is possible and perhaps preferable to speak of Wulfstanian texts that we believe to be associated with Wulfstan or with a wish to emulate his style. The picture that we have painted of Wulfstan is already one of communal engagement, both through books that provided him with source material (as in the case of his frequent borrowings from Ælfric, to name just one example) or in which he left annotations, and through his contacts with other individuals or institutions, such as congregations at Mass, the king and other advisors at meetings of the witan, or in his correspondence with Ælfric and others. As we shall see below, Wulfstan’s texts (or Wulfstanian texts) are composed and recorded in ways that allow for later adaptation by Wulfstan or by other preachers, and nothing better exemplifies communal tendencies in textual production than imitation.

Another factor that has a bearing both on the attribution of these homilies and on our understanding of the use of these manuscripts is the question of Wulfstan’s handwriting.106 The hand that Ker identifies as Wulfstan’s may have been responsible for much of the apparently added punctuation in the manuscripts of his works, and the hand is also the one that made many corrections and additions to the texts of his works, including characteristic Wulfstanian phrases like gyme se þe wille.107 The identification of this hand raises larger questions about Wulfstan and the manuscripts associated with him. If this is not Wulfstan’s hand, then there is again the possibility of Wulfstan imitators, one of whom has annotated material written by Wulfstan or in his style. Given the particular focus of this hand on Wulfstanian texts, notably the Vespasian poem in praise of Wulfstan, it is reasonable to think that the hand must be Wulfstan’s or that of

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107 The “Wulfstan” hand adds this phrase to the Cotton Nero A.i rubric for Bethurum XXI, on which see Andy Orchard, “On Editing Wulfstan,” in Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg, ed. Elaine Trehearne and Susan Rosser (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), 316 and Appendix II at p. 333. The text appears in Bethurum, 276, and the addition in Ker, “Handwriting,” 322, under “115v.” This phrase also closes the pastoral letter from CCCC 201, p. 19.
someone very closely connected to him. Patrick Wormald argues forcefully that the hand belongs to Wulfstan himself, not merely to an amanuensis. That the hand belongs to someone very like or very closely connected to Wulfstan follows from the apparent interest in Worcester, York, secular legal texts, the worldly wealth of clerics, and the spiritual welfare of laymen, coupled with the fact that the York Gospels, which also contain the hand, date from at least 1020. The next joint tenures of Worcester and York after Wulfstan’s lasted only one year each (1040-1041 and 1061-1062), making it less likely that either of the incumbents would have put down roots sufficient to accomplish this much work, still less to wish to accomplish this much work related to those two episcopacies. Wormald claims that it is more likely that the annotations were made by Wulfstan himself, not an amanuensis, because they seem more like the assured work of an author, rather than a copyist, especially in the “flagrant immodesty” of the poem in Vespasian A.xiv that is then tempered somewhat by the addition of si volueris (“if you will”) and the reference to a flock under the pastor’s care. On the other hand, identifying Wulfstan as the copyist of the poem is not necessarily to suggest that Wulfstan was its author, even though both this poem and that preserved on Tiberius A.xiii, f. 101v, display literary traits that resonated with Wulfstan, such as quotation from Alcuin and internal repetition.

If this hand is indeed that of Wulfstan, as seems most likely, then we might ask when these annotations were made, amongst all the perambulations Wulfstan seems to have been making across England. How much of Wulfstan’s corpus had been recorded in its present form by the time he was carrying out these annotations? These annotations must have taken some time to enter, even for the author or compiler himself, so are we to conclude that there are manuscripts that traveled with him from London to York or from the scriptorium at Worcester to find him at York? Either of these conclusions would add a new dimension to the debate over the manuscripts of the so-called Commonplace Book, suggesting that Wulfstan may indeed have requested such collections, if not selected them himself. If we are right to think that his relative unpopularity at Worcester implies that he was not often present, then any Worcester-produced manuscripts that were with him might well have been outside of Worcester for an extended period. Sadly, even

the Wulfstanian manuscripts that are dated to the eleventh century are often dated to the later
eleventh century (including Hatton 113, Hatton 114, and CCCC 201), so we cannot be certain
just what was in the library at Worcester or what might have been produced there during
Wulfstan’s lifetime. In his *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, Neil Ker even
uses the presence of the Wulfstan hand tentatively to assign some manuscripts to either
Worcester or York. Even more tantalizing is the case of BL, MS Harley 55, which contains
annotations in the Wulfstan hand and may have been at York when a statement on lands acquired
by the archiepiscopal see was entered but was almost certainly in Worcester by the early
thirteenth century, when several glosses were entered the Tremulous Hand of Worcester. As
we shall see in Chapter 4, the Tremulous Hand is believed to have consulted most of the
manuscripts that bear his distinctive handwriting in situ at the cathedral priory in Worcester, and
Tremulous glosses are often taken to indicate Worcester provenance. So, it is tempting to
speculate that Harley 55 might have traveled down to Worcester with Wulfstan, although there is
no evidence to prove such a conjecture.

While Ælfric produced more material, Wulfstan nevertheless placed himself at the centre of a
textual community that produced manuscripts and distributed them across England and perhaps
to Scandinavia. Ælfric leaves us evidence in his prefaces of his concern over the accurate
copying and faithful transmission of his works, but we have no reason to suppose that he was
overseeing the production or distribution of his own works (and perhaps, based on his concern,
all the more reason to suppose not). Wulfstan’s standing as a bishop and archbishop probably
helped him to get access to the resources of a scriptorium, and it is also presumably how he came
to be aware of Ælfric’s stature as an authority who could be consulted without shame on matters
of ecclesiastical protocol or points of doctrine. Even so, it would be interesting to know how they
first got in touch, that is, who first referred Wulfstan to Ælfric or where Wulfstan first came

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110 Bethurum, 2–5.
111 These manuscripts are BL, Cotton MSS Claudius A.iii (Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 141), Nero A.i (Ker, no. 164), and Vespasian A.xiv (Ker, no. 204).
112 Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 225.
113 See p. 128 in Chapter 4.
across Ælfric’s writings. Further, we might wonder whether or not Ælfric ever learned the extent to which Wulfstan was reworking Ælfric’s texts in his own works. Could this have been a factor in Ælfric’s cool replies to Wulfstan’s queries? In other situations, Ælfric was the one seeking the support of his ecclesiastical superiors, as when he sent his Catholic Homilies to Sigeric (Archbishop of Canterbury, 990–994) for approval, which probably increased the visibility and circulation of his works. We know also of his secular patrons, but with Wulfstan, there are no indications of any patrons, either secular or ecclesiastical, other than his appeals to Ælfric’s scholarly prowess. Perhaps it was Wulfstan’s homiletic style that first brought him to the notice of the ecclesiastical establishment, but we have no evidence of where or when he was preaching before he became Bishop of London in 996, nor if he, like Ælfric, submitted written copies of his works to powerful ecclesiastics who could promote them and him. At some point, he must have caught the attention of some such potentate, either because of family connections or because of written texts or oral performances of his works, for he was indeed elevated to the bishopric nearly thirty years before his death, when he cannot have been far into his career.

From the interactions between individuals, we turn now to the reworking of texts, where Wulfstan is in a league of his own. Whether he is reworking his own or others’ material, Wulfstan habitually adapts it according to the stylistic and rhetorical patterns discussed above, and the parallels this inevitably introduces into his corpus make it difficult to determine a chronology of his works. His eschatological homilies have traditionally been regarded as early compositions that helped to establish Wulfstan’s reputation as a preacher, but this has recently been called into question. There are few internal clues to the ordering of the homilies, let alone to their dates of composition, but the case of the Sermo Lupi is both especially complicated

114 Orchard, “Crying Wolf,” 240–2 and 257, but see also Scragg, Dating and Style, at p. 12, for a dissenting, or at least qualifying, opinion.
115 Bethurum, Homilies, 101–104.
116 Godden, “Relations,” 365–70, suggests that Wulfstan may have gotten most of his texts of Ælfric from the two small collections in Hatton 115 and CCCC 178, both with Worcester connections, and that he may have done so well after the millennium, that is, well after the time when any works establishing his reputation must have been composed. Orchard, “Wulfstan as Reader,” 336–340, adds to this list CCCC 188, which is the source for a passage in Bethurum V. For other recent accounts of the possible chronology of Wulfstan’s works, see Wormald, “Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder,” 26–7, and Pons-Sanz, Norse-Derived Vocabulary, 18–25, both of whom accept at least some of the supposedly early eschatological homilies as having been composed early in Wulfstan’s known career.
and unusually clear in the amount of information we have upon which to attempt to establish a chronology of versions. The Sermo Lupi survives in five manuscript witnesses that represent three recognizable versions of greatly varying length: CCCC 419 (MS B, dated to s. xi), CCCC 201 (MS C, dated to s. xi), Hatton 113 (MS E, dated to s. xi\textsuperscript{2}), Bodley 343 (MS H, dated to s. xii\textsuperscript{2}), and Cotton Nero A.i (MS I, dated to s. xi\textsuperscript{1}). The chronological ordering of the versions, the date of the first composition or performance, and other differences in editorial philosophy are unsettled questions in the scholarship on the Sermo Lupi.

The Sermo Lupi ad Anglos, printed in its three different versions in order of increasing length as Bethurum XX (BH), XX (C), and XX (EI), has most often been dated to 1014,\textsuperscript{117} although there are compelling arguments in favour of an original composition in 1009.\textsuperscript{118} Whitelock, Bethurum, and Godden have all held that the text grew longer over time,\textsuperscript{119} while others have viewed it a process of repeated cutting.\textsuperscript{120} In assigning a linear chronological ordering of the versions, it is easy to forget that the distribution of non-orthographical, non-dialectal variants is significant enough that it the three versions must be acknowledged as self-sufficient adaptations of common material, not merely as varying faulty copies of a single text whose “true” character was at some point permanently fixed. Next to the multitude of marginal and interlinear corrections and additions to Wulfstanian material in a hand that may be Wulfstan’s or that of someone closely connected to him, this plurality of texts based on a single recognizable outline is more likely to be a sign of Wulfstan’s willingness, even eagerness, to tinker with and rework his own writings to suit various occasions.

\textsuperscript{117} Bethurum, Homilies, 255–75. See also her discussion of the text on pages 22–24, although her assumption that the text must have gotten longer over time and thus that the variant readings in the presumed middle version must be spurious is problematic.

\textsuperscript{118} Keynes, “An Abbot,” has most recently taken up the 1009 argument, although he ultimately favours 1014.


Recent work positing the particular circumstances of the composition and recomposition of versions of the *Sermo Lupi* has helped to redirect the debate, but the field is still haunted by traces of a stemmatic approach that threatens to obscure the evidence of the manuscript witnesses. The discussion given to the dates in the manuscript rubrics is particularly revealing and often betrays a wish to harmonize the differing rubrics. The rubrics in two manuscripts (CCCC 201 and Cotton Nero A.i) date the homily to 1009 and 1014, respectively, but the date in Nero A.i has been added over an erasure. This change could mean any of a number of things, but the fact of the erasure is often overlooked and the date taken without question to be accurate. Meanwhile, the date in CCCC 201 has been called into question on the grounds that the homily includes a reference to an event that took place later than 1009, namely, the expulsion of Æthelred in late 1013: *and Æthelred man dræfde ut of his earde*. The crucial point here is that the reference to Æthelred occurs only in the shortest version of the *Sermo Lupi*, that witnessed in CCCC 419 and Bodley 343. The slightly longer version in CCCC 201 does not include this line, and the argument that the sense of the passage is incomplete without this clause (meaning that the passage must have had this line removed in the medium and long versions, rather than added in the short version) is by no means conclusive. Once again, Wulfstan’s own annotations in the manuscripts of his works and other manuscripts containing texts of interest to him should remind us that his reuse of material was habitual and habitually adaptive.

The manuscripts that contain texts of interest to Wulfstan, rather than large numbers of texts composed by Wulfstan, pose their own set of puzzles. These collections tend to include works on the religious life, ecclesiastical polity, secular legal codes, religious poetry, and homiletic material. These texts are regularly referred to as “Archbishop Wulfstan’s Commonplace Book,” a title first given to them by Dorothy Bethurum. In fact, there is no way of being sure what Wulfstan’s role was, although there are some copies early enough to have been copied during

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121 Wilcox, “Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi*,” places the first performance at the meeting of the *witan* after the death of Swein Forkbeard (d. 3 February 1014), and Keynes, “An Abbot,” 203–13, argues for several stages of development, each responding to different circumstances, but he uses the rubric in Nero A.i to place a “definitive” version in 1014, although the date in that rubric is entered over an erasure.

Wulfstan’s lifetime.\textsuperscript{123} The suggestion that a collection of texts appearing in close proximity to “Recension B” of “Wulfstan’s Canon Law Collection” in CCCC 190 represents something akin to Wulfstan’s “working notes” for the \textit{Sermo Lupi} is intriguing but difficult to verify.\textsuperscript{124} Wulfstan certainly seems to have spent a great deal of time gathering useful material, but pinning down his use of it is tied up with the problem of determining a chronology of his works. What is clear is that Wulfstan’s interests overlapped with a mixture of genres and that his rhythmical, alliterative prose style should give us pause when we confidently distinguish between verse and prose.

A number of manuscripts containing works believed to have been written by Wulfstan or containing works forming part of his supposed Commonplace Book are linked to Worcester in one way or another. In the case of Hatton 113 and Junius 121, this is on the basis of the signature of Wulfgeat, a Worcester scribe of the eleventh century. More circumstantial (and sometimes, controversial) attributions have also placed CCCC 201 at Worcester and Bodley 343 somewhere in the West Midlands.\textsuperscript{125} In fact, out of the four manuscripts on which Dorothy Bethurum bases her edition of Wulfstan’s homilies (CCCC 419 and 201, Hatton 113, and Bodley 343), CCCC 419 is the only one that has not been linked in some way to the West Midlands.

CCCC 201 is a prime example of the rich study that is possible in Wulfstanian manuscripts. Both since such a large proportion of its texts are in some way Wulfstanian and since it is simply an intriguing mixture of items, this manuscript ought to be edited in its entirety. There are larger questions tied up in this endeavour than merely the internal context, complications, and confusions of this one manuscript. The texts in CCCC 201 prompt questions about genre, purpose, and authority, especially in sections like pages 19–25, where several of the texts are surprisingly short and end quite abruptly, sometimes without having developed their themes at


\textsuperscript{124} Keynes, “An Abbot,” 205–6.

\textsuperscript{125} Bethurum, 2, does not accept the localization of CCCC 201 to Worcester but does provide references for it. Mary Swan, “Constructing Preacher and Audience,” in \textit{Constructing the Medieval Sermon}, ed. Roger Andersson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 187, has argued that Bodley 343 originated in the West Midlands.
With such short and arguably incomplete homiletic texts, we are led to ask what constitutes a homily and how the genre is defined. Could a homiletic text serve a purpose other than to be read aloud as a homily delivered in the context of the Mass before a congregation? A major purpose for the copying of homiletic texts must have been to enable other preachers to draw on them, so it is conceivable that even short, deficient texts could serve as valuable prompts to help preachers formulate their own addresses on the corresponding texts or topics. This makes it unclear whose authorship is to be acknowledged when a deficient or, more optimistically, incipient text is prepared for delivery. By whose authority is such a text presented in a particular performance or in a manuscript that may be read and used for generations? We must ask whether each performance constitutes a separate text and whether the incomplete written version in fact constitutes a text in its own right. Even if a complete homily had been written down, it is conceivable that it was performed without the manuscript lying open in front of the preacher, and memory must surely have played an important part for many preachers, as it does today.

A survey of Napier’s and Bethurum’s editions makes it clear that the state of scholarly editions is quite distanced from anything that Wulfstan or any Wulfstanian imitator might have ever actually preached. For all we can ever know, there may well have been massive quantities of genuine Wulfstan or genuinely good Wulfstanian material that was never written down, not even in varying forms from varying circumstances and varying times, as we have received much of the Wulfstanian material that is written down. The highly differing treatments given respectively by Bethurum and Napier to the sequence of texts in CCCC 201, pp. 19–25, point to larger questions in Wulfstan scholarship, or in work on any homiletic texts. Napier follows the rubrication in this manuscript (mirrored in Hatton 113, designated “E” by both Napier and Bethurum), publishing them as homilies 19–22 and 24, but Bethurum conjoins them all into her homily XIII. Bethurum may have been responding partly to the fact that these texts are not fully developed and could surely not have stood alone as sermons, but they seem so obviously unrelated that to string them together leads to an absurd series of non-sequiturs. So, we are left to ask what exactly constitutes a complete homily and what should get edited, which may not necessarily be the same as what is called a complete homily.

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126 A similar situation occurs in Cotton Tiberius A.iii, fols. 88v–93v, and much of the material in the Cotton manuscript corresponds to what appears in this section of CCCC 201. See Donald Scragg, *Dating and Style*, 16–23.
The fact that a text does not seem to be a complete address does not negate its value for scholarship, but it does change it. It forces us to the question of how a homilist or preacher might move from one of these prompts to a sermon delivered aloud and quite possibly with a certain amount of improvisation based on the written material. This sequence in CCCC 201 is a collection of texts that have been alternately split apart and run together without regard for their rubrics, as if they actually formed one massive sermon—and a rather disjointed sermon at that. A careful reading shows that there is little sense in trying to understand them as one address to be delivered continuously, but it also reveals what scanty logic there is behind labeling them individually as whole homilies. It is possible that these fragments were presented as possible introductions to various topics, like the baptismal rite or the relations between men awaiting their final Judgment. If these texts were in fact intended to be starting points for homilies, then it is perhaps surprising that none of the rubrics in the manuscript give any hint of the subject matter to be covered in the following text. Instead, when a rubric appears, it is always a simple TO FOLCE.

The section begins with what is known as Wulfstan’s pastoral letter, which follows the text edited as Napier 3 and Bethurum VII. After the end of Bethurum VII, there is no rubric, but with one line left blank and a large initial wynn, it is difficult to miss the transition. The text that begins with this initial is clearly epistolary, but here we face the same problem that we see in the homiletic texts that follow: How ought we to determine the full scope of the piece? There are several possibilities in this case. The letter may be recorded as a letter actually sent with some collection of texts appended (whether or not it is those texts that follow it in CCCC 201) either for the instruction of the recipients or to aid the recipients in instructing others; the letter may be merely the beginning of a longer letter—it does seem rather short as constituted here—either with or without separate texts appended; or, this may simply be an example of the sort of letter that a bishop might circulate, not so inappropriate an opening for a collection of texts that may well have been conceived of as starter patterns. In the context of this manuscript, none of these possibilities is impossible.

At the end of the letter, the text of Napier 19 and Bethurum XIII begins on a fresh line but without a rubric. This text, comprising all of Napier 19 and the first thirty-one lines of Bethurum XIII, is a useful one to work with because, although it breaks off precisely at the moment where new and meaty material is introduced, it is just long enough to provide us with clear examples of
some of Wulfstan’s most effective rhythmical and aural techniques. Even without the consistent and frequent manuscript punctuation, it would take a poor orator to lose the rhythmical flow that enables the listener to follow the train of dependent clauses, but this text also gives us another glimpse of the large-scale aural punctuation of the homilies. It begins, predictably, with *Leofan men* and ends with *understande se þe cunne*. In between these two extremes, the most frequently occurring piece of aural punctuation is *uton*, and this text gives us two of them (Bethurum, lines 14 and 19), along with a similarly punctuating *eala* (line 12).

We see here a collection of texts that demonstrate a significant amount of skill in their rhythmical and aural effect but which almost uniformly break off without any logical conclusion. It is possible that they were delivered in the forms attested here, but that seems unlikely. If we discard that possibility, then we must explain the utility of including partial texts in a manuscript. The neatest answer seems to be that this section of the manuscript may have been intended as a sort of starter kit for preachers. That would mean that this section shows a unity of purpose that is not readily apparent from the subject matter of the individual texts. Andy Orchard’s suggestion that Bethurum VII ought to be regarded as two separate homilies, both composed by Wulfstan is telling here.¹²⁷ That the shorter of the two homilies that would be thus formed (lines 1–25 in Bethurum’s edition) functions as a microcosm of the larger (lines 26–179) suggests that Bethurum VII, as printed, gives us an example of a slightly different way in which a “starter” homily might have worked, in this case providing a complete outline for the homily, rather than a full introduction with no other structural clues.

Only a few pages after this section of short homilies occurs the first of two witnesses within CCCC 201 to the text printed as Bethurum XXI. The text appears also in Hatton 113 and Cotton Nero A.i, but even the two versions in the Corpus manuscript differ from each other. The two versions have been shown to closely coordinate with their immediate manuscript context, with the first version surrounded by homiletic texts and serving almost as an introduction to Bethurum XIX, which follows. The second version, on the other hand, though preceded by homiletic texts, is followed by a number of legal texts associated with Wulfstan. It concludes with an additional section not seen in other manuscripts, nor in the first CCCC 201 version. The additional material

¹²⁷ Orchard, “Crying Wolf,” 255.
is not only legalistic, but it matches almost verbatim a passage from the law code VIII Æthelred 36. Once again, CCCC 201 displays an internal unity whereby proximate texts show their own kind of consistency.

CCCC 201 was one of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts collected by Matthew Parker (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1559–1575), and the manuscript clearly shows both Parkerian supplementation and Parkerian curtailment. The first part of the manuscript consists of 89 leaves of eleventh-century material onto the end of which a copy of Theodulf’s Capitulary was bound by Parker. The curtailment, on the other hand, came at the beginning of the book, which now opens with a sixteenth-century table of contents for which 38 lines of the Regularis concordia were washed away. Patrick Wormald has calculated that the folio must have begun in the middle of a sentence, but there is no way to know how or when this became the first folio in the manuscript.

This antiquarian use of CCCC 201 is an example of the way in which the textual community to be discussed in Chapter 5 functioned diachronically by responding to and altering manuscripts copied in the Anglo-Saxon period, but as the sequence of short texts in CCCC 201 shows, these manuscripts were already inviting medieval and later use. The compositional prompts provided by the short texts in CCCC 201 hint at both the performative habits of preachers like Wulfstan and the afterlife of Old English homilies that could be repeatedly trotted out without ever being realized in the same way twice. The mixing of ecclesiastical, homiletic, and legal texts in this and other manuscripts associated with Wulfstan speaks to the varying roles played by such prelates—and even by more obscure abbots, as Ælfric ostensibly was. Ælfric’s links to powerful court figures place him in a position to influence the thinking, if not the specific policies, of leading secular authorities, while his correspondence with his ecclesiastical superiors demonstrates his influence within the church.

That Wulfstan seems to have annotated numerous manuscripts of his own and others’ works, in spite of his demanding schedule of ecclesiastical and political duties and his famous predilection for aural effects, suggests that Wulfstan understood manuscripts as fundamental to the formation


and preservation of a textual community. The verifiability of the claim that this annotating hand is Wulfstan’s has less to do with the progress of the field than do the avenues opened by the mere speculation that this hand belongs to Wulfstan. Wondering if it is Wulfstan’s hand leads us to ask whether the books might have been moving with Wulfstan or if there might really be a case to be made for Wulfstanian imitators, one of whom has annotated material written by Wulfstan—or even written by some other imitator.

Through not only their preservation of these annotations, but also their witness to distinct versions of homilies and their care to punctuate so as to facilitate oral performance of the texts, the manuscripts associated with Wulfstan point out to us the contours of a textual community that encompassed composition, copying, later reading, annotation, and performance. We have seen in the example of the short texts from CCCC 201 that manuscripts of Wulfstan’s works could open channels for later interaction. Similarly, Ælfrician manuscripts, especially those where Ælfric expresses concern over the copying of his Catholic Homilies or the reading of his scriptural translations, suggest to us both the kind of activity that occurred while Ælfric was still alive and that which likely continued after his death as his homilies were copied in manuscripts and preached aloud. Like Matthew Parker in the sixteenth century, modern readers are completely dependent on this bibliographic testimony for access to the texts of Ælfric and Wulfstan and, more importantly, to their role in a textual community.
Chapter 4
Old and Newer English in the West Midlands

We have seen Bede and Alfred taking pains to establish English as a legitimate and viable language of literature, religion, and law. In Chapter 3, the use of English in such contexts was sufficiently entrenched that even after Cnut’s accession, laws were still promulgated in Old English.¹ After the Norman Conquest, however, the status of Old English became a vexed question, surrounded by uncertainty as to the duration of its use, its ability to compete with Anglo-French and Latin in either documentary or literary spheres, and its transition to Middle English.² The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the most dramatic changes in morphology, orthography, and lexicon, and these changes went along with widely varying forms of early Middle English. As a result, this period in the history of English is often characterized as lacking any sense of a standard language, but as this chapter will demonstrate, there were many people who were concerned to find ways, if not of determining any sort of national standard, at least of ensuring the intelligibility of the language.³

In the library of Worcester Cathedral, a thirteenth-century hand has glossed and annotated numerous manuscripts containing Old English, at times providing either Latin or Middle English equivalents, updating the spellings of Old English words, and making notes on topics relevant to his interests. Known as the “Tremulous Hand of Worcester” because of the unmistakable tremble in his handwriting, he also copied out several texts in Middle English, although the bulk of his surviving work is glossarial. Many, though not all, of the manuscripts on which the Tremulous Hand worked contain homilies, and homilies in Latin and English are also the primary contents of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 343, a late twelfth-century manuscript in which the

¹ See pp. 88–9 in Chapter 3.
Tremulous Hand did not leave his mark. The vernacular texts contained in Bodley 343, in contrast with those displaying the Tremulous Hand glosses, preserve completed updates of the language without any sign of an exemplar filled with preparatory glossing.

After these two examples of linguistic adaptation of older texts, this chapter moves on to consider a piece of original composition with the *Ancrene Wisse*, an early thirteenth-century text outlining the prayers and strictures of an anchoritic life for lay women. In this case, there is no evidence that the text was an adapted version of a text already extant in an older form of English, but there are indications that some early scribes of this and related texts were taking special care to record them in a systematically updated form of English, known as the AB language. In addition to this, the *Ancrene Wisse* was a popular subject of translation and adaptation for different audiences in French and Latin, as well as English, and the scribal attention it drew and the readership this implies further illuminate aspects of the textual communities under discussion.

We see in the Tremulous Hand an example of someone who read texts in an unfamiliar language and sought to make their meaning clearer; in Bodley 343 texts in which the language has been updated enough to be recognizable and comprehensible to later readers; and in the versions of the *Ancrene Wisse* an element of a nexus of textual production and linguistic innovation. Such a nexus, of course, did not exist in a vacuum. Changes in pastoral care at this period following the Fourth Lateran Council and the local statutes it inspired suggest that the Lambeth and Trinity homilies (those contained in London, Lambeth Palace MS 487 and Cambridge, Trinity College MS B 14.52, respectively, and produced around 1200) might have been produced at the diocesan level, rather than the parochial level, as before, and that they were meant for public

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5 Bella Millett, “The Pastoral Context of the Trinity and Lambeth Homilies,” in *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Wendy Scase (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 44–5, places the Trinity manuscript in the East Midlands, written probably in the late twelfth century, and the Lambeth manuscript in the West Midlands, written in the first quarter of the thirteenth century or possibly a bit earlier. Millett believes that they could still have common or at least related pastoral context, in spite of the geographic spread, because of the five sermons shared uniquely between these two manuscripts.
preaching *tum ad clericos, tum ad populum, tum ad hos et illos.*\(^6\) Bella Millett has further suggested a “unified theory” according to which the works of the *Ancrene Wisse* Group follow the Trinity and Lambeth homilies as part of a larger pastoral movement in which reforming bishops, working with friars, were the catalysts for the production of vernacular devotional literature, not only after 1215 but beginning after the Third Lateran Council in 1179 or possibly even earlier.\(^7\) This adds a layer of synchronic communal interaction to the diachronic work of the Tremulous Hand and the compiler of Bodley 343 to bring texts preserved solely in archaic language into conformity with more current usage. Additionally, an active role for bishops in textual production might help to explain the interest in manuscripts (often preserved at cathedrals)\(^8\) of earlier vernacular material.

Whether or not earlier large-scale production of vernacular devotional literature can be found, it is clear that the twelfth century saw great activity in Old English manuscripts. Liuzza has called this activity “the shredding of a tattered veil” that had obscured changes already taking place in the English language,\(^9\) although Celia Sisam feared that the reworking around the year 1200 of Old English texts by Ælfric and Wulfstan in the early Middle English homilies contained in Lambeth 487 might have been a “last flicker” for Old English homilies.\(^10\) The Lambeth homilies may represent a late effort to engage with Old English literature, but they do not represent the last gasp of interest in Old English, as witnessed by the somewhat later industry of the Tremulous Hand of Worcester.

In fact, the West Midlands was the home of active communities of producers and users of manuscripts in the twelfth and thirteenth century, and this activity was often spurred by a sense of the continuing utility of Old English books and texts, in spite of the linguistic changes

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\(^6\) Ibid., 52–60. “Sometimes to clerics, sometimes to the populace, sometimes to the former and the latter.”


manifested in these centuries. In arguing that the origin of Bodley 343 was most likely the West Midlands, Mary Swan characterizes the region as one “engaged in relatively substantial, and probably relatively organized,” production of Old English texts in the twelfth and even early thirteenth centuries often drawing on the homiletic collections produced in the wake of the Winchester-based Benedictine Reform of the tenth century.\footnote{Mary Swan, “Constructing Preacher and Audience,” in \textit{Constructing the Medieval Sermon}, ed. Roger Andersson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 187.} Unsurprisingly at a time when the English language was undergoing radical changes in morphology and lexicon without actually losing all trace of its Germanic origins, a tension between past and present characterizes not only the Lambeth homilies, but also the larger textual community under discussion.\footnote{For the state of the English language in this period, see Blake, ed., \textit{Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol. II: 1066–1476}.} The Tremulous Hand, the Bodley 343 compiler, and the AB scribes all created coherent orthographical systems with which to represent English as they spoke it. The Tremulous Hand gives us additional indications of a particularly strong sense that not only is the language flexible, but the manuscript page itself is as much a canvas for alteration as it is an immutable record of a fixed set of forms. The orthographical innovations in the \textit{Ormulum} are likewise symptoms of this understanding of the written page.\footnote{For Orm’s attention to orthography, see Thomas Hahn, “Early Middle English,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature}, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 85–7.} Additionally, it is clear that the manuscript book itself was not as final a unit of production or circulation as we might expect, given our own notions of bound books as the vehicles of textual circulation. We shall see that Bodley 343 and several manuscripts containing texts from the \textit{Ancrene Wisse} Group were compiled and assembled out of sometimes complicated combinations of booklets, which may or may not have always been kept together in the same library. The implication of all of this is that this textual community is characterized by a tolerance of flux in the states of books and texts.
In spite of this tolerance of flux, there remain significant parallels between the works of these readers. For example, given the similarities of language and script between the early work of the Tremulous Hand and the Nero text of the Ancrene Wisse, we have to consider the possible existence of centres of scribal training or production in the West Midlands, and it is possible that such centres might also have been pastoral or educational in nature. In light of Bella Millett’s work on the Ancrene Wisse Group, we must also consider the possibility that reforming bishops were the driving force behind the production of pastoral and devotional literature in the vernacular and that the textual activity of this milieu may indicate not tension between older, monastic preaching and newer, mendicant preaching but a shared currency and even collaboration.¹⁴

In identifying and examining this West Midlands textual community, it is useful to consider the model that Ralph Hanna has recently provided for North Yorkshire. Looking for a literary community he believes he can localize to fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Ripon, Hanna begins with the vague localization known for four manuscripts. To this evidence he adds that of scribal stints, common lines of transmission, and dialect analysis to narrow the localization to Ripon. Crucially, he goes on to supplement this with a discussion of literate activity at the Minster (including its elevated status as the devotional centre at the heart of the cult of Wilfrid, who died there in 745 or 746) and of surprisingly vigorous literary and devotional activity among prominent local families with connections far beyond the neighbourhood.¹⁵

Likewise, the current chapter addresses both the evidence internal to the manuscripts and the implications of known human activity. The most significant sites of such activity are, as with Ralph Hanna’s example, cathedrals and their libraries, where we have evidence of devotional practice, statutes governing preaching, more or less concerted scribal activity, and a unique mixing of monks, secular clergy, and laity. The demands of monastic reading culture and of pastoral care provide the motivation and direction for scribal efforts to understand and make accessible the texts contained in Old English manuscripts, as we see particularly clearly in the

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case of Bodley 343. Internal to the manuscripts are annotation and glossing of texts, thematic or linguistic adaption, and codicological data. This textual community forms itself in a matrix of linguistic change and an awareness or acknowledgement of linguistic change. The Tremulous Hand, the compiler of Bodley 343 (or his exemplar), and the scribes who recorded the Ancrene Wisse found a productive space in the non-unity of the English language, mainly in terms of the disjunction between the Old English of the texts mined for pastoral work and the early varieties of Middle English spoken and written by these scribes and their contemporaries. The first task for such scribes would be to read the texts contained in Old English manuscripts, and we begin with the work of a particular scribe more famous for his attempts to read texts in Old English than for his production of texts in Middle English.

4.1 The Tremulous Hand

In more than twenty medieval manuscripts, there appears a hand, usually glossing or annotating but occasionally copying out texts, which is made distinctive by its varyingly prominent but ever-present tremble. Both the handwriting and the individual responsible for it are known as the Tremulous Hand of Worcester. The Tremulous Hand appears in the following manuscripts:16

Worcester Cathedral Library, MS F.174 (written by the Tremulous Hand; Ælfric’s Grammar and Glossary, St. Bede Lament, and Soul’s Address to the Body);

CCCC MS 391 (prayers and prognostics, with four lines of Old English written by the Tremulous Hand on the last leaf);

Cambridge, Clare College, MS 30 and Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunterian 431 (Latin manuscripts of Gregory’s Dialogues and Cura pastoralis, respectively, containing annotations by the Tremulous Hand);

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16 For discussion of these manuscripts, the bulk of which contain at least some homilies, see Christine Franzen, The Tremulous Hand of Worcester: A Study of Old English in the Thirteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 29–83, summarized on pages 79–83. Most of the non-homiletic manuscripts contain Alfredian translations (Hatton 20 and 76, CCC 12, CUL MS Kk.3.18, and BL, Cotton Otho C.i, part II), but Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 482 contains a penitential, and BL MS Harley 55 has glosses on the Laws of Edgar.
and a number of manuscripts containing Old English texts with glosses by the Tremulous Hand:

CUL MS Kk.3.18 (Old English Bede);

CCCC MSS 12 (Old English Pastoral Care), 178 with 162, pp. 139-60, (homilies and Rule of Benedict), 198 (homilies), and 557 (Legend of the Cross);

BL, MSS Cotton Otho B.x (homilies) and C.i, part II, (Gregory’s Dialogues and Vitae Patrum), and Harley 55 (recipes and Law of Edgar); and

Bodleian, MSS Hatton 20 (Pastoral Care), 76 (Gregory’s Dialogues and an herbal), 113, 114, 115, 116 (homilies), Junius 121 (homilies and ecclesiastical institutes), and Laud Misc. 482 (penitential).

Lawrence, Kansas, University Library, MSS Y.103 and 104 are detached leaves from CCCC 557 and Hatton 115, respectively, and also contain Tremulous Hand glosses.

Most of the texts glossed by the Tremulous Hand are in Old English, and the overwhelming majority of these manuscripts date to the eleventh century, although there are several twelfth-century manuscripts among them, and the two copies of the Alfredian Pastoral Care (Hatton 20 and CCCC 12) are dated to the late ninth and late tenth centuries, respectively. The Tremulous Hand glosses are most often into Latin, although his earliest layer of notes includes glosses into Middle English, seemingly updating Old English spellings to match at least some features of his own dialect. On occasion, the Tremulous Hand glosses Old English words with French or Latin words that are not otherwise attested in English (or even in Anglo-French sources) until much later. This progressive adoption of French forms is something the Tremulous Hand shares with the AB language of the Ancrene Wisse Group and is very suggestive of broader trends in textual and linguistic activity in the West Midlands at this time. In 2003, Christine Franzen made a

17 See Franzen, Tremulous Hand, 11–12, on the earliest layer of glossing, known as the D state. Christine Franzen, “The Tremulous Hand of Worcester and the Nero Scribe of the Ancrene Wisse,” Medium Ævum 72 (2003): 16–7, characterizes the Tremulous Hand as not a literatim copyist, but “one whose copies were strongly marked by his local dialect.”

18 Franzen, Tremulous Hand, 99–102. See also Franzen, “Nero Scribe,” 14–9, on Smith’s feeling that the Nero Ancrene Wisse scribe had a “dialectally-confident handling of the vernacular.”
more specific connection with the Ancrene Wisse Group when she suggested a link between the Tremulous Hand and the scribe of the text of the Ancrene Wisse contained in Cotton Nero A.xiv, although she stopped short of a positive identification. Yet another resonance with contemporary textual activity lies in the suggestion that the Tremulous Hand was preparing a preacher’s manual. As we shall see, this mirrors the theory that Bodley 343 (another post-Conquest manuscript showing updated Old English texts) may have been intended not for direct use in preaching but as a book to be read in preparation for preaching.

The first time we can be sure that someone was aware of the markings of the Tremulous Hand (and in fact reading them) is when John Joscelyn, a Latin secretary employed by Matthew Parker, was working through some of the same manuscripts in the sixteenth century that the Tremulous Hand had worked on in the thirteenth century. The Tremulous Hand did not receive explicit scholarly comment until the late nineteenth century, when manuscripts displaying his marks and glosses were linked with Worcester. At that point, the Tremulous Hand was understood as a transitional figure, “ein alter Man” who had known Old English in his youth and outlived its comprehensibility to straddle the transition to Middle English because the Tremulous Hand was initially dated, based on linguistic and palaeographic criteria, to the late twelfth century. Previous notions on the dating of the hand were swept aside when Ker declared that

19 Franzen, “Nero Scribe,” 19–26, notes similarities with D-layer English glosses and affinities of lexical choice and script. The D-layer glosses were more orthographically progressive and consistent than the Tremulous Hand’s later English work, like texts in Worcester Cathedral MS F.174 and the B- and M-layer glosses (14). Franzen concludes that “the Nero manuscript and the D layer glosses cannot be far apart in either time or place” (27).


21 N. R. Ker, ed., The Pastoral Care, EEMF 6 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1956), 16, notes that when John Joscelyn glosses Hatton 20, he not only cribbs many of the Tremulous Hand glosses but in fact leaves off extracting dictionary words soon after the Tremulous Hand ceases glossing the manuscript.

22 J. Zupitza, “Das Nicaeische Symbool in Englischer Aufzeichnung des 12. Jhds.,” Anglia 1 (1878): 286–7 and “Zu Anglia I 5ff., 195ff. u. 286ff.,” Anglia 3 (1880): 32–3. The argument was later extended by Wolfgang Keller, Die Litterarischen Bestrebungen von Worcester, Quellen und Forschungen 84 (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1900), 20, who also applied the “alter Man” label. George MacLean, “Ælfric’s Version of Alcuini Interrogationes Sigeuulfi in Genesin,” Anglia 6 (1883): 425–73, and Anglia 7 (1884): 1–59, notes in volume 6, pp. 436–7, “The marks accompanying the glosses ... were for the convenience of the reader of a later age, and mark the transition from A. S..” Franzen has shown that the Tremulous Hand was not likely to have been a native speaker of Old English. See Franzen, Tremulous Hand, 89–90, on the Tremulous Hand’s treatment of Ælfric’s Grammar and Glossary and 173–82 on the types of errors to which the Tremulous Hand was prone to in glossing.
the additions made by the Tremulous Hand in Hatton 114 had to have been made in the thirteenth century, around 1225 and possibly as late as 1250. Although Ker dated the ductus of the script to the late twelfth century, the Tremulous Hand had made additions and corrections to a table of contents that Ker dated, also on palaeographical grounds, to somewhere between 1225 and 1250.\textsuperscript{23} In light of this verdict, the theory of the older man is much less tenable because even if we recall that Old English seems to have endured longer in the West Midlands than in other parts of the country, it is difficult to imagine that a man old enough to have grown up speaking Old English in the eleventh or even twelfth century could still be working in the middle of the thirteenth century.

Ker’s revision in the dating of the hand has clear ramifications for our understanding of the linguistic import of the Tremulous Hand’s work—whether he grew up speaking Old English or had to learn it later in life, how this skill was cultivated, and what was its relevance for his contemporaries. In his first article on the Tremulous Hand, Julius Zupitza had noted that the Old English inflections were generally observed and that the scribe seemed to understand what he was writing,\textsuperscript{24} but after Ker’s article, the Tremulous Hand began to look more like a later scholar of Old English than a native speaker making a last bequest to posterity. The “old man” theory was effectively ruled out by Christine Franzen, whose identification of seven different layers of glossing or writing by the Tremulous Hand helped her to detail a methodical learning process during which the Tremulous Hand cribbed Latin glosses from other manuscripts available to him and later states of the hand corrected the glosses of earlier states.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} N. R. Ker, “The Date of the ‘Tremulous’ Worcester Hand,” \textit{LSE} 6 (1937): 28–9. Franzen, “Nero Scribe,” n. 6, notes that Malcolm Parkes believes Ker’s date to be too late and suggests that it may be closer to 1200.
\item \textsuperscript{24} “Ich glaube nicht, dass man die volleren vocale in jener zeit noch sprach, vielmehr scheint mir das nur eine nachwirkung der alten schriftsprache, die jedenfalls von dem aufzeichner unseres stückes noch verstanden wurde, wie seine vielfachen glossen in der hs. zeigen,” Zupitza, “Das Nicaesische Symbolum,” 287. “I don’t believe that they still pronounced the fuller vowels in that time; rather, it seems to me just an after-effect of the old written language, which in any case was still understood by the person writing our piece, as his multiple glosses in the manuscript show.”
\item \textsuperscript{25} Franzen, \textit{Tremulous Hand}, 83, 101. Ibid., 198–9, summarizes medical evidence suggesting that a congenital tremor is more consistent with the trembly handwriting than either Parkinson’s disease or old age. Franzen, “Nero Scribe,” 13, suggests that in this scenario, degeneration in the handwriting could have been very dramatic, and all of this work could just possibly have been done in 5–10 years.
\end{itemize}
The implications of this evidence are significant: It seems that the Tremulous Hand’s initial knowledge of Old English was not extensive and that at least his early work was partly motivated by his own unfamiliarity with the language. The Tremulous Hand was not the first reader to respond to a sense of widening distance between his own early Middle English and the Old English of these texts, but he is the first to embark on such a sustained course of study.\(^2^6\) One of the most fundamental aspects of his work is that if he was not old enough to have learned to speak Old English or at least to have studied with someone who spoke Old English, then his study of the language was only possible through the pages of books. It is theoretically possible that a tradition of study of spoken Old English was sustained near Worcester into the thirteenth century, when the Tremulous Hand was working, but we have no evidence for such a practice. The evidence we do have is that the Tremulous Hand was reliant not on other experienced speakers or even other experienced readers of Old English, but rather on other texts. This seemingly exclusive reliance on texts for experience with the language and for access to earlier preaching material places the Tremulous Hand in a textual community centred on the manuscripts he examined.

The possible connection between the Tremulous Hand and the Nero *Ancrene Wisse* scribe adds to this textual emphasis a more contemporary communal dimension. More specifically, this connection gives us a link between two scribes who seem to have been working on different kinds of texts for different audiences. The *Ancrene Wisse* text was, in its apparently original form, directed at female recluses, not at parish priests or at coenobitic monks or nuns, but whereas there are clear indications that the *Ancrene Wisse* was circulating widely throughout that period, subject to frequent revision and translation in spite of its ostensibly reclusive audience, we have no evidence that any Tremulous Hand texts were being read until John Joscelyn began using them in the sixteenth century.\(^2^7\)

A closer examination of specific examples of the Tremulous Hand’s work will give a clearer picture of his methods. While working with Ælfric’s Old English text of the Nicene Creed, the

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\(^2^6\) Hatton 113, in particular, contains a large amount of glossing that probably predates that of the Tremulous Hand, but such heavy glossing makes it unusual (though not unique) among Tremulous Hand manuscripts. See Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 30–34.

\(^2^7\) See pp. 161–3 in Chapter 5.
Tremulous Hand read *Ic gelyfe on ænne god* in Hatton 114, and he added the familiar Latin text as an interlinear gloss. Then, when the Tremulous Hand wrote his own version of the Nicene Creed in English on a flyleaf in Junius 121 that opening had become *Ic ileue on enne god*. The Tremulous Hand’s version of the Nicene Creed is the earliest known Middle English version, and that this first appearance in Middle English occurred in the context of a great deal of experimentation in written English by the Tremulous Hand and others is not coincidental. In the following table, we can see the Tremulous Hand’s interlinear markings above the Ælfrician text of the Creed (Hatton 114, f. 247r), followed by the opening lines of the updated Middle English text of the Creed as written by the Tremulous Hand (Junius 121, f. vi'). The glossing at the beginning of the text is unusually dense by the standards of the Tremulous Hand and is probably due to the fact that the Tremulous Hand would have known this text by heart, which was not likely to have been true in other cases where he used Latin texts as cribs for his glossing.\(^{28}\)

\[\text{[a] Old English Creed with interlinear Tremulous Hand glosses (Hatton 114, fols. 247r-v)}\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{credo } & \quad i \quad \text{\textsuperscript{29} vnun deum patrem omnipotentem} \\
\text{247r/ } & \quad \text{Ic gelyfe on ænne god fæder ælmihtigne.} \quad \text{\textsuperscript{30}}/ \\
\text{creatorem } & \quad \text{celi } \quad \text{terre } \quad \text{o} \quad \text{omnium } \quad i \\
\text{wyr} & \quad \text{heofonan . } \quad \text{eor} \quad \text{pan . } \quad \text{ealra ge- } / \\
\text{i} & \\
\text{sewenlicra þinga . } \quad \text{ungeswenlicra . } / \\
\end{align*}
\]


\(^{29}\) Most Tremulous Hand word separation marks on this page consist of three vertical dots.

\(^{30}\) The Tremulous Hand has left a marginal note: “credo in unum deum.”
in vnum | vniginitum

on ænne crist . hælend drihten þone an-/ |

5 cennedan godes sunu . of þam fæder acen-/ |

ned .’ ær ealle worulda . god of gode . leoh .’ / |

do leoh . soðne god .’ of soðum gode . acen-/ |

| i consubstanciale
nedne . na geworhtne . efen edwistlicne / |

patri quem ::>:::::ancialem

þam fæder . þurh þone synd ealle þinc ge-/ |

qui pro patri | nos homines | |

10 worhte . se for us mannum .’ & for ure hælo ny- |

| i incarnatus |
ðer astah of heofonum . & wearþ geflæscha- |

| |
mod of ðam halgan gaste .’ & of marian þam / |

| |
mædene .’ & wearþ man geworden32 he þrowa-/ |

31 This word is very faint and difficult to read. It may be a repetition of consubstancialem from the line before by eyeskip.

32 The Tremulous Hand or another reader has added a cross-stroke as if to make the <d> into an eth.
de eac swylce on rode ahangen for us. & he

wæs bebyrged. & he aras on þam þriddan dæ-

gewristu segcaþ. & he astah to heo-

fonum. & he sit æt swipran his fæder.’ & he eft /

cymð mid wuldre to demanne þam cwicum /

& þam deadum. & his rices ne bið nan ende. /

e viuificanto dominum

& ic gelyfe on þone halgan gast. & þone liffæs-

tan god se gæp of þam fæder. & of þam sunu. /

adoratur

& se is mid þam fæder & mid þam suna ge-

beden.’ & gewuldrod. & se spræc þurh witegan.
from the tremulous hand’s early middle english version (junius 121, f. vi”)
Glossing for lexical reasons is certainly an important part of the Tremulous Hand’s work, but another significant aspect of his work is his collection of phonological updates. The single most common mark on the pages written on by the Tremulous Hand is the little tick that appears above Old English verbs beginning with the perfective prefix *ge-* to indicate the Middle English spelling *<i>*. The Tremulous Hand is very thorough, even relentless, in including this update, which also helps the Tremulous Hand to account for word separation and to distinguish between homographs. When the second person plural pronoun appears, the Tremulous Hand is consistent in glossing it with *uos*, and it is very characteristic for the Tremulous Hand to distinguish carefully between homographs like this and to indicate word separation where there might be confusion.\(^\text{36}\)

Another very consistent phonological update made by the Tremulous Hand concerns Old English *<g>* when used between vowels. In such a placement, the *<g>* is never hard: between back vowels, as in *agan*, “to have” or “to own,” it’s a voiced velar fricative. On the other hand, between front vowels, *<g>* is a palatal, as in *ege*, which becomes Modern English “awe,” although the meaning has shifted from the original sense of fear or dread. In such cases, the Tremulous Hand adds either a suprimalinal wynn or, in the case of the palatal, an *<i>*. The Tremulous Hand also sprinkles vocalic updates throughout the texts he glosses, but the changes are less consistent than with the *<g>* between vowels or the perfective prefix. In the following passage from an Old English homily by Wulfstan, we see frequent substitutions by the Tremulous Hand for the perfective prefix, as well as occasional Latin glosses and an example of a vocalic update, *<e>* for *<y>* in *gelyfað* in the first line of folio 65r. In this example, as in most of his work, all of the Tremulous Hand’s glosses are into Latin, and the mixture of interlinear and marginal glossing is characteristic. John Joscelyn, on the contrary, generally glosses into English, as in the following Wulfstan passage updated by the Tremulous Hand and occasionally marked by Joscelyn, whose additions are indicated in bold.\(^\text{37}\)

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\(^{36}\) Bethurum, *Homilies*, 105, gives examples such as the distinguishing of *waere* (“aware, wary”) from *waer(e)* (“were” or the feminine noun for “covenant”).

\(^{37}\) Junius 121, f. 64v–65r. The transcription is my own, but the homily is edited as number VIIa in Bethurum, 166–8. “Dear friends, let us do as there is great need: have steadfast faith and full hope in our Lord. And he who cannot
understand proper belief in Latin, learn it at least in English, and speak it frequently thus: *Credimus in unum deum patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum.* We believe in one God almighty who shaped and prepared all things, and we believe and readily know that Christ, the Son of God, came to men because of all mankind’s need. And we believe that the pure virgin SANCTA MARIA bore him, she who never had relations with a man, and we believe that he suffered greatly and severely for the sake of us all."
sunu to mannum com · for ealles mancyn /

nes ðearfe · & we gelyfað þæt hine clæne /

mæden gebære SANCTA MARIA · þe næfre nahte /

weres gemanan · & we gelyfað þæt he mycel /

\textbf{strongly}

pertulit i du re$^{38}$ |

gedolode · & stiðlice þrowode for ure ealra /

neode ·

We know nothing about the process by which the Tremulous Hand learned to read Old English, but his work as seen in the examples above gives us at least indirect evidence. We can guess from the kinds of changes the Tremulous Hand makes—it seems reasonable to infer that the orthographical changes such as the substitution for the Old English perfective prefix or the substitutions for medial $<g>$ indicate that the Tremulous Hand was guessing based on similarities in his own form of English—and we can also guess from the kinds of errors he makes (most frequently mistaken meanings when he tries to guess based on context, but also occasional difficulties with Anglo-Saxon graphs). Additionally, we must not mistake the accurate recognition of older linguistic forms for a genuine understanding of either lexis or syntax, although the Tremulous Hand gives us a glimpse of an unusually sustained interest in the study of the Old English language.

$^{38}$ The word is split to accommodate the back of the \textit{eth} in \textit{stiðlice}. 
As someone literate in both Latin and English, the Tremulous Hand is most likely to have been a cleric of some sort, and given the range of topics covered in the passages he annotated, including practical and specific doctrinal points relating to the daily lives of laypeople and thus of interest to priests, the Tremulous Hand may well have been a priest. In spite of this, it is unlikely that he could have held an appointment to an outlying parish and still have spent the necessary hours in the cathedral library to produce his glosses and annotations. Based on the extended period of time during which he must have had access to manuscripts from the cathedral library at Worcester, the Tremulous Hand may have been a monk. If he was, then he would have been of the right age to have been influenced by Senatus, the prior who is known for his interest in Anglo-Saxon saints. Marilyn Butler has even suggested that the Tremulous Hand might have completed his version of Ælfric’s *Grammar and Glossary* under the direction of Senatus. In such an environment, where Anglo-Saxon texts were under scrutiny and where the concerns of the Fourth Lateran Council over the education of priests were speedily addressed at the diocesan level, it is possible that the Tremulous Hand was assembling a preaching notebook either for himself or for use as a manual, and he may even have been interested in teaching Latin via English.

Whether for his own benefit or for that of students, the Tremulous Hand displays a staggering thoroughness in his linguistic work. This work must have taken many years, but throughout the various layers of his glossing, the Tremulous Hand continues to make phonological updates, implying that he had a real interest in the linguistic gap itself, in the simultaneous familiarity and

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41 As early as 1219 and again in 1229, constitutions were issued at Worcester containing decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council. See Marion Gibbs and Jane Lang, *Bishops and Reform 1215–1272 with Special Reference to the Lateran Council of 1215* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1934), 109–10.

42 Both Bethurum, 105, and Collier, 88–9, have commented on the Tremulous Hand’s interest in teaching Latin, but Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 82–3, notes that although his worksheets and translation of Ælfric’s *Grammar and Glossary* could have been used to teach reading in Latin, the bulk of his work with Old English manuscripts would not have been suitable for classroom use.

unfamiliarity of the language of these texts. The very fact that he continued any kind of updating or glossing for such a long time attests to this interest. If such an effort seems to speak of pedantry and isolation, then we should remember that, whether for preaching or pedagogy, the ultimate aims of the Tremulous Hand look outward and gesture towards a wider network of scribes and literates who found reasons and, more importantly, ways to maintain contact with the texts and books of Anglo-Saxon England well past the period when Old English was spoken.

4.2 Bodley 343

The textual community surrounding Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 343 is much more obviously communal, showing clearer, closer connections than the Tremulous Hand manuscript do with the production and use of manuscripts for reading or for public preaching. Bodley 343, a late twelfth-century manuscript, preserves a version of Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* corresponding to the eleventh-century manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 419. Bodley 343 is the latest manuscript to preserve Wulfstan’s vernacular homilies and is a useful witness because of its late linguistic forms, which provide unusual insight into the transition between Old and Middle English. As Conti notes, the language of the texts in Bodley 343 “does not fit neatly into either the Old English period or the Middle English period,” and in spite of the changes in morphology, the conservatism of the language led Napier to posit that the *History of the Holy Rood-tree* (fols. 14v–20v) was copied from an Old English exemplar, rather than composed at the time of its copying. The manuscript also contains a number of Ælfrician homilies and a collection of Latin homilies that have been identified as a version of the

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44 Susan Irvine, *Old English Homilies from MS Bodley 343*, EETS o.s. 302 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), lv; Jonathan Wilcox, “Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond,” in Townend, ed., *Wulfstan*, 392; and Conti, “Preaching Scripture and Apocrypha,” ii, have all noted the value of the late linguistic forms in Bodley 343. Bethurum, 5 and 49–50, is more dismissive of the value of such a late manuscript.

45 Conti, “Preaching Scripture and Apocrypha,” 4. Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, lv–lxxvii, notes that the language of Bodley 343 still shows many features of late West Saxon usage but also some features of early Middle English, including the use of both a single graph to represent multiple phonemes, and multiple graphs to represent the same phoneme.

Homiliary of Angers. The presence of fifteenth-century glosses on folios 141v–143v seems to imply that Old English texts (though in a somewhat altered state in this manuscript) were still being studied throughout the Middle Ages.

Ker dates the manuscript to the second half of the twelfth century, but some have suggested that it can be more precisely dated to the third quarter of the twelfth century. Determining the provenance of the manuscript is a great deal more difficult, although Worcester has emerged as a sort of “consensus candidate,” based on the range of texts, lines of transmission, and dialect of the manuscript. Susan Irvine suggests that section (f), which contains several items written for or adapted by Wulfstan, is likely to have come from Worcester but notes that the original part of CCCC 419 and 421, with which Bodley 343 shares close textual affinities, was probably written at Canterbury with additions made at Exeter and that Exeter is also the origin of CCCC 190, with which Bodley 343 shares a common source for one of the letters written by Ælfric for Wulfstan’s use. In spite of these farther flung connections, it seems, as with the work of the Tremulous Hand, to be access to the library of the Cathedral at Worcester that enabled the compilation of Bodley 343.

Not only the resources, but also the requirements of a cathedral community influence the choice of texts and the production of manuscripts. The distinction between the Old English homiliaries popular in the eleventh century and the Latin collections that saw increasing popularity after the Conquest underlines the discontinuities in the various functions of a monastic cathedral priory:

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48 Bethurum, 106, and Franzen, Tremulous Hand, 109–10, both discuss this.

49 Ker, Catalogue, no. 310.


52 Irvine, Old English Homilies, li. See also John C. Pope, Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection, EETS o.s. 259–260 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–1968), 82–3, and Ker, Catalogue, nos. 68–69, on the origin of CCCC 419 and 421—concerning Bodley 343 items 66, 71, 72. See also Ker, no. 45, on the origin of CCCC 190, which shares a source for article 67 in Bodley 343.
parish of laity must be served in practical as well as liturgical ways, even as monastic life, with its distinct contemplative and liturgical observances, carries on. As a result of the tenth-century Benedictine Reform, cathedrals like Worcester served as both monastic and parish churches and were sites of contact between monks and clergy, as well as clergy and the larger lay community. If manuscripts such as Bodley 343 show few signs of direct use for preaching or direct classroom use, then they may have served as reading material for not only monks, but also parish priests meeting their own educational or parochial needs. This is reminiscent of the possible aims of the Tremulous Hand: with the influence of the Fourth Lateran Council and St. Wulfstan’s legacy (prompting an interest at Worcester in both Latin and Old English), the Tremulous Hand may have been at work on a handbook for priests or a collection of homilies to be distributed more widely than within his own community.

The most widely accepted description of Bodley 343 and its construction is that offered by Susan Irvine in her edition of some of the Old English homilies it contains, although the assumption of clearly demarcated sections underlying both Irvine’s description and Peter Clemoes’ slightly different version has been questioned. Bodley 343 is a manuscript that seems to be organized into distinct sections, corresponding for the most part with quire divisions. Across the entire codex, there is no chronological ordering of the material, nor are the textual origins of the homilies homogeneous, even within codicological units. There are shorter sequences of homilies ordered chronologically according to the church year, and these sequences sometimes cut across groupings by textual origin. Irvine has suggested that the best way of explaining this is to postulate that the material was gathered from a series of smaller booklets. Bodley 343 shares much of its material and, more importantly, the arrangement of its material with Cotton Vespasian D. xiv, leading Irvine to conclude that the compiler of Bodley 343 had used as

56 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, xviii–xxii, argues that there are seven sections, as does Clemoes, CH I, 1–5. Aidan Conti, “Preaching Scripture and Apocrypha,” 52–57, questions the validity of the notion of discrete “sections.”
exemplar a single, large homiliary that had already assimilated the material from these booklets. The sections as designated by Irvine are as follows:

section (a), fols. vi-x (items 1-4: Ælfrician homilies CH II, 25–26; CH I, 17; CH II, 31);

section (b), fols. xi-xxxix (item 5: Latin version of the Homiliary of Angers);

section (c), fols. 1-20 (items 6-12: six Ælfrician homilies [CH I, 1; Pope xii, viii; Irvine i–ii; CH II, 30] and the anonymous History of the Holy Rood-tree);

section (d), fols. 21-64 (items 13-31: sixteen Ælfrician homilies [CH I, 19, 29, 31; CH II, 32; LS 31; CH II, 28–9; CH I, 8; LS 10; CH I, 13; CH II, 5, ll. 234–287; CH II, 5–6; CH I, 10, 38; LS 22], two anonymous homilies, and an anonymous account of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary);

section (e), fols. 65-128 (items 32-64: thirty-one Ælfrician homilies [CH I, 39–40, 2; CH II, 3; CH I, 9, 14–15, 18, 21–2, 25–7, 20, 6, 23–4, 28, 33, 35; Irvine 3; CH I, 30, 36; CH II, 24, 27, 37; Irvine iv; CH II, 38–9], an anonymous Lenten text on confession, and the Old English Visio Sancti Pauli);

section (f), fols. 129-54 (items 65-76: four Wulfstanian homilies [Bethurum VIIIc; composite of V, Ib, and IV; XX (BH); VI], three letters by Ælfric [Letter to Sigewaerd; first and second Old English letters for Wulfstan], four Ælfrician homilies [Napier 7–8; CH II, 40; CH I, 34; CH II, 4], and three lines beginning sancta maria wes ðreo and sixti winter ða heo of middenærde ferde);

section (g), fols. 155-70 (items 77-85: four Ælfrician homilies [Belfour 9; CH II, 26; Pope 6; Assmann 4], three anonymous homilies [Irvine 5–7], a Latin dialogue on the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed, and The Grave [an early Middle English address to the buried body]).

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57 Irvine, Old English Homilies, xxxv–xxxvii. See also Irvine, “Compilation and Use,” 57–9.

58 Irvine, Old English Homilies, xx.
Irvine’s section (f) is the most directly relevant in that it shows significant links with Wulfstan: it includes four Wulfstanian homilies, two Old English letters written by Ælfric for Wulfstan’s use, Ælfric’s *Letter to Sigewead*, and Ælfrician homilies elsewhere adapted by Wulfstan—Napier 7–8 was rewritten as Bethurum IX and CH II, 40 as Bethurum XVIII.\(^5^9\) Much of this material is also focused on episcopal duties, suggesting that the compiler has selected items either on the basis of this connection with diocesan concerns or because of the connections with Wulfstan, perhaps copying a group of texts previously compiled for Wulfstan, as supposedly seen in CCCC 190 and 265.\(^6^0\) Given that not all of the items are directly related to episcopal duties and that there are other such collections of material centred on Wulfstan, the second option seems the likelier.\(^6^1\) If this is indeed the case, then it is striking in view of Wulfstan’s seemingly sharp drop in popularity in the twelfth century.\(^6^2\) Rather than relying on contemporary homilies or episcopal guides, the choice has again been made to reach back to texts recorded in Old English, a language becoming ever more removed from current speech in England. Wulfstan’s usage, in particular, may have appeared distant in the twelfth century because of his idiosyncratic lexical usage that differs markedly from Ælfric’s more Latinate vocabulary.\(^6^3\) In spite of this, Wulfstan’s awareness of the aural impact of his rhythmical and often alliterative phrases may have made them more accessible to twelfth- or thirteenth-century readers in the same way that we have absorbed the idioms and sonorities of the Authorized Version of the Bible without always comprehending individual words or phrases.

A prime example of Wulfstan’s style and its transmission to later readers is his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. His most famous work, it also has the most complicated textual history, as we have seen in the previous chapter.\(^6^4\) The version preserved in CCCC 419 (MS B) and Bodley 343 (MS H)

\(^5^9\) Ibid., xlvi.


\(^6^1\) Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, xliv–xlvii.


\(^6^3\) For Wulfstan’s idiolect, see Whitelock, “Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut,” 448; Pons-Sanz, *Norse-Derived Vocabulary*; and pp. 85–6 and 93 in Chapter 3.

\(^6^4\) See pp. 102–04 in Chapter 3.
is the shortest of the three that survive and is further distinguished by the unique spelling updates in Bodley 343 and by CCCC 419’s status as the only one of Bethurum’s four “principal” manuscripts that has never been linked in some way to the West Midlands. We cannot by any means assume that the scribe of Bodley 343 was working from CCCC 419, but it is clear that CCCC 419 represents something similar to what the Bodley 343 scribe was working from, and thus we have at least an approximation of a pairing of exemplar and completed update. Bodley 343 does not show significant changes in syntax or lexical choice, but the spellings are fairly consistently updated. In the two passages that follow, the Bodley 343 scribe (or the scribe of his exemplar) has made numerous small spelling updates, but the only lexical changes are the two substitutions in the first passage of *beoð* for *syndon* (lines 5 and 20 of the transcription), both perfectly appropriate Old English verbs, and the insertion of *nu* (line 2) and *wundræ* (line 12) in the second passage. The insertion of *wundræ* may have been prompted by the occurrence of *wundor* in the first line of the passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCCC 419, p. 98, l. 17-p. 99, l. 15</th>
<th>Bodley 343, f. 143v, l. 28-32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&amp; we habbað godes hus · /</td>
<td>&amp; we habbað godes hus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in ne · &amp; ute ·</td>
<td>inne &amp; ute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clæne berypte /</td>
<td>clæne be_rypte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/ ælcra gerisena ·</td>
<td>ælcra gerys-/na ·</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; godes /beowas syndan</td>
<td>&amp; godes ðeowas beoð</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mæðe · &amp; /munde</td>
<td>mæþe &amp; mynde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gewel hwær be/dælde ·</td>
<td>ge hwær be dæled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Dorothy Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (London: Methuen, 1963), 3, acknowledges the close connection between the two witnesses but thinks that neither is derived from the other. CCCC 419 cannot, for obvious reasons, be derived from the significantly later Bodley 343, and Whitelock cites several “better readings” in CCCC 419 to show that Bodley 343 was not based on CCCC 419.
& ge dwolgoda þenan / & ge dwolgadæ þénan
ne dear man mis beodan · / ne dear mon /mis beodon
on ænige wisan 10 on ænige wisan
mid hæ/ðenum leodum · mid hæðenum leodum
swa swa /man godes þeowán nu deð /to wide swaswa mon godes þeowan nu deþ to wide
þær cristene sceol/dan þer /cristene sceoldon
godes lage healdan · / godes lage healdon ·
Ac soð is þæt ic secge · 15 Ac soð is þæt ic secge
godes ge/rihta godes ge rihta
wanedon nu lange · / wonedon nú lange ·
& folclage wyrsedan & /folces lage wurßedon
Eal/les to swiðe · alles to swiðe ·
& halignessa /syndan 20 & halignessæ beoð
to griðlease wide · / to griðlease wide ·

[b]

CCCC 419, p. 106, l. 6-p. 107, l. 18 Bodley 343, f. 144r, l. 28-f. 144v, l. 5

Nis eac nan wundor / Nis éác nan wundor
þeah us mis limpe · nú /ðeah us mis limpe ·
forðam we witon ful georne · /

þæt nu fela geara

men ná /nerohton · 5

for oft hwæt /hy worhtan ·

wordes oððe /dæde ·

Eac wearð þes þeod/scipe

swa hit þyncan mæg · /

swyðe forsyngod 10

þurh /menigfealde synna ·

& þurh /fela mis dæda ·

Durh morð/dæda ·

& þurh man dæda · /

þurh gitsunga · 15

& þurh gi/fernessa ·

þurh stala ·

& /107/ þurh strudunga ·

þurh man/sylene ·

& þurh hæþene /un sida · 20

þurh swic domas · /

& þurh searo cræftas ·

forþan we witan ful georne
þurh /lah bricas ·
& þurh æswicas · /
þurh mæg hræsas · 25
& þurh /man slihtas ·
þurh had bri /cas ·
& þurh æw bricas ·
þurh /sib legeru ·
& þurh mistlice /for ligeru · 30
& eac syndon /wide
swa we ær cwædon · /
þurh að bricas ·
& þurh /wed brycas ·
& þurh mistlice /leasunga · 35
for loren · & for /logen ·
ma þonne sceolde · /
& freols brycas ·
& fæsten /brycas ·
wide geworhte · /
40
oft · & gelome ·
Though the manuscript has been called “strikingly conservative,” and the content and lexicon of the homilies are largely unchanged, the thorough linguistic update suggests that somewhere in the line of transmission, possibly predating the compilation of Bodley 343, this material was being read and translated for comprehension, not merely transcribed as a mechanical exercise in literatim copying. Irvine suggests that the Tremulous Hand’s glossing of Old English manuscripts implies that without significant adaptation, such texts were unlikely to have been directly and immediately useful for preaching, at least by the time the Tremulous Hand was at work in the early thirteenth century. As we have seen, in the texts it shares with CCCC 419 and 421, Bodley 343 shows virtually no updating of vocabulary, and this would appear to lend credence to the idea that manuscripts like Bodley 343 were less likely to be useful as direct sources for public preaching. It is clear from the statutes of the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils of 1179 and 1215, respectively, that there was a perceived need for better education of clerics. It is possible that many clerics were reliant on the vernacular for their education and for preaching material, and even a cleric who could draw on Latin sources for preaching material would have had to translate it from Latin into the vernacular in order to preach publicly. In combination with the non-homiletic material in Bodley 343, including some of the items on episcopal duties in section (f) and the lengthy History of the Holy Rood Tree, the lack of any preacher’s marks suggests that the collection was not intended primarily for preaching to the laity. Instead, its utility may have lain in its store of reading material for monks and clerics who were reliant on the vernacular for their own devotion and education or for material to be incorporated into their preaching. As we have seen in the examples above, the syntax and lexicon remained quite close to Old English usage, and this may have been considered too distant for direct use in public preaching by the late twelfth century.

The question of whether or not a manuscript like Bodley 343 was directly used in preaching highlights another element of the textual communities centred on cathedrals: the parish

67 Millett, “Pastoral Context,” 46.
68 Irvine, “Compilation,” 53.
69 Ibid., 59–61.
communities in which homilies are performed give the impetus for the production of manuscripts containing homiletic texts, even those that may only have been used for private reading either in preparation for public preaching or for educational and devotional purposes. Writing of item 78 (an anonymous homily on the temptation of Christ appearing on ff. 158-60) in Bodley 343 through the lens of a more general theory of preaching and performance, Mary Swan links the mixed use of singular and plural “we” to the maintenance of the reading community essential to the place of preaching in the liturgy and the simultaneous demarcation of the preacher’s authority. The text begins with a singular “we” in reference to the preacher and moves to a more inclusive plural “we” while discussing the obligation to fast that lies on both preacher and audience. Several more ambiguous or mixed uses occur, when the inclusive “we” is accompanied by a reminder that the preacher alone is in a position to address or to urge on the audience. The emphasis of this reading community in which both preacher and audience take part (a “partial or momentary obscuring of difference”) does not alter the fact that only the preacher is in a position to read out the Gospel text and to remain pedagogically, morally, and performatively in charge. This community is necessary to the function of preaching as part of the liturgy (practices based around a community of worship), and it is what the preaching texts are striving to create. Much as the homiletic texts contained in the manuscript rely on a combination of dynamism and continuity in order to simultaneously shore up the authority of sacred texts and the authority of priests to expound on those sacred texts while constantly reshaping a communal participation that includes the audience, the manuscript itself represents an attempt to both “reiterate tradition” and find a contemporary mode of communication.

The suggestion that Bodley 343 may have been intended, or at any rate used, as a reading book, not as an immediate source for preaching, may reflect the kinds of books used as its sources. The paradoxical facts that the textual history of the manuscript seems tied to the large collections of homilies known from Worcester or other centres but that the organization of the manuscript is not consistent with the use of a single one of any of these known collections leave us to presume

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70 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 116–35; the homily is edited pp. 136–45.


72 See Mary Swan’s articulate discussion of this “ongoing tension” in preaching texts, “Constructing Preacher,” 179–80.
that the compiler must have had access to some of these large collections but that the manuscript is unlikely to have been written at one of the major centres at which such collections were usually housed. The compiler (or earlier compilers of the presumed booklets) seems to have had access to the library at Worcester, perhaps from a book intended for just the sort of use to which Bodley 343 was put: for reading by a possibly varied assortment of religious, clerics, and even some lay people within a library such as that of the cathedral at Worcester. That such a book was copied in the twelfth century, containing no twelfth-century texts but reflecting twelfth-century concerns over the accessibility of the language of eleventh-century texts, suggests, as Irvine rightly notes, that although the twelfth century seems to have been lacking in composition of appropriate devotional or educational reading in English, it must not have been lacking in readers of English. Further, this twelfth-century readership indicates a continuing interest in and respect for the authority of Anglo-Saxon texts, in spite of the increasing linguistic distance between twelfth-century readers and the Old English of the texts.

In spite of the fact that Bodley 343 contains none of the marks of omission, changes in punctuation, and marginal additions that are generally looked for as indications of direct use for preaching, the manuscript’s clear connections with significant collections of preaching material are revealing. Both Irvine’s work on the anonymous Old English homilies and Conti’s research on Bodley 343’s version of the Homiliary of Angers point to the use of booklets either in the compilation of Bodley 343 or, as Irvine argues, at an earlier stage of transmission. It was more common than perhaps we think for manuscripts of Old English homilies to be composed of

73 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, xlvii, li–lii. Irvine notes that the scribe has not merely selected appropriate texts but has taken care not to repeat those texts he has already included in his collection.

74 Irvine, “Compilation,” 53, comments on the evidence that Cotton MS Vespasian D.xiv, a manuscript that is connected with Bodley 343 and may have originated at Rochester (another cathedral monastery), was read and annotated by a woman.

75 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, liii. Here, Irvine also notes that, unlike Bodley 343, Vespasian D.xiv does contain English translations of twelfth-century Latin works.

booklets, and individual booklets might have been used not only as exemplars for copying, but as more portable preaching books that could be carried to distant parishes.  

Irvine’s collation of Bodley 343 suggests rather that portable booklets were used as sources for either Bodley 343 or its exemplar, not that Bodley 343 is itself composed of booklets that could have circulated independently. Texts in Bodley 343 sometimes appear in sequences that line up with the church year but often depart from the order in which they appear in source manuscripts. The discrepancies between the arrangement of texts in Bodley 343 and in its sources suggest that the compiler of Bodley 343 was not himself responsible for the chronological sequences that appear here but was instead selecting texts from a manuscript or manuscripts that were already arranged chronologically and that the most likely explanation is that at some stage of transmission, booklets were used as exemplars. Items 14–18 from section (d) form one such sequence arranged chronologically over feasts falling between August and November, but items 14 and 15 are from a different line of transmission than the other items in the sequence, suggesting that the compiler was responsible for the arrangement of items in the manuscript.

This use of booklets in the assembly of a large manuscript is paralleled in other Middle English manuscripts, including the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts, which share some corresponding material in differing page layouts and hands, leading to discrepancies of foliation. In Vernon and Simeon, prose and verse generally appear in separate quires with distinct ruling patterns, suggesting that there was “forethought, at least for economy” and that the various constituent sections of the manuscripts might have been conceived and written in a different order than they appear in either manuscript. For example, parts 1 and 2 of the Simeon manuscript roughly correspond with the first 137 leaves of part 3 of the Vernon manuscript, but Simeon part 3 draws on Vernon parts 3 and 5, with Simeon part 4 roughly matching up with the beginning of Vernon part 4. This, in turn, implies that these constituent sections may not have been bound together

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78 Irvine, Old English Homilies, xxxv.

until they were copied into the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts, even though their repeated juxtaposition hints that they were intended to accompany each other. Similarly, the ordering in Bodley 343 of material drawn from CCCC 198 suggests that the constituent booklets of CCCC 198 were likely consulted separately rather than within the manuscript as we now have it: The compiler of Bodley 343 has preserved a sequence of six Lenten homilies that appear near the end of the first of three booklets of CCCC 198, but although Bodley 343 continues with a set of post-Lenten items, as does the second booklet of CCCC 198, the material no longer corresponds. As with the Latin material in Bodley 343, Conti’s identification of the Latin sermons as a rearrangement of the Homiliary of Angers not only hints at the use of booklets in the compilation of Bodley 343 or its exemplar, but it allows us to place Bodley 343 in a sequence of versions that demonstrates a lengthy interest in and willingness to translate and rearrange the Homiliary: the Taunton Fragments, written in the eleventh century, preserve a bilingual version in Latin and Old English, while Bodley 343 gives a twelfth-century Latin reordering, and Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS C.12 a thirteenth-century English version. This provides a longer and broader perspective on the use of the Homiliary of Angers in England, and it helps to correct any “antiquarian” characterization of Bodley 343 as merely recopying texts of a dying language.

Just as it seems to have been compiled out of booklets that moved through geographical space, Bodley 343 also gives witness to temporal shifts and to a “probably vibrant traffic in Anglo-Saxon material in the century following the Norman Conquest.” The inclusion of Latin material in the collection indicates that a purely antiquarian set of motivations is not sufficient to

80 Irvine, Old English Homilies, xxxvi.


82 Conti, “Circulation,” 395–6, draws a parallel between the codicological complexities of the St. John’s manuscript witness and those of Bodley 343’s version.

explain this compilation,\textsuperscript{84} and these tensions in the compilation of the book mirror the
dynamism inherent in effective preaching texts, such as those contained in Bodley 343. In certain
aspects of its linguistic usage, Bodley 343 mixes conservatism and progressiveness, much as we
have seen the linguistic studies of the Tremulous Hand negotiate a balance between these two
tendencies. In the case of Bodley 343, we have seen that the linguistic innovation is driven by the
need in the cathedral community for reading and preaching material. These communal demands
determine the audience for and thus give shape to the work of the scribe to make old manuscripts
and texts accessible once more.

From the work of later scribes on Old English texts, we move now to an example of fresh
composition. The linguistic updating visible in the Middle English versions of the \textit{Ancrene Wisse}
is all the more striking when the text is not, so far as the negative evidence of the lack of versions
in older forms of English may be construed as proof, simply adapted from a text previously
extant in some variety of Old English or early Middle English. The so-called AB language, in
particular, gives evidence of systematic linguistic conformity across the work of multiple scribes,
implying a coordinated project to utilize a single, coherently updated language, as we shall see.

### 4.3 \textit{Ancrene Wisse}

The \textit{Ancrene Wisse}, likely composed in the early thirteenth century, betrays an extensive
community of readers and also of writers, adapting, translating, and copying the text repeatedly
for new readers. At first glance, this seems contradictory, since the text was directed towards
anchorites,\textsuperscript{85} who theoretically live in isolation from the world, but there is little indication that
their lives were truly cut off from external contact.\textsuperscript{86} This chapter provides further evidence that

\textsuperscript{84} See Irvine’s discussion of this in \textit{Old English Homilies}, lli.

\textsuperscript{85} Millett, \textit{Ancrene Wisse}, II.xix–xxiv.

\textsuperscript{86} See pp. 146–7, below.
anchorites, though they may or may not have taken on active roles, were nevertheless implicated in larger textual communities. 

Middle English versions of the *Ancrene Wisse* survive in nine manuscripts, most of which date to the thirteenth or fourteenth century: CCCC 402 (MS A; s. xiii), BL Cotton Cleopatra C.vi (MS C; s. xiii¹), Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 234/120 (MS G; s. xiii²), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. th. c. 70 (MS H; s. xiv), BL Cotton Nero A.xiv (MS N; s. xiii²/4), Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2498 (MS P; c. 1365-75), BL, MS Royal 8 C.i (MS R; s. xv), BL Cotton Titus D.xviii (MS T; s. xiii²/4), and Bodleian MS Eng. poet. a.I (MS V; s. xiv⁴, probably after 1384).

A Latin translation appears in four extant manuscripts with a fifth now lost: Oxford, Magdalen College, MS Latin 67 (MS Ma; c. 1400), Oxford, Merton College, MS C.I.5 (MS Me; s. xiv¹), BL, MS Royal 7 C.x (MS R²; s. xvi), and BL Cotton Vitellius E.vii (MS V¹; s.xiv).

Two different translations into French were made, the earlier preserved in BL Cotton Vitellius F.vii (MS F; s. xiii or s. xiv⁵) and the later translation appearing in three manuscripts: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 90 (MS Bd; s. xiii or s. xiv), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fonds français 6276 (MS BN; s. xiv), and Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 883 (MS Tr; s. xiii or s. xiv). ⁸⁸

These versions, spanning several centuries and three languages, speak to the contemporary popularity of the text, particularly when the direction of translation was more likely to be from, not into, Latin. That the number of non-English manuscripts nearly equals the number of English manuscripts suggests further that the appeal in other languages was not merely limited to the

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⁸⁷ Anne Savage, ““The Communal Authorship of Ancrene Wisse,” in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Yoko Wada (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 45–55, writes of a “community of solitaries” with whom (though not by whom) the *Ancrene Wisse* was written by someone who had long experience hearing their confessions and who may well have undertaken the task at their request and with their help. Cate Gunn’s argument, in *Ancrene Wisse: From Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 36–40, that the life of the anchoresses and the text of the *Ancrene Wisse* show similarities with the life and sermons of the continental beguines also suggests that there may have been wider networks along which anchoritic texts circulated.

⁸⁸ For descriptions of all manuscripts, see Millett, *Ancrene Wisse*, I.xi–xxvii.
occasional enthusiast but must have been fairly broad. Even by themselves, the Middle English versions inform our understanding of the linguistic situation in England from the thirteenth century on. The pull between past and present seen in the form and contents of Bodley 343 is also visible in the so-called AB language, identified by Tolkien in 1929 from CCCC 402 (MS A, an early manuscript of the Ancrene Wisse) and Bodley 34 (MS B, which contains the “Katherine Group” texts). These manuscripts are written in clearly differing hands, yet they display close linguistic similarities, suggesting an adherence to some kind of school. As we shall see, there seems to be a conscious and coordinated attempt to devise a systematic orthography for English.

The question of how to craft a form of English that would be comprehensible and pronounceable seems to have been especially on the mind or minds of those preparing texts that are now considered to be examples of the AB language. The AB texts display particularly interesting solutions to the problem of the Old English consonants that are sometimes palatalized between vowels. Whereas the Tremulous Hand marks the palatal <g> with a superscript <i> and what would once have been a voiced velar fricative with a superscript wynn, the AB scribes mark the fricative with <h> (an unusual strategy for the Middle English period but one with precedents in the Old English period), and follow the traditional distinction of representing the plosive /g/ by the Caroline <g> and the palatal semi-vowel by the Insular <g>. The AB scribes also distinguish

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89 Catherine Innes-Parker, “The Legacy of Ancrene Wisse: Translations, Adaptations, Influences and Audience, with Special Attention to Women Readers,” in A Companion to Ancrene Wisse, 145–73, has catalogued a lengthy set of late medieval borrowings from or adaptations of material from the Ancrene Wisse, including even a source for Wynkyn de Word’s 1493/4 printing that was circulating in Burgundian court circles.


91 Tolkien, 106–12, is pessimistic about the ability of most scribes to translate from one dialect into another and concludes that it is unlikely that the scribes of the A and B manuscripts, respectively, could have been working independently of oversight. S. R. T. O. d’Ardenne, ed., Pe Liflade ant Te Passiun of Seinte Iuliene, EETS o.s. 248 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961 [for 1960]), xxxiii–xxxv, is more willing to trust the abilities of scribes to translate, but she still mistrusts the scribe of Bodley 34 (MS B) and concludes that he would not have been capable of either editing or translating.

the palatal <c>, which stands for /tʃ/, from <c> or <k> spellings for the plosive (before back and front vowels, respectively) by using a French-derived <ch> spelling for the palatal.\(^93\)

In light of these details, recent scholars have not resisted the urge to pigeon-hole the AB language, maintaining the emphasis on its associations with “the ascetic and the studious” and its “acquaintance with ‘the pen’.”\(^94\) As a language preserved in books, AB could hardly avoid an acquaintance with the pen, and the sense of otherworldliness strikes wide of the mark when dealing with a text, like the *Ancrene Wisse*, which has been translated and reshaped for so many different audiences. Even though the text was directed towards recluses, it is clear from the warnings given to them about dining with others,\(^95\) keeping cows or other animals,\(^96\) and selling goods\(^97\) that there must have been some kind of contact with people outside of the anchorhold. Warning the anchoresses against the words of evil tongues, the author instructs them to warn each other immediately, “Ã¥ meistre haueð iwriten us as in heast to halden þet we tellen him al þet euch of oþer hereð,” and goes on to advise them, “Euch noðele[\textit{s}] warni oþer, þurh ful siker sonesmon, sweteliche ant luueliche as hire leoue suster, of þing þet ha misnimeð, ȝef ha hit wat to soðe.”\(^98\) Such a system of mutual advice and warning belies the idea that the anchoresses lived entirely without human contact.

Further evidence of some sort of communication comes from the use of the AB language, which appears to have been a fairly coordinated effort, possibly with a single centre as the authoritative


\(^{94}\) Dance, 72.

\(^{95}\) “Sum ancre makeð hire bord wið hire gest utewið. Þet is to muche freondschipe; for of alle ordres, þenne is hit uncundelukest ant meast ajein ancre ordre þe is al dead to þe world. Me haueð ðerf ofte þet deade speken wið cwike, ah þet ha eten wið cwike ne fond Ich ðet neauer.” Millett, Part 8, ll. 36–40.

\(^{96}\) “Ȟe, mine leoue sustren, bute ȝef neod ow driue ant ower meistre hit reade, ne schulen habbe na beast bute cat ane...for þenne mot ha þrenchen of þe kues foddre, of heordemonne hure, olnhin þe heiward, wearien hwen he punt hire, and þelden þah þe hearmes.... Ancre ne aþ to habben na þing þet utward drahe hire heorte.” Millett, Part 8, ll. 90–100.

\(^{97}\) “Na chaffere ne driue Þe. Ancre Þet is chepilt...ha chepeð hire sawle þe chapmon of helle.” Millett, Part 8, ll. 101–3.

\(^{98}\) Millett, Part 4, ll. 1109–16.
body. d’Ardenne is certain that texts were moving back and forth between the AB centre and other centres where they were copied— and texts must have moved with people, although this is not to say that the texts were moving back and forth from the anchoresses to whom the *Ancrene Wisse* was directed. Anne Savage recognizes a “community of solitaries” who were, if not authors of the text, central to and influential on its composition, and the very content of the *Ancrene Wisse* makes it clear that the anchoresses must have had ample opportunities of engaging with those who still lived openly in the world.

A parallel with Bodley 343, on the other hand, emerges in the *pecia*-style copying of the Cleopatra manuscript of the *Ancrene Wisse*. The evidence gives a clearer picture of the production of this copy than do the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts, where losses in both manuscripts have obscured some of the possible parallels, and it appears that the Cleopatra manuscript was one of two copies being prepared at one time, with two scribes passing sections back and forth so that only a third of the exemplar need have been out of the anchoresses’ possession at any one time.

A distinctive feature of the various texts of the *Ancrene Wisse*, among Middle English texts more generally, is their strikingly early adoption of French words and spellings. The difficulty lies in distinguishing between one author’s “idiolectal” bilingualism and one text’s reflection of societal bilingualism within the scribal class of the period. This is compounded when, as in the present case, there is so little written evidence to shed light on the relative states of Middle English and Anglo-French, and this is what makes the Middle English *Ancrene Wisse* so valuable as evidence of language contact and of the coexistence of the two languages long before we have much other

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99 d’Ardenne, xxxiv.


documentary evidence. The Middle English Corpus text, for example, shows lexical and other similarities with the Anglo-Norman Vitellius text. Far from undermining the status of the Corpus text as a witness to innovation and revitalization in the use of English, this familiarity with French is in fact an element of the conscious system of updating the orthography that appears in AB texts.

The willingness to live with linguistic variance has resonances in the content of some of these texts. The *Ancrene Wisse* expects the anchoresses to find their own, varying ways of living out its guidelines: “For sum is strong, sum unstrong ant mei ful wel beo cwite ant pai Godd mid leasse. Sum is clergesse, sum nawt ant mot [t]e mare wurchen ant on oðer wise seggen hire bonen.” In a similar spirit, the Latin interpolations in the *Ancrene Wisse* were sometimes translated and sometimes left untranslated, suggesting that the text is ready for readers of all abilities, each navigating along a slightly different path through the work. As with the parables of the New Testament, the text of the *Ancrene Wisse* offers various levels of meaning to those with the appropriate sensibilities. In this way, the content of the text parallels the external linguistic situation.

In comparison with the apparently more learned AB language, the Nero text of the *Ancrene Wisse*, contained in the Cotton manuscript Nero A.xiv, has been dismissed rather slightingly with its “busy redactor” and “fussy and interfering scribe.” There are none of Tolkien’s “country gentlemen” here, in spite of the fact that the Nero scribe is also trying to find a coherent written representation of his form of English. The manuscript is dated to the second quarter of the thirteenth century and localized to Worcestershire, and as mentioned before, the suggestion of

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104 Ibid., 91. Tolkien, 113, dismisses the suggestion that the Corpus *Ancrene Wisse* was a translation, a theory that Trotter also is not fully prepared to accept.
106 Dance, 59.
even a link between the Tremulous Hand and the scribe of the Nero Ancrene Wisse has significant ramifications for our understanding of the textual culture of the West Midlands in the early thirteenth century and for our sense of the kinds of textual communities that were at work. The slighting characterizations of the Nero scribe, anxious to mold the text to match his own linguistic profile, are strikingly reminiscent of the Tremulous Hand’s project to bring Old English texts into a form of English recognizable and comprehensible to readers of his day, whether or not this meant matching his own dialect in every particular. If the Tremulous Hand or someone trained with the Tremulous Hand was producing copies of the Ancrene Wisse, then it would be the first specific link between the Ancrene Wisse and Worcester Cathedral and Priory. Worcester is one of the dioceses precocious in adopting the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council, and such a link at least in reproduction (if not in composition) would reinforce Bella Millett’s “unified theory” of the production of Ancrene Wisse Group texts. It would not tell us any more about who might have served as the spiritual director for the anchorites in the West Midlands, but it would indicate that even if the director were not affiliated with the cathedral, the resources of a cathedral scriptorium would not necessarily have been beyond the reach of someone wishing to copy, or have copied, a text such as the Ancrene Wisse.

Beyond this, if the Tremulous Hand is the hand of the Nero text of the Ancrene Wisse, then we have found the first hint that anything written by the Tremulous Hand was being read and transmitted before John Joscelyn discovered his work in the sixteenth century. The identification of the Tremulous Hand with the Nero scribe would also link the texts read and written by the Tremulous Hand with the remarkably active community of readers, adherents, adaptors, and copyists of the Ancrene Wisse. In this scenario, either the Tremulous Hand was so involved in the textual communities around him that he managed to get his hand in on at least this one version of the Ancrene Wisse, or the circulation of versions of the Ancrene Wisse was so pervasive that it reached the Tremulous Hand as well as the many other competent linguistscribes who produced versions of it.

If, on the contrary, the Tremulous Hand was not responsible for the Nero text, then we are nevertheless left with the conclusion that multiple people in the same geographic area at around the same time were attempting to find distinctive written expressions of their language. Not even the original text of the Ancrene Wisse would have been in the Old English that the Tremulous Hand encountered, but that only makes the urge to update all the more intriguing. In this second
scenario, we have, on Franzen’s evidence, signs of common training in terms of both linguistic and palaeographical aspects of production. It is possible that the Tremulous Hand and the Nero scribe both received training at a single centre, and this raises the question of the other activities of such a centre and whether it might have served a broader educational purpose, training clergy as well as scribes. It could, in fact, have been linked to the kind of environment that Irvine, Richards, and Webber see in the mixing of religious, clergy, and laity at cathedral monasteries.

In fact, cathedral libraries seem to have played a central role in the textual communities discussed in this chapter. As the sites of libraries, they provided manuscripts out of which preaching texts were drawn, and they were also home to parishes in which such texts were used and from which they were dispersed to outlying parish churches. Many of the manuscripts on which the Tremulous Hand worked and out of which the compiler of Bodley 343 or its exemplar drew material were housed in the library at Worcester Cathedral. Bella Millett and Ralph Hanna have both argued for the importance of cathedral communities in textual production and circulation. Particularly in Millett’s discussion of the West Midlands, the need for preaching texts is seen to drive much of the textual activity emanating from diocesan centres, such as the Trinity and Lambeth homilies, but it was not so simple as merely recopying homilies out of manuscripts in the cathedral libraries. Large numbers of eleventh-century collections of Old English homilies survive from cathedral libraries, but the language of these homilies was no longer transparent to twelfth- and thirteenth-century audiences. In order for the diocesan statutes on vernacular preaching that followed the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils to be put into effect, the written form of Old English preserved in the eleventh-century manuscripts required updating into written forms of Middle English whose orthography was recognizable to anyone reading the texts and would produce comprehensible spoken forms for those listening.

Another crucial connection made in the cathedrals is that between the Ancrene Wisse Group and homiletic production. If Millett’s reading of the cooperative relationship between reforming bishops and the new orders of friars is accurate, then texts were either emanating from or at least receiving impetus and justification from diocesan centres, although they circulated more widely
with friars or other readers. We should bear in mind Mary Swan’s note that the West Midlands saw substantial vernacular textual production, including in Old English, during this period, and also the suggestion that the booklets used in the compilation of Bodley 343 may have been traveling more widely than within a single library. Once again, the example of the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts is enlightening: sometimes borrowing from each other, sometimes mining sources independently, neither manuscript can be consistently viewed as a precursor to the other with regard to their shared texts. The layouts of the two manuscripts are distinct, but although it is unlikely that either was intended as a replica of the other, the shared material suggests that the two manuscripts were not conceived independently. The implication is that even in a single library or workshop, related material may often have been compiled in varying and discontinuous, if inter-related, ways.

In spite of occasional scholarly comment on the Tremulous Hand’s interest in “Englishness” and on the ways this is reminiscent of Alfred’s concern that a body of texts has become linguistically inaccessible, there are very significant differences. The languages at stake are different: the Tremulous Hand, the compiler of Bodley 343 or its exemplar, the AB scribe, and the Nero Ancrene Wisse scribe are trying to work out the shape of English, or the respective shapes of various sorts of English. The English language is changing constantly, but here, we see an assortment of literate people who are particularly conscious of that fact. These writers are not necessarily concerned to halt a decline (as when we insist on standard usage while marking undergraduate essays) so much as they are intent on safeguarding an intelligible form.

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From our vantage point in a society that relies on a highly standardized written language, it is all too easy to describe this period in the history of English as one best characterized with reference to a very fragmentary and fundamentally localized linguistic map. That is to say, “English” in this period is marked by very distinctive dialectal variation and has more the look of an assortment of closely related languages than of a single normative usage, and the period has even been labeled as a time when “any sort of national or even provincial standard could scarcely be imagined.”\textsuperscript{113} It is true that this period proves that the possible solutions to linguistic and orthographic conundrums are multiple and distinctive, but we need not assume that such scribes were working to create a national standard in order to credit them with an awareness of the problem of intelligibility. If there are differing forms of English coexisting, then the problem of intelligibility is also one of contemporary relevance, with fewer overtones of antiquarianism, and we should be wary of any impulse to treat these activities as quaint hobbies lacking the immediate significance that they in fact show. Instead, the textual community that drove these activities not only reached back to draw on the support for English vernacular writings in the Anglo-Saxon period, but also provided what was to become, as Chapter 5 will show, a crucial link between these Anglo-Saxon texts and their early modern readers.

\textsuperscript{113} Dance, 65.
Chapter 5  
Shewing the Auncient Fayth: An Elizabethan Sequel

We have seen that Old English manuscripts continued to be read throughout the Middle Ages, as we can tell from the glossing that they received and, in some cases, from the later copies of or later texts derived from Old English texts. As Chapter 4 shows, Old English manuscripts and texts received particular attention in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the most famous glossator was the Tremulous Hand of Worcester, but it is clear that later medieval readers also made use of Old English manuscripts. 1 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 343, itself a late twelfth-century copy of Old English texts, has been glossed by a fifteenth-century hand with a good knowledge of Old English. 2 At least one early text of the Ancrene Wisse was still being read in the sixteenth century; on a flyleaf of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402, which contains a thirteenth-century text of the Ancrene Wisse, a sixteenth-century hand has added an inscription about the text to follow, warning the reader that the text is written in Saxon characters and listing Anglo-Saxon words that have become unfamiliar and dated, along with more modern equivalents.

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that a textual community can function in response to and even in dialogue with textual activity that is temporally distant, as when the Tremulous Hand left his mark in Old English manuscripts and perhaps participated in the production of new texts in the Ancrene Wisse Group that carefully positioned themselves in a kind of linguistic counterpoint with Old English. A similar sense of remoteness from the language and script of the text is precisely what opened up the productive space in which sixteenth-century antiquarians (like our reader of the Ancrene Wisse) studied and made use of medieval texts. The textual community in which they worked was formed around the effort that was necessary to make Old English or early Middle English texts accessible once more and around the models of textuality found in the manuscripts they used. Matthew Parker (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1559–1575) and other antiquarians, though working towards different ends than the compilers of their medieval

2 Interlinear glosses appear on fols. 141v–143v. See Ker, Catalogue, no. 310.
manuscripts, nevertheless took their cues from the possibilities opened up by those manuscripts. In this way, the Parkerian circle participated in a textual community by learning from the annotating habits of earlier readers, including Wulfstan and the Tremulous Hand, and then showing others how to read through their own annotation of manuscripts and through their publication of medieval texts. From both Wulfstan and the Tremulous Hand, the Parkerian circle learned a model of reading, but as we shall see, they also learned more specific information about Old English by reading the Tremulous Hand glosses.

Parker’s textual activities were intended to repair a religious and political rupture resulting from the creation of the Church of England with the monarch also at the head of the church, but Parker’s use of medieval sources meant that he was also attempting to repair a linguistic rupture. So, the textual community thus formed was necessarily diachronic, as Parker laid claim to centuries-old texts that required the cultivation of particular linguistic and palaeographical skills. As a result of this diachronicity, there were no longer any speakers of Old and Middle English, meaning that manuscripts were not merely one possible entry point into the material, but the sole entryway available to Parker and his circle. Their textual community was thus constituted in activities carried out in or relying on the manuscripts: Parker’s selectivity in embracing only appropriate texts, the annotations entered in various manuscripts by both Parker and his assistants, the translations that were prepared for the edited texts published by Parker, the dissemination in print and the imitation of Anglo-Saxon hands in manuscript and in print, and Parker’s famous reorganizations and rebindings.

Monastic libraries were most likely in flux at all times, and the late medieval tendency to send books to colleges at Oxford or Cambridge may have seriously depleted the in-house stores of books in some institutions. Beyond this, notable losses of books occurred in the course of the

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3 For an account of the political and religious divisions in the period leading up to Elizabeth’s reign, see Christopher Haigh, English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), esp. 105–20 and 219–34.

1327 attack on the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds and the burning of records during the Peasant Revolt of 1381. Nevertheless, the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century led to the dispersal of large numbers of books. Although John Leland and John Bale attempted to stem this tide, it was not until Elizabeth’s reign that serious efforts were made to gather and use medieval manuscripts. Much of the early modern impetus for the attempt to mine medieval English texts arose following the second Act of Supremacy in 1559 and the final break with the Roman Church, when there was considerable pressure to locate antecedents for the reformed English church. So, the reformers turned to medieval manuscripts, hoping to find pre-Conquest parallels for their own positions.

One of the architects of the Elizabethan Settlement and one of the most zealous collectors of manuscripts was Matthew Parker, born in 1504 in Norwich, educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and eventually appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Elizabeth. Parker amassed an impressive collection of medieval manuscripts that had been dispersed following the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII between 1536 and 1541. Most of Parker’s manuscripts were given to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, of which he had been Master from 1544 until 1553, and preserved there under strict regulations. His eighteenth-century biographer, John Strype,

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describes Parker as having been reluctant, at least partly because of concerns over his health, to take up any post that would draw him out of private or University life. After having been summoned several times, increasingly peremptorily, Parker was finally prevailed upon to face a meeting and then to agree to become Archbishop of Canterbury.\textsuperscript{10} Parker was consecrated in 1559, just a year after Elizabeth’s accession, and as archbishop, he presided over the Elizabethan Settlement and the final form of the Thirty-nine Articles. It was, however, some years before Parker prevailed upon the Privy Council to give him the authority to demand medieval manuscripts.\textsuperscript{11}

In an attempt to justify positions taken by the reformed English church, Parker (as Archbishop) had to find ways of arguing that there were English precedents for Anglican positions on transubstantiation (that the spiritual grace conferred during the Eucharist was more important than the physical consumption of the body and blood [Art. XXVIII]), clerical marriage (that it was not unlawful and that marriage should not bar men from becoming priests [Art. XXXII]), and submission to the authority of Rome (that the Church of Rome had erred [Art. XIX] and that the Bishop of Rome had no jurisdiction in England [Art. XXXVII]).

To find these precedents, Parker turned to the writings of the Anglo-Saxon church and principally to the homilies of \Ælfric of Eynsham, who lived in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries (c. 950–c. 1010). \Ælfric was an obvious choice, because of his standing as one of the foremost and most prolific prose stylists in Old English, but at the same time, he makes an unlikely choice, in the wake of the Dissolution, because of his background as a student of \Æthelwold’s monastic school at Winchester following the tenth-century Benedictine Reform.

Parker worked with no fewer than fifteen Anglo-Saxon homiliaries, ten of which he labeled in sequence (“Primus liber homiliarum,” etc.): CCCC MSS 162, 178, 188, 198, 302, 421, and 419 (with pages 1-2 from MS 421); Cambridge University Library, MS Li.1.33; CCCC 303; and Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.34. The other five were left unlabeled: CCCC MSS 201

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{10} John Strype, \textit{The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker} (London, 1740), 35–37.
\item\textsuperscript{11} Plate 24 in \textit{Page, Matthew Parker and his Books}, is a facsimile of the broadsheet issued by the Privy Council in 1568.
\end{footnotes}
and 367; CUL MS II.4.6; and BL Cotton MSS Faustina A.ix and Vespasian D.xiv. Many of these were also used by Matthew Parker’s secretary, John Joscelyn, including CCCC MSS 178, 198, 201, and 421, and BL Cotton MSS Faustina A.ix and Vespasian D.xiv. Joscelyn can also be shown to have handled BL Cotton MS Otho B.x and Bodleian MSS Rawlinson Q.e.20, Bodley 340 and 342, and Hatton 113, 114, and 115, including the portion of Hatton 115 now housed in Lawrence, Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, MS Pryce C2:2.

In addition to several publications dealing with ecclesiastical discipline, Parker published a number of books, in various combinations of Latin, Old English, and Modern English:

A Testimonie of Antiquitie (London, 1567; STC 159 and 159.5; edition and translation of an Old English Ælfrician homily for Easter touching on the doctrine of transubstantiation; preface probably composed by John Joscelyn; first book printed in Old English or in Anglo-Saxon types);

A Defence of Priestes Mariages (London, 1567; STC 17518–19; treatise justifying clerical marriage with scriptural and patristic texts)

Holie Bible (London, 1568; STC 2099; known as the “Bishops’ Bible,” consists of a translation of the entire Bible into English);

The Gospels of the Fower Evangelistes (London, 1571; STC 23961; edition of the Old English Gospels; preface written by John Foxe);

De antiquitate Britannicae ecclesiae (London, 1572; STC 19292; treatise on the history of the church in England); and

Ælfredi regis res gestae (London, 1574; STC 863; edition of Asser’s Latin Life of King Alfred, also in Anglo-Saxon types).


13 Ibid., 452–4.
Parker was by no means the first to cultivate an acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the sixteenth century, and earlier scholars, like John Leland, Robert Recorde, and Robert Talbot, examined Anglo-Saxon manuscripts as much as twenty years before Parker began to do so. Recorde even imitated Anglo-Saxon letter forms when he added excerpts from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to CCCC MS 138, thus prefiguring Parker’s later project to develop Anglo-Saxon types based on manuscript models and to print Old English texts with types based on Anglo-Saxon minuscule.

Robert Talbot (c. 1505–1558) was one of the earliest antiquarians to study Old English, and he probably had a better knowledge of the language than either of his contemporaries, John Leland (c. 1503–1552) or Robert Recorde (c. 1510–1558). An early reformer, Talbot nevertheless escaped severe punishment under Mary, and his contributions to Anglo-Saxon studies were important early steps: Talbot’s transcription of a set of Anglo-Saxon charters with Old English boundary clauses is the only surviving witness to those texts, and he may also have influenced both Leland and Recorde. Both Leland and Bale are named as associates of Talbot in Strype’s biography of Parker. Unlike most of his fellow Anglo-Saxonists, Talbot was sufficiently intrigued by runic alphabets to have made note of where he found them, and it may have been

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17 Strype, 529.
Talbot who pasted an alphabet originally from CUL MS Kk.3.18 onto the recto of a leaf of London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.ix, with another runic alphabet on the verso.  

Although the tradition that John Leland was “King’s Antiquary” to Henry VIII has been discredited, Leland did style himself “antiquarius” and made several trips across England in the early 1530s surveying manuscripts. Leland conceived of his antiquarian activities in a nationalistic light and hoped to establish by his writings not only the religious autonomy but the historical and intellectual stature of England. He is also believed to have acquired the copy of Asser’s Latin *Life of King Alfred* that was once the first item in Cotton MS Otho A.xii but is no longer extant. John Bale carried on with the same project and published or referred to some of Leland’s antiquarian writings in his own published works. Bale also made early catalogues of English manuscripts and authors, and Parker consulted him for guidance on the owners of medieval books.

Parker, significantly, differed from his predecessors in putting a larger scheme into practice and organizing at his palace in Lambeth what has been likened to an institute of manuscript studies. His was a relatively systematic process of searching for and studying these books. After successfully petitioning Queen Elizabeth, he secured in 1568 the right to demand “auncient recordes or monumentes,” and he was not afraid to alter either his own or others’ manuscripts.

Parker’s methods of working with manuscripts have received severe criticism from modern

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22 *Illustrium Maiorum Britanniae scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae, Cambriae, et Scotiae Summarium* (Wesel, 1548).
24 The 1568 broadsheet granting permission is printed as plate 24 in Page, *Matthew Parker and his Books*.  

scholars, as have his similarly invasive practices when editing Anglo-Saxon texts. His red crayon annotations have become infamous, and he also had contents lists added to many of his manuscripts. Sometimes, he even washed out initial leaves of manuscripts in order to accommodate such lists, as is the case with CCCC 201, page 1. This manuscript, in fact, survives as a Parkerian joining of two previously unrelated manuscripts. Parker removed the first leaf from CCCC 419 and added it to CCCC 421, the original part of which was a companion volume to CCCC 419. Then, a frontispiece was provided for CCCC 419 out of a thirteenth-century psalter. In other instances, deficient leaves or passages of text were supplied, as when a passage from CCCC 190 was supplied where it was missing from CCCC 265. In a 1566 letter to William Cecil, Parker reveals that Cecil, like Parker himself, employs a scribe who is able to “counterfeit in antiquity” and who, in Parker’s estimation, should be put to work supplying missing leaves for deficient manuscripts.

All of these things point to a well developed program of study of Old English and Old English manuscripts, and Parker had clear inducements to engage in this sort of study, reasons both polemical and based on probably genuine historical enthusiasm. The households of men like Parker and Cecil fostered the talents of other Anglo-Saxonists, and John Joscelyn and Laurence Nowell, both renowned Anglo-Saxonists, probably did not begin their work on Old English until the 1560s, when they served in the households of powerful men with a vested interest in the use


26 Part I is described in Chapter 3; Part II is an Exeter copy of Theodulf’s Capitulary in Latin and Old English taken from CCCC 191. See Wormald, Making of English Law, 206.


of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.\textsuperscript{30} Joscelyn submitted to Catholic practice under Mary but was sufficiently Protestant in his views to be made Latin secretary to Parker in 1559.\textsuperscript{31} Contrary to the accusations that his editorial activities constituted mere propaganda or justifications constructed after the fact to solidify positions taken by the nascent Church of England, Parker showed a lifelong interest in reform, and his academic career demonstrated genuine scholarly promise beyond the image of a man merely able to gather and coordinate more intelligent subordinates.\textsuperscript{32} Parker collaborated with Martin Bucer, a Continental reformer, to assemble a \textit{Florilegium Patristicum}, a collection of patristic opinions intended as a source-book for reformers,\textsuperscript{33} and Parker was sufficiently close to Bucer to give the English eulogy at his funeral in 1551.\textsuperscript{34} He can scarcely be accused of cynical or disinterested propagandizing on the question of clerical marriage, having first lived with Margaret Harleston from 1544, then having married her in 1547, two years before the practice was legalized in 1549 under Edward VI.

John Joscelyn, in addition to his work on Old English lexicography, taught Latin and Greek at Queens’ College, Cambridge, in the 1550s, but he resigned his post in 1557, possibly on religious grounds.\textsuperscript{35} Joscelyn was not the only person to work on Old English lexicography, but he was one of the earliest to make real progress towards a dictionary, and he is the first person we know to have been using the thirteenth-century glosses of the Tremulous Hand. Neil Ker first noticed that John Joscelyn seemed to be using the Tremulous Hand glosses in Hatton 20 and that it “may not be a coincidence” that Joscelyn’s use of the manuscript as a source of dictionary

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Graham, “Talbot,” 295.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Kleist, “Anglo-Saxon Homiliaries,” 452–4.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Bjorklund, “Parker’s Purposes,” 220–21, notes that Parker received an ability-based scholarship in his first year at Cambridge and completed his four-year course in three and a half.
\end{itemize}
words ends soon after the Tremulous Hand glosses leave off. In this cribbing of vocabulary, where the Latin glosses are used to understand the Old English words, Graham has noted the likeness with Joscelyn’s technique in working with Ælfric’s *Grammar*.

As with Parker’s assemblage of assistants in his own household, this careful use of all the linguistic information available in the manuscripts speaks to a systematic approach to the study of Old English. Unfortunately, a reliance on the tremulous glosses can lead to the perpetuation of errors, as occurred on ff. 30v–31r of *A Testimonie of Antiquitie*, where the Parkerian translation preserves the Tremulous Hand’s misreading of CCCC 198, fol. 220r. The Old English text is a homily written by Ælfric for Easter Day, in which he discusses the various symbols used to represent Christ, including a lamb, a lion, and bread. The Tremulous Hand takes all of this in stride but is confounded by the phrase *gehu elles*, which must mean in this context “and other things.” For reasons that are not clear, the Tremulous Hand takes the phrase as referring to a mountain. In the Parkerian edition of the same homily in *A Testimonie of Antiquitie*, the translation given is again “mountayne,” and since there is nothing in the context of Ælfric’s homily to suggest a mountain above all other possible symbols of Christ, it seems that the Parkerian circle have arrived at this translation purely by following the Tremulous Hand’s gloss. This piece of inaccurate translation is an example of when a textual community may work in less than fortuitous ways, although perhaps it is fortuitous for scholars, since it gives us a much clearer indication than we would otherwise have that the Parkerians were directly relying on the translations recorded by the Tremulous Hand approximately 250 years earlier.

The fact that Old English is a much more foreign language for John Joscelyn than it was for the Tremulous Hand allows us a glimpse of his baby steps in Old English, a view that is lacking in our understanding of the Tremulous Hand. In his notebook now preserved as London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 692, John Joscelyn not only leaves us with page upon page of word-pairs or paired Old English-to-Latin declension tables, but in the first column of folio 11v, he uses Old English prose to explain one equivalence:

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The Old English conjugation of *getācnian* (weak class II) is correct, as is the adjectival declension of *getitelod(e)*. As with most of his Old English entries in this notebook, Joscelyn imitates Anglo-Saxon letter forms, and the use of archaizing hands is widespread amongst early Anglo-Saxonists.  

Robert Recorde, as noted above, used an archaizing hand when he added portions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to a later medieval chronicle, and Parker evidently prided himself on the skill of his scribe, Lyly, in “counterfeiting” antiquity.

The technique of imitating ancient scripts to bring about a visual effect plays into Parker’s very tactile vocabulary for discussing memory and knowledge. This rhetoric is used to build up a sense of a collective national memory of “some abstruse Matters … and many things, which are now intricate and wrapt up from us,” which must be revived through the study of medieval English manuscripts and their use to support the Anglican Church. Likewise, Parker’s selection of the quotation from Jeremiah for the title page of *A Testimonie* echoes Alfred’s metaphor of the spor representing the examples of “ure ieldran” in the preface to the *Pastoral Care*: “ac we him ne cunnun æfterspyrigan, forðæm we habbað nu ægðer forlæten ge þone welan ge þone wisdom, forðamþe we noldon to ðæm spore mid ure mode onlutan.” It is the failure to “bend our minds to the track” and follow the footsteps of more learned forebears that costs Alfred and his contemporaries “both the wealth and the wisdom.” Parker sees a similar need for a return to “olde conformitie,” rather than a “new reformation of thinges lately begonne, which were not

39 “Thousand : *mille*. One superscribed *m* betokens one thousand, and one superscribed *i* betokens one thousand. And two superscribed *i i* betoken two thousand, and so forth.”


41 Strype, 535–36.

42 “But we cannot follow them because we have now lost both the wealth and the wisdom because we would not bend our minds to the track.” Sweet, *King Alfred’s West-Saxon Version of Gregory’s Pastoral Care*, I.4–5.
before,” as John Foxe phrases it in the preface to the Parkerian edition of the Old English Gospels. The search for the “olde conformitie” entailed the identification and labeling of witnesses to that conformity.

In order to make use of the writings of Ælfric or any other Anglo-Saxon, Parker had to get past the fact that these texts, in John Joscelyn’s words, “laye hidden euyery wheare contemned and buried in forgetfullnes and throwgh the ignoraunce off the Languages not wel vnderstanded.” Before they could even begin to worry about their ignorance of the language, the Parkerian circle had to learn to decipher the script in which the language was written down. It is clear, however, that Parker and his assistants went beyond this and continued to make the script an integral part of their use of these texts, even imitating the letter forms by hand and in a typeface commissioned by Parker. Parker’s preface to his edition of Asser’s Life of King Alfred makes the assertion, highlighted by Strype, that the use of the Anglo-Saxon typeface was not only intended to encourage readers to study Anglo-Saxon texts (“that being arrived to the Knowledge of the Character, they might convert their Endeavours towards the Saxon Writings”), but that it might in fact lead them to a study of the Irish language because of the similarity of the letter forms in Anglo-Saxon minuscule to those of other Insular scripts. This representation of the usefulness of the study of Anglo-Saxon hands may reflect a sixteenth-century wish to present antiquarian study as relevant to affairs of state and to the sometimes precarious foreign relations of Elizabethan England.

Palaeography and the appearance of the text on the page played a vital role in Parker’s effort to incorporate Anglo-Saxon texts into his political and ecclesiastical project to defend the reformed English church. For obvious and practical reasons, an ability to surmount both linguistic and palaeographical hurdles is a fundamental ingredient in the formation of textual community—how else to engage with texts? This is even more of a problem when the textual community under discussion spans not merely a century or two, but reaches back across a gap of five or six centuries. Aside from this immediate necessity, there is a value in being able to point to a clearly

43 The Gospels of the Fower Evangelistes (1571; STC 2961), sig. ¶iir.
44 The Life off the 70. Archbishopp off Canterbury presently Sittinge (1574), C1r-v; cited in Robinson, 1066.
45 See appended text and translation of the Parkerian Preface to Ælredi regis res gestae, section 31.
established ability to work with such obscurities—academia, for example, thrives on a similar sort of recognition and valuing of authority in obscure fields. Parker is thus able to cast himself as the guardian of a legacy that could only be shared because he had found the books that preserved it. The aim of this is communal, as when Parker urges the readers of his Ælfredi regis res gestae to contemplate and emulate the qualities attributed by Asser to Alfred. Like Alfred, Parker claims to be a conduit for the renewed memory of lost knowledge when he suggests that assiduous readers will “without doubt daily pluck forth and draw out many things which now lie hidden and concealed.”

Mary Carruthers has argued that books and memoria are not mutually exclusive and that the valuing of memoria persisted well past the time when book technology had begun to shift. Additionally, objects (most specifically in the context of her discussion, books and cathedrals) can be forms of literature and “profusely pictured,” regardless of the level of learning of the audience. Carruthers quotes Richart de Fournival’s Li Bestiaires d’Amours: “For I send you this writing, both painture and parole, so that when I am not present this writing by its painture and by its parole will make me present to your memory.” Likewise, Parker’s Anglo-Saxon types are to make Old English present for his sixteenth-century readers, for whom Old English would certainly not be present otherwise. (See Figure 1.)

Parker further explains the significance of the letter-forms in his preface to the Bishops’ Bible, when he laments that “very many bookes be yet extant, though for the age of the speache and

46 Preface to Ælfredi regis res gestae, sections 4 and 12.
47 Preface to Ælfredi regis res gestae, section 44.
49 Ibid., 274–75.
50 Ibid., 277–78.
straungeness of the charect of many of them almost worne out of knowledge,” as though they had been imprinted on a surface being worn smooth by the passage of centuries. Several years

Figure 1. Opening of Ælfric’s homily for Easter Day (CH II, 15) in Anglo-Saxon types, with facing translation, as it appears in A Testimonie of Antiquitie, sig. C3v–4r.

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later, Parker returned in the Preface to his edition of Asser’s *Life of King Alfred* to the significance of the letter-forms, noting that [now that the letter forms have been cut] “the things which were written in Saxon characters will easily be published in these same types. The reading of which types will indeed renew for you the memory of that ancient and once familiar language and will supply you with no mean furniture for concealed knowledge” — presumably formerly concealed knowledge. Peter Lucas argues that the reference to furniture means household furniture, not the wooden wedges used to hold blocks of type in place. This latter usage is not attested in the Oxford English Dictionary until 1683, more than a century after Parker’s death, and Lucas suggests that Parker is assembling something like reproduction furniture, to build something new as a way of “recreating something old and venerable.” There are, however, by the second half of the sixteenth century, a number of attested uses of “furniture” based around the provision of equipment, supplies, or even munitions. This seems to be the sense in which John Leland uses supellex to refer to the contents of the library of Christ Church, Canterbury: “tota enim huius bibliothecae supellex … translata est,” which suggests that Parker may also have used the term in this way.

The printing of Anglo-Saxon texts in a typeface based on the models of medieval English manuscripts represents the culmination of all of these strands of rhetoric. After the manual labour of making the types and printing the text, the visual representation of textual monuments made its own imprint on the minds of the readers, who were then supplied with the equipment that would enable them to furnish their minds with formerly concealed knowledge. Parker also included with the edition a set of type specimens corresponding to the sorts used to print the text and based on the letter forms from Insular script. These type specimens are the realization of the drive to “shew the auncient fayth,” and this particular formulation of the purpose of the publication of *A Testimonie*, appearing on the title page, points to an awareness of the visual

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53 See section 32 of the appended text and translation of the preface to *Ælfredi regis res gestae*.

54 Lucas, 169, n. 83.


56 de Hamel, “Dispersal,” 266.
impact of the page, of the presentation of the text on the page. Before the text even begins, we have a hint that form is actually integral to the communication of content.

Parker’s use of the term “furniture” (suppellectilem) to describe the product of the printing of Anglo-Saxon texts in the Anglo-Saxon types cut by John Day suggests that Parker again conceives of the process as very much one of physical labour. This calls to mind the similarly manual metaphors used by Alfred to characterize the process of gaining wisdom and knowledge, as in the preface to his translation of Augustine’s *Soliloquies*:  

Forþam ic lære ælcne ðara þe maga si and manigne wæn hæbbe, þæt he menige to þam ilcan wuda þar ic ðas stuðansceafas cearf, fetige hym þar ma, and gefeðrige hys wænas mid fegrum gerdum, þat he mage windan manigne smicerne wah, and manig ænlic hus settan, and fegerne tun timbrian, and þær murge and softe mid mæge on-oardian ægðer ge wintras ge sueras, swa swa ic nu ne gyt ne dyde. [...] swa ic gelyfe eac þæt he gedo for heora ealra earnunge, ægðer ge þisne weig gelimpfulran gedo þonne he ær þissum wes, ge hure mines modes eagan to þam ongelihte þæt ic mage rihtne weig aredian to þam ecan hame, and to þam ecan are, and to þare ecan reste þe us gehaten is þurh þa halgan fæderas. sie swa.

This is not the only time that Parker and others use physical objects as metaphors for these texts they publish. The manuscripts containing medieval English writings are consistently referred to as monuments, although there is an important distinction between “monuments of antiquity”

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57 “Therefore, I instruct each of those who is able and has many wagons, that he go to that same wood where I cut down these posts, and obtain there more for himself, and load his wagons with fair rods, so that he can weave many an elegant wall, and build many a splendid house, and construct a fair dwelling, and dwell there pleasantly and tranquilly both in winter and in summer, just as I have not done yet. [...] Just as I also believe that he will do for the merit of all of them, both make this way better than it was before and especially illuminate the eyes of my mind so that I can find the right way to that eternal home, and to that eternal glory, and to that eternal rest which is promised to us through the holy fathers. Amen.” Carnicelli, *King Alfred’s Version of St. Augustine’s Soliloquies*, 47–48. 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*,” *NQ* 54, no. 1 (2007): 1–11.
(which are worth preserving) and “monuments of superstition” (which are dangerous). \footnote{Summit, 108–11.} Strype reports that Parker would have felt content if “the Bishop of Rome’s Laws … and other such Dregs of the Devil … had leaped out of our Libraries, and so become coverings for Books,” but that in putting

our antient Chronicles, our noble Histories, our learned Commentaries, and Homilies upon the Scriptures, to so homely an Office of Subjection, and utter contempt [as selling them for waste paper, often overseas], we have both greatly dishonoured our Nation, and also shewed our selves very wicked to Posterity. \footnote{Strype, 529.}

Parker and John Bale \footnote{John Bale (1495–1563) was Bishop of Ossory (Kilkenny) in Edward’s reign and twice went into exile because of his Protestant beliefs. See John N. King, “Bale, John (1495–1563),” \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1175 (accessed 17 July 2009).} were assiduous in the search for appropriate and useful texts, and they frequently referred to them as monuments. Writing to Parker in 1560, John Bale, having made an inventory of various categories of medieval English historical texts or authors, lists other Elizabethan men who “are thought to haue many notable monumentes also.” \footnote{Letter dated 30 July 1560, edited in Timothy Graham and Andrew G. Watson, \textit{The Recovery of the Past in Early Elizabethan England: Documents by John Bale and John Joscelyn from the Circle of Matthew Parker} (Cambridge: Cambridge Bibliographical Society, 1998), 30.} The Preface to \textit{A Testimonie} refers to Parker’s “diligent search for such writings of historye, and other monuments of antiquitie, as might reueale vnto vs what hath ben the state of our church in England from tyme to tyme.” \footnote{\textit{A Testimonie}, sig. A3r.} As we have seen already, the 1568 broadsheet from the Privy Council granting Matthew Parker permission to take possession of medieval manuscripts referred to them as “auncient recordes or monuments,” and these persistent references to “monuments of antiquitie” are significant. We look at documents and at texts, of course, just as much as we look at tombs or statues of commemoration, but we sometimes do so without considering it a visual or sensory experience. So, this emphasis on the “monumental” nature of these records serves not only to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{A Testimonie}, sig. A3r.
\end{itemize}
underscore the significance of those records for the nascent Anglican church and the political aims of the Elizabethan state, but to remind readers that these records were to be seen as well as read, that they were tokens of a connection with an earlier community of English writers and ecclesiastics. Even the title page of *A Testimonie* is laid out like a vase on a pedestal, another visual representation of a monument. (See Figure 2.) Ironically, this monumentalizing of texts stands in opposition to the way that the books were actually being used: texts were annotated, passages excerpted, books separated, joined, or supplemented—in short, manhandled and manipulated.

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**Figure 2. Title page of *A Testimonie of Antiquitie*, sig. A1r**

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The post-Reformation link between “monuments” and “muniments” is familiar to book historians, but this blurred usage in fact has its roots in medieval texts, such as the opening lines of a 995 charter of King Æthelred (r. 978–1016): “Quicquid perpetuæter permanens a saecularibus agitur seris litterarum firmiter muniri debetur, quia hominum fragilis memoria moriendo obliuiscitur, quod scriptura litterarum seruando retinet.”64 By the eleventh century, instrumentum, a term used of documents, was increasingly linked with munimentum or, more rarely, munitio,65 but the association of written documents with fortification and what may be called juridical defence goes back even farther.66 Regardless of its origins, this linking of “monument” and “muniment” is especially apt in connection with Parker’s understanding of the value of his Anglo-Saxon typeface. Beyond its power to help restore knowledge of Old English in England, Parker declared that the typeface would also make it easier for those “engaged in any duty of embassy in those regions or will be entangled in any other way in the affairs of the island” to learn the Irish language.67 In the precarious political environment of Elizabethan England, such a reference to foreign affairs suggests another way that a monumentalized text may become a muniment.

Reversing their perspective on the fortifications, the Parkerian circle also played on the linguistic and palaeographical inaccessibility of those Old English texts that the reforming antiquarians wished to paint as useful and even essential to an understanding of the English nation and church. In his account of the production of A Testimonie of Antiquitie, Strype mentions that

64 John M. Kemble, Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici (London: S. and J. Bentley, Wilson, and Fley, 1848), VI.128, no. 1289. My emphasis. The charter is translated by Dorothy Whitelock, ed., English Historical Documents, Volume I: c. 500–1042 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955), no. 117: “Whatever is transacted by men of this world to endure for ever ought to be fortified securely with ranks of letters, because the frail memory of men in dying forgets what the writing of letters preserves and retains.


67 See section 31 in the appended text of the preface to Parker’s edition of Ælfredi regis res gestae.
Lanfranc had “craftily abolished” all Latin books that contradicted the bodily presence in the Eucharist, but he adds that since they did not understand Old English, Lanfranc and the “other Italian Priests here in England” had overlooked the vernacular texts that ought to have been destroyed. In fact, it is not at all clear that Lanfranc and other Norman bishops targeted English books, saints, or relics for disgrace and destruction, and the later statement that they did so seems to parallel the sixteenth-century accounts of blood cults and associated miracles occurring in Germany that were actually written by Protestants hoping to discredit Catholics and their “superstition.” The very difficulty of reading Old English texts may have protected them from censorship or pollution after the Conquest. So, it was only by reaching back across that gap to the surviving pre-Conquest manuscripts that Parker was able to restore the lost knowledge and, as he put it, renew the memory of the old and once familiar language with his new and yet familiar types. As Benedict Scott Robinson notes, “the continuity of a proper, reformed theology in England is doubly predicated on the vernacular, not only through a rediscovered ability to read old books, but also by the Catholic failure to do so.”

This rediscovered ability, which is central to the Parkerian project, is about language and script. That ability is rediscovered through the pages of books, and this reliance on books is one of the fundamental characteristics of the textual community surrounding Parker. If there is no possibility of the Tremulous Hand’s having learned Old English as or from a native speaker, then there can hardly be any possibility for the sixteenth-century antiquarians to have learned Old English except on the pages of medieval manuscripts. Indeed, their reliance on the glossing of the Tremulous Hand, to the point of following in his errors, speaks to their dependence on the written record of Old English.

Robinson continues, “The Elizabethan settlement is thus legitimized by the work of translation,

68 Strype, 531.

69 H. E. J. Cowdrey, Lanfranc: Scholar, Monk, and Archbishop (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 175–84, reports that Lanfranc’s reputation for hostility towards English cults is due largely to an error in nineteenth-century scholarship and that Lanfranc and other Normans seem rather to have been willing to accept the continued veneration of English saints, after ensuring that they were accredited and validated according to accepted standards.

70 Caroline Walker Bynum, Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 49.

71 Robinson, 1062.
of deciphering the national texts, and displaying them in all their ancient yet reclaimable strangeness.‖\textsuperscript{72}

The effort to establish justifications for the new English Church (as in fact not so new) required Parker to engage in a “continuous struggle against an insuperable distance, an effort to recapture from an alien past the traces of a recognizable, Protestant identity.‖\textsuperscript{73} In the words of John Foxe, the editions of Anglo-Saxon texts were to demonstrate “how the religion presently taught and professed in the Church ... is no new reformation of thinges lately begonne, which were not before, but rather a reduction of the Church to the Pristine state of olde conformitie, which once it had, and almost lost by discontinuance of a fewe later yeares.”\textsuperscript{74} Parker’s task was to embody anew the English ecclesiastical heritage, bridging that discontinuance to free old conformity from obscurity or pernicious influences. To do this, he presented Old English texts not only in a medium more amenable than manuscripts to wide dispersal, but also in a form that recalled their “antique” and “monumental” status.

The first book printed in Anglo-Saxon types was \textit{A Testimonie of Antiquitie}, an edition of one of Ælfric’s homilies for Easter Day (CH II, 15) probably printed in late 1566. This text was printed in order to justify the position of the Anglican Church on transubstantiation during the Eucharist. Parker also used extracts from Ælfric’s writings to support the argument that clerical marriage had always been looked on with a degree of tolerance, if not encouragement, in the English Church, even though the evidence is actually that Ælfric disapproved of the practice. Aaron J. Kleist has recently discussed Parker’s nimble maneuverings through Ælfric’s writings on clerical marriage, quoting accurately but sparingly from Ælfric’s \textit{First Latin Letter for Wulfstan}\textsuperscript{75} so as to eliminate any definite statements against clerical marriage. Ælfric acknowledges the necessity of marriage for the propagation of the human race, but he strongly upholds clerical celibacy, one of the first priorities of the tenth-century Benedictine Reform, whose leaders influenced Ælfric.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 1062.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 1082.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Gospels of the Fower Evangelistes}, sig. ¶iir.

\textsuperscript{75} The \textit{Letter} is edited by Fehr, 47–8.
Nevertheless, Parker uses the *First Latin Letter* to prove that the medieval church never *forced* priests to dismiss their wives.  

Although the situation with respect to transubstantiation is somewhat less fraught, we can nevertheless see some anxiety about Ælfric’s status as a monk from Winchester (a centre of the Benedictine Reform) in the Preface to *A Testimonie*, where Parker is quite suspicious of what he calls the “superstition & hipocrisie of monkes.” In the Preface to *A Testimonie*, Parker himself recognized and acknowledged (at least to a certain extent) the variance between his own ecclesiastical stance and Ælfric’s monastic education at Winchester, noting that Ælfric had been “traded vp in lerning” and become “an earnest louer and a great setter forwarde of monkerye.” Parker performs a very careful balancing act to use Ælfric—but only in a very measured and limited way that allows Parker to continue to pursue his own ends.

It is in the pursuit of those ends that Parker focuses on his Anglo-Saxon typeface as a way of designating or demarcating an ancient and untainted native tradition in both Latin and Old English, rather than on exactly replicating the look of any individual manuscript witness, although Parker claims to represent the content of manuscript exemplars exactly. For Parker, Old English is a language defined almost as much by its proper script as by its linguistic qualities, and even Anglo-Latin texts may be brought into the graphemic fold of Anglo-Saxon textuality. We would never mistake these editions for facsimiles, with their parallel or interlinear translations and their failure to reflect lineation and other features of the manuscript pages, but such editions invoked the idea of a facsimile, a “making alike” or a “shewing,” as it is described.

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77 *A Testimonie*, 6v.

78 *A Testimonie*, 6v–7r

79 See section 47 of the appended text and translation.
on the title page of *A Testimonie*. Echard calls this phenomenon the “impulse to facsimile” and traces the lasting impact of this impulse in the afterlife of the image of plowmen at work in Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.14 as a frontispiece to various editions of *Piers Plowman*.  

Timothy Graham notes of William L’Isle’s apparently fruitless attempts to publish Old English texts in Anglo-Saxon types that not only would this have entailed specialist skill and great expense, but “potential printers might also have been discouraged by the likelihood that the audience to which a publication in Old English might appeal would be small.”  

Certainly, an eighteenth-century editor of *A Testimonie* mentioned “some little Struggle with my Printer, for retaining the *old English*” as in the original edition (but omitted from the 1687 edition), which “is the same *that* the Archbishop, and the rest of the Bishops *approved of*: and shews the great *Alteration*, both in *Language* and *Orthography*.” In the 1736 printing, as in Parker’s original edition of *A Testimonie of Antiquitie*, it is the continuity of doctrine across a great distance measured in linguistic and orthographical change that signifies truth and authority. By successfully promulgating appropriate Anglo-Saxon texts in Anglo-Saxon types, Parker took on Alfred’s mantle as one following the track of lost wisdom that had been neglected and was still being neglected by his contemporaries.  

Alfred’s “most needful books for all men to know” had themselves become the examples of lost wisdom as identified by Parker, and instead of unlocking Latinate knowledge for a Catholic audience, Parker became the sole preserver of English lore for an Anglican nation. If, as L’Isle’s printers may have feared, the potential audience for texts in Anglo-Saxon type would have been small, then for Parker, this would simply be a sign of the degree to which the “olde way” of lost knowledge had been neglected.  

The Old English alphabet was also the subject of earlier attention from individuals who were not Old English speakers but nevertheless wished, like Parker, to adopt a version of the Old English alphabet for their own textual productions. The Icelandic First Grammatical Treatise, composed in the mid-twelfth century and recorded in the Codex Wormianus (Copenhagen, Árni Magnússon

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82 See p. 49 in Chapter 2.
Institute, MS 242), which is dated to c. 1360, is appended to the Prose Edda and followed by three other, later grammatical treatises. The so-called First Grammarian expresses concern at the opening of his treatise with regard to the relationship between languages and alphabets:

Hveriga tungu er maðr skal ríta annarar tungu stofum, þá verðr sumra stafa vant, af því [...] at eigi finnsk þat hljóð í tungunni, sem stafirnir hafa, þeir er af ganga. En þó ríta enskir menn enskuna látínustofum, óllum þeim er réttæðir verða í enskunni, en þar er þeir vinnask eigi til, þá hafa þeir við aðra stafi, svá marga ok þesskonar sem þarf, en hina taka þeir ór, er eigi eru réttæðir í máli þeira. 83

Underlying the First Grammarian’s statement on the suitability of a single alphabet for different languages is an implicit linking of graphemes with phonemes or, more accurately, the wish for such a link. What concerns the First Grammarian is that the use of the Latin alphabet to represent Old English (or Old Norse, for that matter) disturbs the relationship between the graphemic units of the alphabet and the phonemic units of the spoken language it is used to represent. For Parker, it would only be necessary to add a handful of graphs used in Old English but unfamiliar to speakers of Modern English, but he seems to view the unified representation of the whole alphabet as significant enough to require that it all be written in the same script and, later, typeface. Not every foreign language printing in the British Isles was linked to the creation of a related typeface: the first text printed in Welsh predated A Testimonie by twenty years, but its printer did not make an attempt to devise a specialized typeface for the purpose. 84 By contrast, Parker and the First Grammarian share a sense of the importance of using appropriate graphs to represent the phonemes of each language, but we have already seen that for Parker, this was also

83 “Whatever language one has to write with the letters of another, some letters will be lacking, because [there are sounds in the language for which the other language has no letters, and some letters may be taken out, because] [the sound of the letters that are removed is not found in the language]. And yet Englishmen write English with Latin letters, as many as can be rightly pronounced in English, but where these no longer suffice, they add other letters, as many and of such a nature as are needed, taking out those that cannot be rightly pronounced in their language.” Text and translation printed in Einar Haugen, ed., First Grammatical Treatise: The Earliest Germanic Phonology, An Edition, Translation and Commentary, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Longman, 1972), 12–13.

84 Echard, 27–28.
an element in the establishment of texts made authoritative by their antiquity and monumental nature.

In light of Parker’s careful articulation of purpose in the prefaces to *A Testimonie* and Asser’s *Life*, we must reconsider our assessment of Parker’s textual activities. If castigation of his methods is unwarranted, then so is the apologist plea that it is unfair to judge Parker’s editorial and curatorial activities overly harshly because “he didn’t know any better.” In his editions, Parker is not only working for clear and clearly expressed purposes, but he is taking his cues from Anglo-Saxon textual practices. In the case of his edition of Asser’s *Life of King Alfred*, for example, Parker closely follows Asser’s own method of textual development and authorizing—and builds on the picture of the cultivation of authority at Alfred’s court that Asser wishes to build up.  

As we saw in Chapter 2, Alfred relied, at the beginning of his life and well into his reign, on the expertise of more skilled readers, but the transformation of a man who cannot read without the mediation of others into a man who, as king, mediates and directs the reading of his subjects is mirrored in the Parkerian reading of medieval manuscripts. Parker and his circle relied on the mediating assistance of the Tremulous Hand in order to read Old English texts, then, just as Alfred set himself up as the preserver of and guide to the books “most needful for all men to know” (*niedbedearfosta sien eallum monnum to wi advis*), Parker wrote of his own role in preserving medieval books and of the way in which his published texts would help readers to follow the trail back to a renewed ability to read Anglo-Saxon texts.

In Asser’s *Life* itself and in his image of the textual practices at Alfred’s court, compilation and reassembly are valorized as ways of building up authority. Looked at in this light, Parker’s incorporation of various other sources into Asser’s text, including the Annals of St. Neot’s and even text from Matthew Paris, as well as his concern for the form of the book he was producing (that is, the typographical practice and his care to articulate the motivation for it), are very much in keeping with the ethos of the text he was editing and with the narrative of textuality within that text. Even Parker’s readiness to jump in and alter his manuscripts seems less barbaric when

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86 *A Testimonie*, sig. A3r.

87 Sections 26–30 of the appended text and translation.
we consider that his selective preservation and magpie-like editing made physical a process that had been textual in Asser’s *Life of King Alfred*. If Parker never explicitly makes this connection, then we should nevertheless remember his very tangible metaphors and rhetorical turns whereby texts are represented as physical objects suited to manual labour.

The discussion offered by Malcolm Parkes of *compilatio* as practiced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries falls chronologically in between the two centres of textual activity under discussion here, but what Parkes emphasizes is important in the context of the Asserian/Alfredian and Parkerian models of textuality: A compiler fills a distinct textual role, a role characterized by its return to the *auctores* from whom textual authenticity is derived, and a role made useful by the arrangement imposed on this authoritative material. 88 The selectivity displayed by Parker and other antiquarians active in the sixteenth century as they sought out the most suitable texts (the “monuments of antiquity”) to be edited as part of a growing library of relevant medieval texts. 89 Beyond that, a significant part of this arrangement or compilation of material is the decision to print Old English texts, as well as translations, and to commission a typeface that closely resembles the manuscripts in which these texts were recorded.

Parker articulates these ideas most thoroughly in the preface to his 1574 edition of Asser’s *Life of King Alfred*. 90 In spite of the fact that the text was written in Latin, which was usually distinguished in English manuscripts from Old English texts and Anglo-Saxon minuscule by the use of Caroline minuscule, Parker has chosen to print the text in his Anglo-Saxon type-face because of the “venerable antiquity” of the exemplar (8) and because the effort to read the text in Anglo-Saxon letters will bestow both pleasure and utility on the reader (28), as will the subject matter itself (3). Moreover, the exertion will enable the reader to appreciate the similarities, such as they are, between Old English (“that obsolete and now almost extinct language”) and “this, our native language” (29). Parker carefully distinguishes between the scripts proper to the two English languages by reserving “Anglica littera” for the letters as written in modern English and

89 Summit, 108–11.
90 Numbers in parentheses refer to sentences in the appended text and translation of the preface.
using “Saxonica littera” to refer to any letter from Anglo-Saxon minuscule or the printing sorts based upon it (30). Parker also asserts that a college of nuns had been founded at Tavistock in which the knowledge of Old English was preserved (45-46), but this claim is regarded with skepticism by modern scholars.  

Interestingly, he reverses the apparent chronology of palaeographical history when he informs the reader that there are Irish manuscripts written in “Saxon” letters (31), and it is at this moment that Parker is also able to establish the diplomatic utility of his Anglo-Saxon types: anyone entangled in affairs of state may extend a knowledge of the letters to a knowledge also of the language (31). Parker accomplishes two things with this reasoning. First, he presages the arguments of later Elizabethan antiquarians who petitioned the queen for a national library and academy on the grounds that this would not only preserve the “memory of the nation,” but produce knowledge that could be beneficial to the state in foreign affairs.  

Secondly, he reinforces his own effulgent praises of King Alfred. The picture of Alfred painted in the Parkerian preface is one of a king who is to be revered because of his ability to join literary studies and the liberal disciplines with the more practical, even violent, aspects of life (14-18), and this is precisely the model of literacy that Parker proposes for his early modern readers in his preface to Asser’s Life of King Alfred.

Parker’s edition of Asser’s Life also includes the text of Alfred’s Preface to his translation of Gregory’s Cura pastoralis, and Foxe used the Alfredian Pastoral Care to justify his edition of the Old English Gospels. From these examples and from other attention the Alfredian Preface received from sixteenth-century readers, it is clear that shared concerns such as the education of priests and the translation of spiritual texts into English gave this text particular significance for Parkerian reformers, and much work remains to be done on early modern uses of this text.  

We can, however, begin to examine the larger project in which Parker and his fellow antiquarians were engaged. As established by Jennifer Summit’s analysis, Parker and other Reformation 


bibliophiles were highly selective in what they chose to preserve from medieval libraries and
drew a marked distinction between “monuments of antiquity” and the “superstitious” or
“fabulous” histories that represented corruptions of pure doctrine. Summit asserts that
“Reformation library making is thus aligned with, and even contingent upon, the act of library
breaking,”⁹⁴ but there is a more constructive model for the creation of Matthew Parker’s
collection and for his use of it. We have seen that the Tremulous Hand of Worcester, the
compiler of Bodley 343, and some early scribes of the Ancrene Wisse worked in response to
earlier manuscript activity and that an active textual community flourished in the West Midlands
in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries based on an interest in Old English texts.⁹⁵ A similarly
diachronic textual community underlies Parker’s engagement with medieval English
manuscripts, and this model enables us to provide some kind of rationale for Parker’s methods in
dealing with books and texts. Like the Tremulous Hand and the compiler of Bodley 343, Parker
and his circle were equally responsive to the models provided by Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and
it was from the contents and signs of use in the very books they were using that they learned how
to be a textual community.

We have seen that Parker’s editorial methods in his 1574 publication of Asser placed him in a
community with Asser and the Alfredian circle, who shared a similar conception of textuality
and authority, and that Parker’s creation and use of an Anglo-Saxon typeface was intended to
help him establish a link to a wider Anglo-Saxon scribal and ecclesiastical community. It is also
worth examining Parker’s relationship with late Anglo-Saxon homiletic production and specific
homilists like Ælfric and Wulfstan. His use, excising, and manipulation of Ælfric’s homily for
Easter, though it is more pointed in its appeal to a named historical figure rendered authoritative
by virtue of his antiquity, is reminiscent of Wulfstan’s willingness to rewrite the works of Ælfric
and to continue to utilize both his own and others’ material in varying ways over time.

There are also other ways that Parker and Wulfstan place themselves in similar textual
environments. Both men not only acted in their capacity as archbishops (one of Canterbury, the
other of York) at high levels of ecclesiastical governance, but both were involved at equally high

⁹⁴ Summit, 110.
⁹⁵ See pp. 111–15 in Chapter 4.
levels of secular governance. Wulfstan’s influence on the law codes of multiple Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Danish kings is well known, and his preaching seems to have been influential in arenas other than local parish churches, as witnessed by his possible responsibility (in part) for the St. Brice’s Day Massacre and the political overtones of his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*. In fact, Parker drew on the *Sermo Lupi* and printed part of it out of CCCC 201 in his *De antiquitate Britannicæ ecclesiae*. In this, both Parker and Wulfstan mirror that foundationally textual Biblical figure, Ezra, who led his people from captivity, restored the order of law, and gave order and titles to the psalms. We have also seen that Ezra provided a model for Bede—and thereby for later Anglo-Saxons—of the pairing of textual and non-textual methods of providing guidance. The most crucial point for the discussion in this chapter is that Ezra codified both legal and religious texts, providing a textual matrix for the religious and cultural life of generations of Israelites. So too Parker and Wulfstan fashioned textual frameworks with regard to both religious observance and political practice in England—and in the English language.

Parker and Wulfstan also share the trait of being forever linked with particular books they owned, produced, or greatly influenced. One of the most famous pieces of scholarship on Wulfstan is the suggestion of and subsequent search for his supposed commonplace book. Unlike the unified account of Alfred’s *handboc*, this controversial theory depends on the existence of a compelling number of manuscripts that contain texts believed to have been

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97 The *Sermo Lupi* is edited as homily XX in three versions by Bethurum, *Homilies*, 255–75. On the political overtones of the homily, see Jonathan Wilcox, “Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond,” in Townend, ed., *Wulfstan*, 375–96; and Keynes, “An Abbot,” 151–220. Wilcox, 377, notes that Wulfstan’s promotion to the archdiocese of York took place in 1002, the same year as the St. Brice’s Day Massacre, suggesting that there may be a connection between the two events, although there is no evidence of any causal relationship.


99 See p. 46 in Chapter 1.


composed by Wulfstan, as well as texts sharing his interests in preaching, poetic rhetoric, ecclesiastical polity, and legal codes. Additionally, Wulfstan’s own handwriting survives in several manuscripts identified by Neil Ker. Like Wulfstan, Parker was not afraid to leave his handwriting in manuscripts, now identifiable by the red crayon he preferred. Whether Wulfstan commissioned or merely inspired the production of the manuscripts that have been put forward as copies of his commonplace book, the perception that he was in some way part of the production of a set of books also mirrors for us Parker’s program of printing Anglo-Saxon texts, both in Old English and in Latin.

In these ways, Parker and Wulfstan participate in similar types of textual activity, and we should not accuse Parker of a sudden and wanton disregard for the rules of textual criticism, nor damn him with the faint praise of having done the best he knew how (when we, on the other hand, know better). When he and members of his circle relied on the work of the Tremulous Hand, Parker was participating in a community of readers, while his creation of an Anglo-Saxon typeface allowed him to behave as a member of a community of scribes and to adhere to their palaeographical conventions. His emulation, whether conscious or not, of the models of textual production provided by Wulfstan, Alfred, and Asser placed Parker in community of authors. These different modes were available to Parker because of the many manuscripts that were eventually available to him. So, although Parker’s wish to safeguard a particular brand of Protestantism was a different end than the manuscripts had served in the past, the formation of his textual community represented an extension of the productive and inventive potential of the manuscripts.

Relying on and fearlessly adapting Anglo-Saxon manuscripts for their own ends, Parker and his fellow antiquarians were participating in a diachronic textual community, interacting with multiple layers of writing in those manuscripts, from the Insular graphs of the Old English texts (or the Caroline graphs of Latin texts) to the thirteenth-century glossing on which the antiquarians sometimes relied for their own studies. As the culmination of an extended study of these texts and their language and script, those texts that were deemed appropriate were edited and printed as “monuments of antiquity.”

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Having bridged the gap that was opened up by the changed language and script of English writings, Parker and his associates needed to demonstrate their competence gained in these areas, competence that was not shared by the monks who had so long neglected the manuscripts. This ability was drawn to the attention of readers of these editions with the alphabetical tables of type specimens printed with the texts, enhancing the authoritative status of these editions. The repeated labeling of the Anglo-Saxon texts and manuscripts as “monuments” also reinforced the perceptions of age and authority, which were transferred, thanks to the emphasis on visual presentation, to the printed editions of these texts. All of this was done in an attempt to reclaim and renew the memory of pre-Conquest precedents for early modern church teachings, and the diachronicity of this textual community was the very aim of the Parkerian endeavour, to “shew the auncient fayth,” or as we have it, in an echo of Alfred’s ninth-century lament on “ure ieldran,” in the quotation from Jeremiah on the title page of A Testimonie of Antiquity, to point to the old way and “goe therin.”
Appendix: Preface to the Parkerian Edition of
Ælfredi regis res gestae

Text

1 /Aij r/Præfatio ad Lectorem.

2 AElfredi regis amplissimi (qui olim toti ferè Britanniae præfuit) historiam, tibi
(humanissime lector) exhibemus: à Iohanne Assero Antistite Shyreburnensi (qui illi quondam a
sacris fuit) Latinis literis luculenter expressam.

3 Quæ quidem historia non mediocrem menti tuæ volupptatem infundet, neque minorem
adferet cum voluptate vtilitatem, sed in præclarissimarum rerum contemplatione defixus, te ad
earum imitationem, & quasi imaginem totum effinxeris.

4 Etenim quæ delectatio maior quàm clarorum virorum studia, res gestas, mores, vitas
denique, ortus, obitus, (tanquam tabulas bene pictas) quotidie intueri?

5 Quis fructus vberior quàm qui ex istiusmodi rerum perenni lectione percipitur?

6 Et quanquam non sint hæc omnibus artium coloribus illustrata, atque posita, neque
eleganti verborum concinнатe distincta, tamen & Latinè loquitur, & significanter, & (vt priscis
illis temporibus) non omnino incultè, tantumque sibi fortassì adhibuit ornamenti, quantum in
exponenda decuit.

7 Nam elaboratam exquisitius orationem, nimiaque excultam industria, prudentium aures
non modò in vulgari sermonis consuetudine, verùm in historia quoque respuere consueuerunt.

8 Latina autem cum sint, Saxonicis litteris excudi curauimus, maximè ob venerandam ipsius
archetypi antiquitatem, ipso adhuc (vt opinio fere mea) Ælfredo superstite, ijsdem litterarum
formulis descri/Aii vt/tam.

9 Augent coniecturam Pastoralia quæ ab ipso prudentissimo rege ex sermone Romano in
Saxonicum conuersa fuerunt, atque illius imperio per quasdam Britanniae Ecclesias sparsa.
10 Quorum vetusta quaedam exemplaria, eodem etiam tempore descripta, Hodie extant similibus depicta characteribus.

11 Atque haec omnia (lector erudite) tuam ob causam diuulgamus, nimirum vt tibi iucunditati sint & emolumento.

12 Etenim cum videas regem summo splendore, & tanta (quantam illa perraro vidit ætæs) dignitate regem, qui non pacis solūm laudibus floruerit, sed belli quoque gloria circumfluxerit, omnem curam, industriam, cogitationes denique omnes, in disciplinarum studium consumpsisse: adeo vt horam fere nullam effluere sibi passus sit, quam non in literis, et cum virtute traduxerit, quo te lector animo esse oportebit? quàm in bonarum artium studia flagranti semper, & incenso?

13 Neque solūm doctrinæ & cognitionis desyderio ipse mirificè afficiebatur, adeo vt omnes conatus ad eam illustrandam conuerterit, sed exemplo suo alios item ad excellentem omnium artium honestarum cupiditatem incitauit & illexit, doctosque ex omnibus locis viros asciuit, quorum præceptis instititusque nobilium liberi, in Aula sua, vnà cum regis filijs, ad humanitatem, & præclarissimarum artium scientiam quotidie informarentur.

14 Quod eò mirabilius videri debet, quandoquidem maximis in rebus longeque diuersis, sese per omnem pene ætatem laboriosissimè exercuerit, duasque res specie dispares, admirabili prudentia coniunxerit.

15 Quid enim tam distans quàm pax a bello?

16 Quis tamen vnquam illo aut pacis amantior est habitus, aut belli laude illustrior?

17 Quid tam difficile quàm & regni fines contra barbararum gentium immanita/Aij r/tem assiduè tueri: & doctrinæ ac literarum terminos quotidie proferre?

18 Vtrumque sanè rex nobilissimus consecutus est, vt & Danorum copias perpetuò in Britanniam influentes virtute bellica represserit, & in maximis semper occupationum fluctibus, liberalium disciplinarum studia nunquam intermiserit.

19 Cuius industriae testimonia extant sanè permulta, apud viros & iudicij & antiquitatis autoritate insignes.
20 Etenim in historia Eliensi lib.2. sic scribitur: Aluredus acerrimi ingenij princeps, per Grimbaldum & Iohannem doctissimos Monachos tantum instructus est, vt in breui librorum omnium notitiam habuerit, totumque nouum & vetus Testamentum in eulogiam Anglicæ gentis transmutauerit.

21 Accedit huc quod a vicesimo ætatis anno, ad quadragesimum quintum, diuturno morbo afflicitus, importunoque elanguerit: qui quidem non tam corporis vires plerumque debilitat, quàm mentis vim infringit & imminuit.

22 Adde insuper, quod ea tempestate rex optimus vixerit, cum priorum annorum miseranda peruersitas, toti pene terrarum orbi inscitiæ, superstitionis, & perfidiae tenebras offudisset: vnde euenit vt pietati, temporis improbitas, doctrinæ verò communis illa bonarum artium lues non nihil obstiterit.

23 Quo magis lætari nos conuenit, et immortales Deo optimo maximo gratias habere, qui hoc tanto cognitionis et scientiæ lumine (quibus superioris ævi infœlicitas obstruxit) diuina nunc benignitate circumfundimur.

24 Iam verò quanta ignoranceis nox, & tempestas ætatem illam obscurauerit: quo animo, quamque ad virtutem ardentì & incenso pius rex flagraverit, quemadmodum se eruditorum hominum quotidiana consuetudine deuinxerit, quos denique illis honores, quantaque virtutum præmia contribuerit: harum rerum omnium exempla, tum liber iste, tum Pastorali (cum explicatione eiusdem) præfixa præfatio copiosissimè suppedabit.

25 Sin autem quis requirit, quamobrem cum isthæc Latinis literis memoriæ mandentur, eadem tamen nos Saxonicis typis peruulgari fecerimus, nihil est quod expedire tam facilè possimus.

26 Etenim cum ipsa nos primi exemplaris (vt antea dixi) antiquitas, debita quadam veneratione perfudit: tum magni ad fidem & authoritatem interesse putabamus, si quæ priscis notis verbisque conscripta, exsignataque ad manus nostras peruenissent, eadem nos ijsdem literarum formulæ imprimeremus.

27 Eoque me minus instituti mei pœnitet, quod facile sentio, hanc meam cogitationem, tibi (amice lector) nec inutilem, neque iniucundam futuram.
Primùm enim vbi huius te libelli lectioni paululum assuefeceris, literarumque priscarum gnarus iam extiteris, licebit a Latinis ad Saxonica studium conuertere, quorum ex scriptis (mihi crede) non mediocrem voluptatem adipiscere: & in veteribus monumentis perscrutandis incredibilem cum voluptate vtilitatem coniunges.

Præterea operœ pretium erit patrium hunc nostrum (quo hodie vtimur) sermonem, cum illo obsoletō iam pene & extincto conferre, & conferendo quàm sint inter se similes, & pene eædem, animaduertere.

Quam potissimùm ob causam, quatuor Euangelia eadem lingua, atque ijsdem literarum formulis excudi curauimus, & quò facilius eius cognitionem intelligentiamque comprehenderes, Anglica cum Saxonics in margine coniunximus, talibusque notis atque figurarum signis distinximus, vt perfacile inter se diuersarum linguarum sententiae comparari queant.

Accedit huc etiam, quod cum Hybernici, libros aliquot antiquissimos, sermone vernaculo conscripserant, eosque Saxonics characteribus exsignauerint (quanquam verborum sensum, atque pronuntiandi morem natium obtinent, atque domesticum, tamen quandoquidem in vocibus descriptis etiam hisce diebus Saxonics vtntur typis ac formulis) ex horum characterum notitia & intellectu, aditus certè patebit aliquis ad eiusmod linguæ scientiam ijs, qui in regionibus illis legationis aliquod munus obierint, aut alio quous modo eius Insule negotijs implicabuntur.

Iam vero cum Dayus Typographus primus (& omnium certè quod sciam solus) has formas æri inciderit: facilè quæ Saxonics literis perscripta sunt, ijsdem typis diuulgabuntur.

Quorum sanè lectio & veteris tibi linguæ, ac quondam domesticæ memoriam renouabit, & haud parum suppeeditabit abstrusæ cognitionis suppellectilem.

Facile autem erit vocum vim, & verborum varietatem percipere, præsertim cum tanta sit huius nostræ (qua nunc vtimur) linguæ & illius veteris similitudo.

Pronunciatio obscurior fortassì & impeditior aliquantulum videbitur, quàm vt absolutè percipi queat.
36 Neque mirum: quandoquidem quotidianus eius sermonis vsus iam penitus euanuerit, & Saxones qui hodie in Germania sunt, illum pristinum pronuntiandi morem longo interuallo temporis amiserint.

37 Veruntamen non exactam nos eius sermonis (qui iam fere totus obsoleuit) notitiam, nec sollicitam nimis in verbis exutiendis industrium, requirimus: tantum operæ in eius studio ponatur, quantum erit ad intelligendum satis.

38 Quod qui fecerit, vtilitatem exinde duplicem consequetur.

39 Nam cum & veteres Britanni, & post hos Saxones (qui Britannorum vocabulis aut funditus deletis, aut ad arbitrium suum immutatis, noua cunctis pene locis nomina in/lv/diderunt) semper aut alicuius celebris facti memoriam, aut rei naturam locorum appellationibus exprimere consueuerint (vt omittam vtilitatem) quanta huius linguae studioso voluptas erit (& vt periuunda, ita non multi sanè laboris) scire, omnium ciuitatum, vbrium, montium, syluarum, fluminum, & viarum nomina, & hac nviuersa vnde deriuentur, & quo quidque quasi e fonte profluxerit intelligere.

40 Quibus de rebus si qua fortè quis degustare concupierit, Gulielmi Lamberdi (viri sanè eruditi, & in hospicio Lincolniensi, inter legum consultos, domestici iuris peritissimi) præfationem perlegat & expendat, quam libro de veteribus Saxonum legibus præfixit, quas nuper latinis literis eleganter expressit.

41 Ibi etenim nonnulla de instituti sui ratione atque consilio prudenter præfatus, demum (vt est in istiusmodi rebus perscrutandis sagaci certè ingenio & peracri) quorundam verborum vim ac naturas subtiliter persecutus est.

42 Quo in libro si se studiosius exercuerint ij, qui aut huius linguae notitiam, aut vetustarum legum (quas reges antiqui sanxerunt) scientiam habere desyderant, sapienter meo iudicio facient, & inde non mediocre sibi ad eas quoque res percipiendas instrumentum, facultatemque comparabunt.

43 Quinetiam quoniam diplomata multa, & vetustioris ætatis monumenta, tum regiæ quæ in archiuis custodiuntur chartæ, tam ante, quàm post Normannorum in Angliam aduentum, adhuc extant, quæ Saxonicis & verbis, & literis comprehenduntur, omnes qui in regni institutis
addiscendis elaborauerint cohortabor, vt exiguus labore, seu pene nullo huius sibi linguæ cognitionem acquirant.

44 Quod si facere voluerint, multa procul dubió quotidie eruent, & elicient, quæ abdita iam iacent, et abstrusa, et plurima/Av r/rum rerum inuolutas penitus naturas, & implicitas, nullo negotio expedient.

45 Quem in finem superioribus sæculis a maioribus nostris monialium quædam Collegia instituta sunt, in quibus essent quæ & huius linguæ scientia imbuerentur, & eandem (cum alijs communicando) ad posteros transmitterent.

46 Quod quidem in Cœnobio monialium Tauestokensi in comitatu Deuoniæ, & multis alijs conuenticulis (nostra memoria) receptum fuit, credo, ne eius sermonis peritia, ob linguæ insolentiam penitus obsolesceret.

47 Quod autem ad historiæ fidem attinet (lector humanissime) hoc te scire volo, eam me semper rationem secutum, in omnibus ijs libris quos divulgavi, nihil vt de meo adiecerim, aut diminuerim, sed cuncta prout in primis exemplaribus reperiuntur ad verbum expresserim.

48 Alioquin si quid forsán de meo attulissem, aut vetustatis veluti rugas ac nævos delere omnes voluissem, metuendum mihi sanè foret (ne quod Salustio suo scribit Cornelius nepos) non tam illorum qui illas conscripserunt historiæ, quàm meæ videri possent.

49 Indicio erunt ipsa prima exemplaria, quæ idcirco Cantebrigiae, in bibliotheca collegij Corporis Christi, ad sempiternum huius rei testimonium extare voluimus.

50 Vbi si quis cum codicibus manuscriptis, impressos comparare voluerit, enimuero nihil nos aut detraxisse, aut addidisse inueniet, sed summam vbique fidem & religionem præstitisse.

51 Quapropter si quid emolumenti ex huius historiæ lectione sine alicuius alterius iam per me euulgatæ ad te (humanissime lector) redundauerit lætabimur: et nos instituti ac voluntatis

103 Note in outer (right) margin: Cornælus nepos ad / Sallustium in Bello / Troiano.
nostræ (quandoquidem id solum concupiuiimus) fructus amplissimos consecutos existimabimus. Vale.

Translation

1 Preface to the Reader.

2 We present to you (most gentle reader) the history of the most distinguished King Alfred (who once ruled over almost all Britain), splendidly portrayed in Latin letters by John Asser, Bishop of Sherborne (who was formerly his chaplain there).

3 Indeed, this history will impart no middling pleasure to your mind, nor will it bring any less utility with the pleasure, but fixed in contemplation of most honourable things, you will shape yourself entirely in imitation of them, as if in their image.

4 Truly, what brings greater delight than daily to contemplate (like panels well painted) the inclinations, deeds, and customs of famous men, in short, their lives, births, and deaths?

5 Which enjoyment is fuller than that which one receives out of continuous reading of things of such a kind?

6 And though these things are not explained and arranged with all the decorations of the arts, nor adorned by an elegant arranging of words, nevertheless he writes in Latin, and clearly and (by the standards of those ancient times) not altogether inelegantly, and perhaps he applied himself as much to embellishment as befitted the things he had to relate.

7 For the ears of the wise were accustomed to reject discourse that was very showily elaborated and adorned with excessive effort, not only in the common usage of speech but also in [the writing of] history.

8 But although they are in Latin [in the manuscript], we have taken care to have them punched in Saxon letters, mostly on account of the venerable antiquity of the exemplar itself, which moreover was copied in the same letter-forms when Alfred was, as is certainly my opinion, still alive.
9 The Pastoralia, which had been translated by the same most wise king from Roman speech into the Saxon speech and distributed by his command throughout certain churches of Britain, strengthen this conjecture [that Alfred oversaw the copying].

10 Certain ancient copies of them, also transcribed at the same time, survive today, copied in similar characters.

11 And all these things (O, learned reader) we publish for your sake, truly in order that they may be a delight for you—and a benefit.

12 Indeed, when you see that a king of the highest splendour, a king of great merit such as that age never saw, who abounded not only in the praiseworthy deeds of peace, but overflowed also with the glory of war, employed all his diligence and attention—in short, all his thoughts—in the study of the disciplines, to the extent that he hardly allowed an hour to vanish that he did not spend on letters and with virtue—when you see a king like that, of which kind of mind does it befit you to be, reader, and a mind how ardent and inflamed for studies of fine arts?

13 And not only was he so extraordinarily moved by his longing for instruction and learning as to direct all his efforts towards illuminating it, but by his example, he roused and summoned others in the same manner to an outstanding desire for all honourable arts. He assembled learned men from all places, by whose precepts and regulations the children of noblemen were to be daily instructed at his court, together with the royal sons, in refinement and knowledge of most excellent arts.

14 This ought to be seen as more glorious, since in the midst of very important and widely differing affairs, he busied himself most industriously throughout his life and joined with admirable foresight two things dissimilar in appearance.

15 For what is so distant from war as peace?

16 And who was ever held to be fonder of peace or more famous in the renown of war than [Alfred]?

17 What is so difficult as both to guard assiduously the borders of the kingdom against the cruelty of the barbarian peoples and to extend daily the boundaries of teaching and letters?
Certainly, the most celebrated king achieved both, in that he curbed with warlike strength the multitudes of Danes constantly flowing into Britain and yet never interrupted his studies of the liberal disciplines, though he was always subject to the greatest disturbances of his employments.

Very many witnesses to his industry certainly survive among men distinguished by the authority of their judgment and antiquity.

Indeed, in the history of Ely, Book 2, it is written thus: Alfred, prince of most dazzling ability, was so greatly instructed by the most learned monks Grimbald and John that he soon had knowledge of all books and translated the entire Old and New Testaments into the splendid language of the English people.¹⁰⁴

In addition, from the twentieth year of his life to the forty-fifth, he grew feeble, having been afflicted with a long and distressing ailment, which generally does not so much weaken the strength of the body as bruise and diminish the vigour of the mind.

Consider in addition that this best king lived in the tempest when the lamentable perversity of earlier years had poured out on almost the whole orb of the earth the darkness of ignorance, superstition, and faithlessness: whence it came about that the depravity of the time greatly hindered piety and the widespread affliction of the good arts greatly blocked learning.

All the more is it fitting that we rejoice and that we give unending thanks to the highest and greatest God, we who are now, by divine favour, engulfed by this great light of learning and knowledge, which the misfortune of the previous age blocked.

But now this book and the preface prefixed to the Pastoral Care (with an explanation of it) will most abundantly supply examples of all these things - how great a night and tempest of ignorance obscured that time, with what a mind ardent and burning for every virtue the pious

¹⁰⁴ In fact, the reference is to Book I of the Liber Eliensis; see Blake, Liber Eliensis, I.39, p. 54 (“Qui acer ingenii per Grimbaldum et Iohannem doctissimos monachos tantum instructus est ut in brevi librorum omnium notitiam haberet totumque Novum et Vetus Testamentum in eulogiam Anglice gentis transmutaret.”), translated by Fairweather, Liber Eliensis, 72–3 (“He was an intellectually acute man, so well educated by the most learned monks Grimbald and John that, in a short while, he had a knowledge of all books and translated the whole New and Old Testament into the high style of the English people.”). See also pp. 60–1 in Chapter 2.
king glowed, how he bound himself with the daily companionship of erudite men, and finally what preferments and what great rewards for their virtues he imparted to them.

25 But if anyone asks why, although these same things are committed to memory in Latin letters, we have nevertheless caused them to be published in Saxon types, there is nothing we can so easily explain.

26 Indeed, when the very antiquity of the first copy (as I said before) filled us with a certain due veneration, then we thought it of great importance for trust and authority if we were to print those same things, which came into our hands written and recorded in ancient writing and words, in the same letter-forms.

27 And so, my plan displeases me less because I easily see that this design of mine will be neither useless nor unpleasant for you, dear reader.

28 Indeed, as soon as you have habituated yourself a little to the reading of this little book and are already skilful in reading ancient letters, you will be able to turn your effort from Latin letters to Saxon ones, and from the copies of these letters (believe me!) you will get no ordinary satisfaction. And in examining old monuments, you will get unparalleled usefulness as well as satisfaction.

29 In addition to that, it will be worth the effort to compare this, our native language (which we use today) with that obsolete and now almost extinct language and to perceive by comparing them how similar they are to each other—and almost the same.

30 Chiefly for this reason we have taken care that the four Gospels be punched in the same language and with the same letter-forms. And in order that you might more easily grasp the knowledge and understanding of it, we have joined [modern] English letters with the Saxon ones in the margin, and we have set them apart with such marks and indications of shapes in order that the sentences of the different languages may be matched with each other.

31 Added to this is the fact that, since the Irish left some very old books written in the vernacular language and expressed them in Saxon letters (although they retain the native and local sense of the words and pronunciation, nevertheless, seeing that even nowadays they use Saxon types and letter-forms in transcribing sounds), from a knowledge and understanding of
these characters some approach will clearly be open also towards a knowledge of the language for those who are engaged in any duty of embassy in those regions or who will be entangled in any other way in the affairs of the island.

32 But now, since Day the Printer is the first (and, to my knowledge, the only one) to have indented these forms in copper, the things which were written in Saxon characters will easily be published in these same types.

33 The reading of which types will indeed renew for you the memory of that ancient and once familiar language and will supply you with no mean furniture for hidden knowledge.

34 Moreover, it will be easy to grasp the force of utterances and the variety of words, especially since the similitude between this our language (which we now use) and that old language is so great.

35 The pronunciation will perhaps seem a little more obscure and awkward than so as to be completely understood.

36 And no wonder, since daily use of that speech has now wholly vanished, and the Saxons who live in Germany today have lost in the long interval of time the former pronunciation.

37 Notwithstanding, we do not demand exact knowledge of that speech (which has now almost all fallen into disuse), nor overly careful diligence in examining words: only as much exertion should be placed in the study of it as is enough for understanding.

38 The one who does this will obtain a double utility from it.

39 For since both the Britons of old and after these the Saxons (who, having completely destroyed the words of the British or altered them arbitrarily, imposed new names on almost all places) were always accustomed to express either the memory of some famous deed or the nature of the thing in the appellations of places, what great satisfaction (and being very agreeable, thus

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105 Punches were cut in steel, matrices stamped from copper, and individual pieces of type cast in an alloy of lead, antimony, and tin. See Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1995), 9–10. Day was not a punch cutter, so Peter Lucas, “A Testimonye of Verye Ancient Tyme,” 164–5, argues that *inciderit* should be understood to refer to the production of matrices, not punches.
certainly not of great labour), to say nothing of utility, it will be for the one who is studious of this tongue to know the names of all towns, cities, mountains, woods, rivers, and roads and whence they are all derived, and to understand from where each one proceeds as from its source.

Concerning these things, (if anyone by chance wishes to make himself acquainted at all with them), let him read carefully and evaluate the preface of William Lambarde (a man indeed learned and most skilled in English law among the lawyers in Lincoln’s Inn). He prefixed this preface to his book concerning the old laws of the Saxons, which he recently were printed elegantly in Latin letters.\(^{106}\)

And indeed, there he wisely said some things concerning the method and purpose of his plan, and finally (as is assuredly fitting for a shrewd and very sharp intellect in examining things of this sort) he carefully hunted out the meaning and natures of certain words.

If those who desire to have knowledge of this language or understanding of the old laws which ancient kings decreed employ themselves studiously in this book, they will, in my judgment, do wisely and will get from it a not insignificant tool and capability for also grasping the subjects.

Moreover, since many documents and monuments of an older age, and also royal charters that are kept in archives, which are expressed in Saxon words and Saxon letters, both before and after the coming of the Normans to England, are still extant, I will encourage all who take pains in learning further the regulations of the kingdom to acquire for themselves a cognizance of this language, with little or no effort.

If they desire to do this, they will without doubt daily pluck forth and draw out many things which now lie hidden and concealed, and they will easily free the utterly obscure and confused qualities of many things.

To this end, certain colleges of nuns were founded in previous ages by our forefathers in which the nuns both received instruction in the knowledge of this language and transmitted it to posterity by communicating with others.

And indeed, within our memory, it had been recovered in a monastery of nuns at Tavistock in the county of Devon and in many other little convents, I believe, lest experience of that speech, on account of the unfamiliarity of the language, should entirely fall into disuse.

But I want you (most gentle reader) to know this, which pertains to the credibility of the history, that in all the books which I have published I always followed this procedure, so that I have not added or removed anything on my own account, but I have printed to a word all things as they are found in the first exemplars.

Otherwise, if perchance I had reported anything of myself or if I had wanted to remove all the wrinkles and warts of old age, certainly I would have feared (indeed, as Cornelius Nepos wrote to his Sallust) lest the histories would have seemed not so much theirs (who wrote them) as mine.  

Proof of this is the first exemplars, and for this reason we wished them to remain in the library of the college of Corpus Christi of Cambridge as an eternal testimony of this matter.

There, if anyone wishes to compare the printed books with the manuscript codices, to be sure, he will find that we have neither removed nor added anything, but we have preserved everywhere the highest fidelity and respect.

On account of which, if any profit from the reading of this history or of any other already published by me should redound to you (most gentle reader), we will rejoice: we will reckon (since we aspired to that alone) that we have attained a very full harvest from our design.

Farewell.

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107 This is a reference to the De excidio Troiae of Dares Phrygius. Purportedly a translation from Greek into Latin by Cornelius Nepos, with a dedication to Sallust, the text is edited by Ferdinand Meister, Daretis Phrygii De Excidio Troiae Historia (Leipzig: B. G. Tübner, 1873; repr. 1991).
Conclusion

This dissertation has suggested several new avenues of inquiry that it has not been possible to treat adequately. One of the most tantalizing questions that remains unanswered is how to better understand the spaces in which books were produced and used during the Middle Ages. That is to say, what constituted a scriptorium, and what level of physical proximity was required to maintain meaningful oversight, if such was desired? Nor has it been possible to deal adequately with the forms of medieval libraries and what patterns might have characterized their use, yet both these spaces of production and of use are crucial to the textual activity at the heart of the present discussion, and it is to be hoped that further work will shed some light on them.

Somewhere, perhaps scattered throughout the cells of monks, the cloisters, and other communal spaces, Bede must have had access to hundreds of manuscripts, but we have neither any trace of these books, nor any concept of their organization and storage.¹

Likewise, it is difficult to do more than speculate on the details of the use and production of books at Alfred’s court,² nor is it clear where Wulfstan sat to read and annotate manuscripts that may have originated at opposite ends of England.³ It is common to assume, given the large number of manuscripts he consulted and the proportion of them that are known to have been in Worcester in the Middle Ages, that the Tremulous Hand carried out his glossing at Worcester Cathedral Priory,⁴ but it would be appealing to know the circumstances of the production and acquisition of the large collection of manuscripts held there. Wulfstan II (Bishop of Worcester, 1062–1095) may have personally directed some of the production of manuscripts during his episcopacy, but as Treharne notes in her discussion of the manuscripts produced in the later eleventh century at Worcester and Exeter, while these two scriptoria account for an overwhelming proportion of the surviving manuscripts from this period, we cannot know whether or not the proportion accurately represents the contributions of these two scriptoria to

¹ See p. 21 in Chapter 1.
² See pp. 59–63 in Chapter 2.
³ See p. 87 in Chapter 3.
⁴ See p. 128 in Chapter 4.
the body of manuscripts produced in the second half of the eleventh century.⁵ Thanks to Parker’s care to secure his collection against another dispersal, we have a clearer picture of how his library was maintained and used after his death,⁶ but although we sometimes have information on their history, it is not always easy to know the provenances of his manuscripts, nor how they entered his collection.

This dissertation has also highlighted the linguistic experimentation that is made possible in manuscripts. The Anglo-Saxon fascination with the Hebrew alphabet⁷ and the use of runes alongside the Latin alphabet suggest that there is much work to be done on the situations in which writing does not so much fix linguistic forms as allow for a different kind of experimentation than spoken interactions permit. Matthew Parker’s imitation of medieval script in his Anglo-Saxon typeface betrays a similar sensitivity to graphemic matters. The work of the AB scribes to rationalize English orthography, discussed in Chapter 4, would not have been possible outside of the manuscripts they copied, nor would the Tremulous Hand’s phonological updates been of any moment.

What this dissertation has shown is that textual communities not only flourished throughout the medieval period and into the early modern period, but also were closely linked to both the physical objects of their activity and to the linguistic environment in which they operated. In Chapters 1 and 2, Bede and Alfred used linguistic distance to valorize their textual practices. For Bede, this was a fundamental element in his fusion of textual criticism with reformist tendencies, and it ultimately extended back to the Biblical miracle of the Pentecost, by which all nations were united in a single, Christian community.⁸ Alfred identified and utilized the distance between his Latin exemplars and the Old English translations he instigated to offer a new rationale for a textual kingdom, strengthened in wisdom and thereby in military prowess.

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⁶ See p. 155 in Chapter 5.


⁸ See pp. 31 and 48 in Chapter 1.
Alfred’s grandson, Æthelstan, then used the physical distribution of books to bind up the West Saxon sphere of influence as a wider textual community.\(^9\)

The discussion in Chapter 3 of the different lexical preferences of Ælfric and Wulfstan reminds us that linguistic distance can operate synchronously within a single language. Moreover, the difficulty in evaluating the origins of Wulfstan’s Norse vocabulary provides a useful reminder of the limitations of our ability to understand multilingual contact in England at this period.\(^{10}\) By contrast, there is a dense body of scholarship focused on the physical books used by or containing witnesses to the works of Ælfric and Wulfstan. The repetition with variation in manuscript witnesses to Wulfstan’s work in particular, as well as Wulfstan’s annotations and the careful punctuation of many of Wulfstan’s homilies, present a new and intriguing way of understanding a textual community as operating both through painstaking attention to written detail and through repeated oral performance and adaptation.\(^{11}\)

Contrary to the discussion in Chapter 3, Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that textual communities need not operate synchronically, but may and do also function diachronically when a linguistic gap opens up within different forms of a single language. The activities of the Tremulous Hand, the updated forms in Bodley 343, and the early copying of texts from the Ancrene Wisse Group do highlight the well known complexities of early Middle English and the difficulty of classifying texts as either Old or Middle English, but their place in a diachronic textual community interacting with Old English texts more importantly draws attention to the fact that variance and complexity do not always signify chaos and disinterest.\(^{12}\) The concept of a diachronic textual community also opens the door for a more constructive discussion of Matthew Parker’s use of medieval manuscripts: In order to lay claim to the medieval heritage of the English church, Parker assimilated both models of reading texts and models of producing texts

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\(^9\) See pp. 64–7 in Chapter 2.

\(^{10}\) See pp. 85–6 and 93 in Chapter 3.

\(^{11}\) See pp. 91–101 in Chapter 3.

\(^{12}\) See pp. 147–52 in Chapter 4.
from the very manuscripts he studied. He then capitalized on those models to direct the reading of others and to restore lost knowledge to England.\(^\text{13}\)

As an example of the continuing importance of textual community from early medieval England up to Parker’s day, I conclude my dissertation with a brief discussion of a single medieval manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20.\(^\text{14}\) This manuscript contains an Old English translation of the *Cura pastoralis* originally composed by Pope Gregory the Great (590–604). Regarded as “the apostle of the English” for his crucial role in their conversion to Christianity, Gregory was highly influential on and deeply beloved of Bede and many other Anglo-Saxon scholars, but this translation was not made until Alfred’s program of translation of the “most needful” texts into Old English in the late ninth century. Dated to the late ninth century and opening with the words *DEOS BOC SCEAL TO WIOGORA CEASTRE* (“This book must go to Worcester”), Hatton 20 is one of the only surviving contemporary copies of an Alfredian text, making it one of the most treasured of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Its value for Anglo-Saxonists is increased further by the survival on its first folios of glosses and annotations made by Wulfstan, the Tremulous Hand, and John Joscelyn.

A text written by Gregory, who was admired and cited by Bede,\(^\text{15}\) who was himself influential in both Anglo-Saxon and early modern England,\(^\text{16}\) was translated by Alfred and his scholarly court milieu in the late ninth century. The translation survives in a copy that was officially sanctioned and prepared at the Alfredian court. This copy was repeatedly used and marked by later readers, who began to rely on each other’s annotations, even up until the sixteenth century. It was at that

\(^{13}\) See pp. 177–83 in Chapter 5.


\(^{15}\) Bede writes of Gregory in *HE* II.1, “recte nostrum appellare possimus et debemus apostolum” (“rightly we can and ought to call him our apostle”), and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 209–12, lists numerous citations of Gregory’s writings, including the *Cura pastoralis*, in the works of Bede.

point that the Parkerian circle discovered the text of the Old English *Pastoral Care*, using the glosses made originally by the Tremulous Hand in the early thirteenth century and, in some cases, perpetuating errors made by the Tremulous Hand.\(^\text{17}\) In and of itself, the first folio of this manuscript contains the traces of a textual community that spans nearly one thousand years, as well as tremendous changes in the English language and its relationship with Latin. Within every layer of the writing on that folio, including the main text of Alfred’s translation with its foreshadowing in Bede’s and other early writings, lies the tension of linguistic distance.

At every stage, it is this linguistic tension that drives the textual activity we see in the manuscript. The linguistic concerns central to Bede’s writings and to his participation in an early Northumbrian textual community are only implicit in the record of this manuscript, but his participation in and his role in giving shape to that Northumbrian textual community were crucial to the formation of the Alfredian textual community. Bede’s emphasis on textuality as a means of driving reform and of reaching out into the world, as well as his articulation of an identity for an English *gens*, were foundationally important for Alfred’s project to translate a Latinate body of knowledge and wisdom into an English vehicle for not only intellectual and educational reform, but also both the spiritual and military defense of the kingdom. Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* depicted kings involving themselves in interlinguistic transactions and in ecclesiastical affairs, modelling for Alfred elements of the persona he famously chose to adopt as *novus David* and Christian king.\(^\text{18}\) Moreover, the fact that Bede pushed for reform by textual means gave license to Alfred’s textually driven program of reforms.

The inscription at the beginning of Hatton 20, specifying that the manuscript was to be sent to Worcester, is in itself a testament to the movement (or at least intended movement) of books through the community of ecclesiastical and political leaders Alfred wished to link by means of textual bonds. The very production of this manuscript relied on the smaller community of scholars gathered around Alfred to advise, assist, and perhaps ventriloquize the king’s voice as part of the creation of his translations. The production of this copy and all other copies inscribed


\(^{18}\) See pp. 31–5 in Chapter 1 and p. 69 in Chapter 2.
Alfred’s model of textual community for later readers to see. This, as Alfred knew, was a necessary step since spoken words, as Augustine noted, “last no longer than they sound” (*nec diutius manent quam sonant*), while letters make it possible to present words to the eyes of readers and thus cast across (*ad traiciendum*) what was in the mind of the writer.  

Alfred claimed that in the texts he wished to translate he could still see the traces of those who had previously loved wisdom and used it to bequeath wealth to their descendants (*her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæd*), and he criticized the failure of so many in his own time to bend to the track and follow in their footsteps (*to ðæm spore mid uere mode onlutuan*).  

This account of Alfred’s sense of following the *spor* of his predecessors left an additional layer of *spor* that could be followed by readers who wished to emulate Alfred and participate in the textual community again. Alfred’s explanation of this phenomenon and the *spor* he left in offering that explanation provided the matrix in which all later interactions with the manuscript took place.

In the late tenth or early eleventh century, Wulfstan of York apparently spent time reading this manuscript, or at least the Preface, which he annotated. It is unlikely that a speaker of Old English would have needed to carry out extensive glossing for comprehension of the text, but Wulfstan’s habit of annotating was not limited to manuscripts containing his own works. His annotations in the *Pastoral Care* Preface include additions or corrections (as he judged them) to the text, some spelling changes (especially to change *<ie>* to *<y>*), and new or altered punctuation.  

Just as manuscripts of Wulfstan’s works show signs of and in fact encourage aural experimentation, so Wulfstan’s annotations in his own and other texts declare a sense that books are to be used and intervened in, once again inviting active interaction by later readers. Like Alfred, Wulfstan seems to have developed a “growing vision of a Holy Society” fashioned through both ecclesiastical and legal authority and guidance.  

So, a text like the Preface to Alfred’s *Pastoral Care*, laying out a vision of Anglo-Saxon society that was to be realized

19 DDC II.3 and 8. See also pp. 1–3 in the Introduction.

20 Sweet, *King Alfred’s Pastoral Care*, 5.


through textual activity and the oversight of spiritual and political leaders, would have resonated with Wulfstan, an archbishop whose facility with spoken and written text was directed towards the construction of a holier social framework.

For the Tremulous Hand, the content of the *Pastoral Care* would certainly have been in keeping with the other kinds of texts he tended to annotate—homiletic and other works dealing with doctrinal and pastoral matters—but its greatest utility might have been in the linguistic information the text held. For the Preface, no Latin original existed, so far as we know, but the main text of the translation had a Latin original, which the Tremulous Hand is known to have consulted in preparing his glosses to the Old English text. The Latin crib allowed the Tremulous Hand to grasp more easily the syntactical and lexical value of the Old English words, at least where the Old English text gave an accurate reflection of the linguistic details of the Latin original. So, the *spor* left by the Tremulous Hand also betrayed his reliance on other manuscripts that he drew into the textual community. The Tremulous Hand seems to have needed no encouragement to mark up the manuscripts he read, but in his turn, he left further inducements for later readers and annotators by adding his own glosses to the manuscript alongside Wulfstan’s earlier annotations.

We have already seen that Alfred presented a useful model for Parker and his sixteenth-century circle, and the Preface to the *Pastoral Care* had its own appeal for the Parkerian group. John Joscelyn, who made the sixteenth-century annotations in Hatton 20, was heavily involved in Matthew Parker’s textual projects and also worked towards an Old English dictionary with Parker’s son, John. In Lambeth 692, the notebook quoted in Chapter 5, Joscelyn entered words drawn from Hatton 20—not only do the spellings match Hatton 20, rather than CCCC 12, but Joscelyn also underlined the words where they appeared in Hatton 20. Here, as elsewhere, Joscelyn seems to have used the Tremulous Hand as a crutch in reading the manuscript and

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mining it for his lexicographical project, for he abandoned it soon after the last of the Tremulous Hand glosses. So, the sixteenth-century layer of annotating in Hatton 20 speaks both to the interest of the Parkerian circle in Alfredian texts and to their dependence on the earlier communal interactions of the Tremulous Hand with this and other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. The manifestation of the already diachronic textual community as layers of writing in Hatton 20 allowed Parker and Joscelyn to follow the spor of their predecessors and participate in the communal interactions with the manuscript.

The opening folios of Hatton 20, then, illustrate the central importance of textual community in the literary culture of England throughout the Middle Ages and into the sixteenth century. Moreover, the record of these folios also illustrates the necessity of using books to enter the textual community. For Wulfstan, it was simply the presence of the text that was needed, but for the Tremulous Hand and John Joscelyn, the Old English text was only partially accessible without careful study of this and other manuscripts. The spor left by the Tremulous Hand in his study was also crucial to the success of the sixteenth-century layer in the textual community.

The text and annotations in Hatton 20 also exemplify the varied ways in which linguistic distance operates to demand textual community. The multilingual environment in early medieval England is reflected in the translation from Latin to Old English and in Alfred’s discussion of the need to perform this work. In this, Alfred echoes Bede’s comfort with translation and with the use of the vernacular for texts of spiritual import, as well as Bede’s sense of the urgency of any project to make spiritual texts accessible to all. The Tremulous Hand glosses span both an interlingual distance (with his use of a Latin crib and his entry of Latin glosses into the manuscript) and an intralingual distance within English, whose differing forms he struggled with for many years. Parker and his circle also struggled with the changes that had occurred in the English language over many centuries, but this struggle to renew the memory of “that ancient and once familiar language” became the way of demonstrating their integration into the textual community. Parker set out to “inquyre for the olde way,” and like Alfred, he too found there the spor of those who had preceded him in the textual community, beckoning him to take part.

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