

Introduction

The self exists only in and by its relations with others; intensifying the social exchange means intensifying the self. The aim of existence could not be one *or* the other – no more self or no more society – but ‘in hours of miracle,’ in the language of Saint-Exupéry, ‘the quality of human relationships.’¹

Moral Regulation: Theories, Methodologies

In *Governing Morals*, Alan Hunt states that his ‘study addresses moral regulation as a practice of governing in order to focus attention on social action that attempts to influence the conduct of human agents’,² and he understands ‘all practices of governing [to] involve some element of moral regulation’.³ This thesis has similar concerns: it addresses the regulation or governance of morality, specifically marital morality, with a focus on the late Anglo-Saxon ‘social actions’ that endeavoured to modify conduct and inculcate morality, as witnessed in a variety of Old English texts – legislation, penitentials, romance, riddles, and hagiography. I will return presently to theories of governing and governance; initially it is necessary to define moral regulation theory, and its projects and processes.

In essence, projects of moral regulation are ones ‘which involve practices whereby some social agents *problematise* some aspect of the conduct, values or culture of others on moral grounds and seek to impose regulation upon them’;⁴ that is, moral regulation projects

¹ Tzvetan Todorov, *Life in Common: An Essay in General Anthropology*, trans. by Katherine Golsan and Lucy Golsan, European Horizons (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 145.

² Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*, Cambridge Studies in Law and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 4.

³ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 6.

⁴ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. ix; my emphasis.

proscribe conduct, values, or culture. I would additionally argue, however, that projects of moral regulation involve other, equally important, but antithetical, practices, whereby some social agents *idealise* some aspect of the conduct, values, or culture of others on moral grounds and seek to *prescribe* such conduct, values, or culture.⁵ Understood as both *proscriptive* and *prescriptive*, moral regulation is ‘a distinctive form of discursive and political practice [: ...] moral politics’.⁶ Or, ‘moral regulation involves the deployment of distinctively moral discourses which construct a moralised subject and an object or target which is acted upon by means of moralising practices’;⁷ moral discourses and moralising practices can be both negative (proscriptive) and positive (prescriptive).

Hunt argues that:

moral discourses frequently link moralised subjects and objects with some moralised practices in such a way as to impute some wider social harm that will be occasioned unless subjects, objects and practices are appropriately regulated. Moral regulation comprises ‘moralisation’ rather than ‘morality,’ and thus is relational, asserting some generalised sense of the wrongness of some conduct, habit or disposition.⁸

This argument is convincing, but limited in its scope. For explicitly hortatory texts, like Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, classification as a text of ‘moralisation’ according to Hunt’s definition is entirely appropriate.⁹ Yet, other Anglo-Saxon texts which, as I will argue in this thesis, sought to impose moral regulation upon their audience cannot be classified in such terms. To accommodate texts such as hagiographies and penitentials Hunt’s views must be modified and enlarged. Hagiographies did not only ‘impute some wider social harm that will be occasioned unless subjects, objects and practices are

⁵ As is argued by Philip Corrigan, ‘On Moral Regulation: Some Preliminary Remarks’, *Sociological Review*, 29 (1981), 313-37 (pp. 320-21, p. 329).

⁶ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. ix.

⁷ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 6.

⁸ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 8.

⁹ Hunt comments that most texts of moral regulation ‘are articulated within a language of decline or degeneration: “things” are presented as not being what they used to be and this change is articulated within a moral discourse. One common form invokes an imagined golden age of community or national greatness and moral rectitude that is confronted by a “present danger” that threatens future social ills of decline, degeneration, and social disorder’ (*Governing Morals*, p. 11). This observation is particularly applicable to *Sermo Lupi*.

appropriately regulated’;¹⁰ they also ascribed some social benefit (for example, conversion to Christianity or charitable behaviour) that would be occasioned if morals were appropriately regulated according to an idealised exemplar (the saint). Hagiographies, as texts of moral regulation, still comprised “moralisation” rather than “morality”,¹¹ but in the sense that they asserted the *rightness* of ‘some conduct, habit or disposition’ through the saints’ performances of sanctity and morality. Indeed, some Anglo-Saxon texts did *not* appeal to social harm *or* good to establish their moralisation. Penitential texts, for instance, did not contain any explicit justification, whether of social harm or good, for the moralisation which they encoded. This aspect of penitential regulation has frequently been noted, especially in the context of the texts’ failure to invoke the social harm of contraception.¹² Hunt’s theoretical understanding of moral regulation, then, must be supplemented with other theoretical strands to accommodate the richness of Anglo-Saxon moral regulation projects.

Although his work does not engage specifically with moral regulation, Tzvetan Todorov’s *Life in Common* provides a valuable balance to Hunt’s theoretical premises. Todorov argues that, as fundamentally social beings, humans require the gaze, or recognition, of others: ‘all coexistence is recognition. [...] Recognition touches all the spheres of our existence’.¹³ However, he distinguishes between two opposite forms of recognition: ‘a recognition of *conformity* and a recognition of *distinction* [...]: either I want to be perceived

¹⁰ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 8.

¹¹ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 8.

¹² For example, see Pierre J. Payer, ‘Early Medieval Regulations Concerning Marital Sexual Relations’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 6 (1980), 353–76 (p. 359); Pierre J. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code, 550–1150* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 117–18. This point may be extended to the conduct, regulated by the penitentials, which is ‘victimless’, such as masturbation: regulations against masturbation restrict personal freedoms which are not *explicitly* related to the welfare of society.

¹³ Todorov, *Life in Common*, pp. 77–78.

as being different from others [*distinction*] or as being like them [*conformity*].¹⁴ In Todorovian terms, this thesis is concerned with the ‘recognition of conformity’.¹⁵

Anglo-Saxon projects of moral regulation promoted conformity: they encouraged individuals to conform ‘as closely as possible to the customs and norms that they consider appropriate to their condition’,¹⁶ and endorsed those who did. As Todorov himself acknowledges, ‘the choice between different modes of recognition [conformity or distinction] does not depend entirely on the situation at hand or on the will of the individual. Certain societies and certain periods favour one and exclude another’.¹⁷ In Anglo-Saxon society, the individual was encouraged by regulation ‘to occupy a place that has been assigned in advance (his choice is more limited). [...] We can say, then, that recognition of conformity predominates here’.¹⁸ Whilst recognition of distinction was not absent from Anglo-Saxon society (Beowulf, for example, is represented as having achieved such recognition, and is praised for his distinction), those projects concerned with moralising were likely to advance the position of conformity as socially approved and authorised.

Anglo-Saxon moral regulation, then, can be understood through an amalgamation of Hunt’s and Todorov’s theories. In Hunt’s terms, these projects were a ‘significant form of politics in which some people act to problematise the conduct, values or culture of others and seek to impose regulation upon them’.¹⁹ Yet, Todorov’s proposition of a recognition of conformity nuances Hunt’s proscriptive formulation of moral regulation: since Anglo-Saxon society promoted conformity to norms, then the moral regulation evident in that society was potentially both proscriptive – in terms of censuring and penalising non-

¹⁴ Todorov, *Life in Common*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁵ Todorov, *Life in Common*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁶ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 80.

¹⁷ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 84.

¹⁸ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 86; Wulfstan’s *Institutes of Polity* exemplifies this predominance and promotion of ‘recognition of conformity’.

¹⁹ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 1.

conformists – *as well as* prescriptive – in terms of constructing those norms and validating conformists.

Hunt and Todorov both emphasise the social aspect of moral regulation, and recognition of conformity, respectively. Todorov contends that:

to have this recognition [of conformity], I do not need to repeatedly solicit the gaze of others. I have internalized this gaze in the form of customs and norms [...], and just my conformity to rules supplies me with an image – positive, moreover – of myself. Therefore, I exist. I no longer aspire to being exceptional but rather to being normal. [...] The satisfaction derived from conforming to the norms of the group also explains in great part the power of community feelings, the need to belong to a group, a country, a religious community. Scrupulously following the habits of a milieu furnishes you with the satisfaction of feeling that you exist because of the group.²⁰

Todorov's argument here points to the fundamental connection between recognition of conformity and moral regulation: recognition is the psychological and social motivation for individuals to conform to external moral expectations; conformity to regulations constructs a positive self and social image. Moral regulation, in its promotion of conformity to its proscriptions and prescriptions, provides a tangible sense of belonging which cannot be discounted as an incentive, consciously recognised or not, to adherence to regulation: 'the social behavior of man is the terrain on which morality is built'.²¹ Todorov's contention that 'all morality is social',²² and that recognition (of conformity or of distinction) is the essence of humankind's sociability, associates recognition of conformity with moral regulation: both are socially stimulated and mutually dependent. Regulation depends upon an aspiration to conform to regulation; conformity depends upon cultural values, norms and morals being socially transmitted and internalised by regulation. Thus, as Hunt argues, 'the concept of moral regulation succeeds in capturing [...] that these projects are always "social" because they exhort their targets and seek to

²⁰ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 80.

²¹ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 146.

²² Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 43; note his qualification that 'all sociality is not moral'.

render them governable'.²³ In other words, 'regulation is more than impact [...] it is a governing'.²⁴

How, then, is the notion of governance to be theorised? Foucault explicates the theory of governing as designating

the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not cover only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others.²⁵

According to this broad remit, 'a wide range of social agents are [*sic*] involved in practices of governing'.²⁶ Philip Corrigan contends that the primary agency governing 'moral regulation' is the state;²⁷ Mitchell Dean argues that Corrigan's position fails to account for 'ethical self-formation [...], for the spheres of self-regulation and self-formation that are not immediately political'.²⁸ Dean's criticisms of Corrigan's conceptualisation of moral regulation are valid in a modern context. However, in an Anglo-Saxon context, Corrigan's formulation is apposite: although moral governance was undertaken by a 'wide range of social agents' in Anglo-Saxon England (that is, individual agents were regulators),²⁹ it is in general true that those agents were representatives of the 'state' (that is, of church and king).³⁰ Or, more correctly, those Anglo-Saxon projects of moral regulation for which we

²³ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 16.

²⁴ Jay Lemke, *Textual Politics: Discourse and Social Dynamics*, Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995), p. 127.

²⁵ Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. by Herbert Dreyfuss and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 208-26 (p. 221). See also Hunt, *Governing Morals*, pp. 4-5.

²⁶ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 5.

²⁷ Corrigan, 'On Moral Regulation'.

²⁸ Mitchell Dean, "'A Social Structure of Many Souls": Moral Regulation, Government, and Self-Formation', *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19 (1994), 145-68 (p. 147-55).

²⁹ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 5.

³⁰ Whilst 'state' is not an entirely satisfactory term to use in an Anglo-Saxon context, for the sake of convenience I will use it in this discussion. It is here taken to designate the institutions of the church and king which governed various aspects of Anglo-Saxon life. It is important to note that in a late Anglo-Saxon context, the church is not distinct from the 'state', but fundamental to it (that is, a church/state divide is

have evidence, usually textual, were produced on behalf of church and/or king, and the institutional site of textual moralisation was the church: in Anglo-Saxon England, although individuals acted, ‘there was a much greater homogeneity in the literate class [than in later periods, and ...] textual production was almost exclusively the province of churchmen’.³¹ We will return to this issue presently, as well as in Chapter 1.³²

In an Anglo-Saxon context, then, governance was primarily performed by a variety of social agents, but these agents were embedded in the institutions which Corrigan, and Durkheim before him, broadly terms the ‘state’. Durkheim’s vision of the state as ‘above all, supremely the organ of moral discipline’,³³ whilst superseded by more sophisticated social theories in terms of contemporary analysis,³⁴ is not entirely unsuitable for application to an Anglo-Saxon context. In Bernstein’s development of Durkheim, regulators are ‘the agencies and agents whose *function* is to define, monitor and maintain the limits of persons and activities’.³⁵ If Durkheim’s and Bernstein’s conception is applied to an Anglo-Saxon context, then regulative agencies are the church and the king; their agents are the transmitters of regulation (variously defined as authors, translators, scribes, anthologists, orators, *et cetera*). Thus, governance should be additionally appreciated as the performance of *power*, where ‘power is conceptualised as a chain [...], that is a system of relations spread throughout the society, [...] a strategy [...]. Power needs to be seen as

anachronistic). See, for example, Eric John, ‘The King and the Monks in the Tenth-Century Reformation’, in *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies*, ed. by Eric John (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), pp. 154-81 (first publ. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 42 [1959], 61-87).

³¹ R. D. Fulk, ‘Male Homoeroticism in the Old English “Canons of Theodore”’, in *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillmore Calder*, ed. by Carol Braun Pasternack and Lisa M. C. Weston, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 227 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), pp. 1-34 (p. 4).

³² See discussion below, pp. 12-14, and Chapter 1, pp. 61-64.

³³ Emile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, trans. by Cornelia Brookfield, *International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1957), p. 72.

³⁴ See, for example Lemke, *Textual Politics*, pp. 19-36.

³⁵ Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes, and Control Vol. III: Towards a Theory of Educational Transmissions*, 2nd rev. edn (London: Routledge, 1977) p. 129.

something which has to be constantly performed rather than being achieved'.³⁶ Three points of correlation are relevant here: firstly, the regulatory apparatus of projects of moralisation governs morality by 'distinctive regulatory and disciplinary regime[s]' and through the 'larger regulatory operation of power' (that is, regulation is related to the 'state' and to power);³⁷ secondly, projects of moral regulation can be understood as actions which govern norms (that is, regulation is related to governing);³⁸ thirdly, all performances of governing imply moral regulation to varying extents (that is, governing is necessarily regulatory).³⁹ In these ways, moralised projects are witnesses to an attempted assertion of power as a mode of governance; the individuals to whom such projects are directed are the "place[s]" where power is enacted'.⁴⁰

Moralisation concerns not only the regulator but also the target or object; thus moral regulation requires the active response of its target. As Bakhtin explicates, 'all real and integral understanding is actively responsive'.⁴¹ Moral regulation, then, as a strategy of governance and a performance of power, is not static or monolithic; rather, it is a process which requires performance and re-performance and which is characterised by multiplicity, both in terms of the wide range of social agents which deploy it, and the even wider range of subjects, objects and targets to (or for) which it is deployed, and which respond to it.⁴²

³⁶ Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault*, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 35.

³⁷ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), p. 41.

³⁸ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 4.

³⁹ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Mills, *Foucault*, p. 35.

⁴¹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. by Vern M. McGee, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 8 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 60-102 (p. 69).

⁴² See Hunt, *Governing Morals*, pp. 4-11; Todd May, *The Moral Theory of Poststructuralism* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 42; Corrigan, 'On Moral Regulation', p. 320.

The necessarily fluid status of moral regulation is also implied by its relationship with discourse. Moralisation, in Hunt's terminology, is the discourse of moral regulation.⁴³ Lemke argues that 'the role of discourse in society is active';⁴⁴ as a mechanism of power and for regulation, discourse "produces" individuals [...: it] *manages* and *makes use of them* but [...] it also *actively constitutes them*'.⁴⁵ Foucault envisages that 'discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it'.⁴⁶ One way in which the discourse of moral regulation constitutes morality and facilitates its internalisation is by means of its referential and relational quality: in terms of discourse, proscription always implies prescription; prescription always implies proscription.⁴⁷ Moralisation anticipates the potential performance of antithetical conduct since a proscription (for example, of drunkenness) entails the implicit recognition of its converse (sobriety): 'the manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say'.⁴⁸ Moral regulation discourse both constructs and signifies moral knowledge since such discourse involves the *deconstruction* of moral or immoral behaviour (that is, the problematisation or idealisation of particular conduct), as well as the implicit (or, possibly explicit) *construction* of alternative modes of behaviour (recommended or prohibited).⁴⁹ Moralisation thus should be appreciated as *evolutionary*; it is a heterogeneous and complex articulation of the *potentiality* of morality.

Although the subtleties of Bernstein's theory of discourses (for example, his differentiation between horizontal and vertical discourse) is beyond the scope of this brief

⁴³ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Lemke, *Textual Politics*, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, p. 50.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978; repr. 1990), p. 101.

⁴⁷ Robert Arrington, *Rationalism, Realism, and Relativism: Perspectives in Contemporary Moral Epistemology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 282-285.

⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 25.

⁴⁹ Corrigan, 'On Moral Regulation', p. 329.

survey of moral regulation theory, his understanding of pedagogic discourse is relevant here. Using a Bernsteinian model, we can approach moral regulation schematically:

INSTRUCTIONAL DISCOURSE

REGULATIVE DISCOURSE⁵⁰

Bernstein argues that this schema shows ‘that the instructional discourse’, that is, the discourse which enunciates and evaluates morality, ‘is embedded in the regulative discourse, and that the regulative discourse’, that is, the discourse of social order and conformity, ‘is the dominant discourse’.⁵¹ Moral discourse (moralisation in Hunt’s terms, or pedagogic discourse in Bernstein’s) is the result of the embedding of instructional discourse in regulative discourse. Moral discourse requires both the articulation and assessment of moral precepts, and the participation in processes of social control.⁵²

Moralisation, then, requires both regulation and moral instruction, or moral knowledge. The latter is formed by moral discourse, where knowledge ‘is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice [...]. There is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms’.⁵³ In other words, moral discursive practices are generative or constructive as well as regulative. They ‘systematically form the objects of which they speak’.⁵⁴ In Bakhtinian terms, ‘there can be no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance. The speaker’s evaluative attitude toward the subject of his speech [...] determines the choice of lexical, grammatical, and compositional means of the utterance’.⁵⁵ Bakhtin formulates an utterance as ‘a moment of

⁵⁰ Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education (London: Taylor and Francis, 1996), p. 46.

⁵¹ Bernstein, *Pedagogy*, p. 46.

⁵² Lemke, *Textual Politics*, p. 132; Bernstein, *Pedagogy*, pp. 116–118.

⁵³ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 183.

⁵⁴ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 49. See also Corrigan, ‘On Moral Regulation’, p. 318.

⁵⁵ Bakhtin, ‘Speech Genres’, p. 84.

discourse, as a social event, as an act that contributes to the social activity of discourse'.⁵⁶ To Bakhtin, all discourse is moralised.⁵⁷ Yet, not all discourse is moral regulation, and projects of moral regulation should be understood as only that discourse which specifically *seeks* to regulate morality, or to moralise as a strategy of governance and power (that is, which includes both instructional and regulative discourses).

The theoretical principles upon which this thesis builds are synthesised from various theorists. For the purposes of this thesis, moral regulation projects are appreciated as both proscriptive (conduct or values are proscribed as harmful or wrong), and prescriptive (conduct or values are prescribed as beneficial or right). The condemnation or idealisation of particular immoral or moral conduct and values always implies the presence of its antithesis: the beneficial, as the opposite of the harmful, is necessarily implied by the construction of the harmful, and *vice versa*. The impetus towards morality – for the individual to be regulated – is, at least partially, understood by the recognition of conformity, a principle promoted by morally regulatory discourse. A society's positive recognition of conformity to its ideals facilitates a sense of belonging and sociability. Indeed, ideal (or ideology) is the vehicle by which morality is made vocational. By elevating particular moral conduct and values to ideals or ideologies through regulatory discourse, the individual is motivated to conform to the ideal in order to attract the recognition or gaze of his social milieu to which that conformity is dedicated. Ideology, as a product of moral discourse, then, is a method of non-coercive power relations: 'ideology is employed as an alternative *instrumentum regni* which works by engineering people's consent' to their own regulation.⁵⁸ Conforming to social ideals, as internalised and constituted by the discourse of moral regulation, is a vocation for the individual. Thus the

⁵⁶ Lemke, *Textual Politics*, p. 22.

⁵⁷ As Todd May states, 'it may look as though moral discourse were indistinguishable from descriptive [Bakhtin's evaluative] discourse, not because it is reducible to it, but instead because they are both linguistic practices that fall under the same account' (*Moral Theory*, p. 35). See also, Corrigan, 'On Moral Regulation', p. 318.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey Minson, *Genealogies of Morals: Nietzsche, Foucault, Donzelot, and the Eccentricity of Ethics* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 54. See also Lemke, *Textual Politics*, p. 11-12.

process of social formation of the individual as a moral subject is one in which the 'individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as a moral goal'.⁵⁹ In other words, moral regulation is characterised by instability and multiformity since it is a process that relies not only on the regulator, but equally on the objects or targets which 'are the vehicles of power [or regulation], not its points of application'.⁶⁰ The association of moral regulation with governance and power, moreover, necessitates its volatility: moral regulation requires constant attention, definition, and performance, just as power does. They are both processes, or strategies, rather than achieved entities. Moralisation is variously defined, rather than constant or given.

In order to situate these concepts of governance, power and discourse in relation to moral regulation in an Anglo-Saxon context, it is necessary to consider issues of literacy and textuality in that society. In his seminal work, Brian Stock distinguishes between literacy and textuality, arguing that 'literacy is not textuality. One can be literate without the overt use of texts, and one can use texts extensively without evidencing genuine literacy'.⁶¹ Applying this distinction to Anglo-Saxon society, the illiteracy of the majority of the population did not preclude the textuality of that society; nor did its textuality preclude its simultaneous dependence on the oral processes required by its general illiteracy.⁶² Jennifer Christine Brown has convincingly applied Stock's distinction to Anglo-Saxon society, arguing for its textuality and concluding that 'the vernacular text becomes a

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985; repr. 1992), p. 28.

⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures', in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by C. Gordon (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), pp. 78-108 (p. 98).

⁶¹ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 7.

⁶² Simon Keynes, 'Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 226-57 (p. 256).

repository for the standards of conduct within Anglo-Saxon society':⁶³ that is, 'the text itself – and writing as a consequence – was gaining force as a locus of cultural power'.⁶⁴ According to Brown's argument, since the text itself encodes morality ('standards of conduct') and is a 'locus of cultural power' (regulation), then the text embodies a process of social control: inscription as text is a signifier of legitimisation. Text renders particular meanings relevant; it *legitimises* particular conduct, values, or culture.⁶⁵ Through the legitimate text, the author,⁶⁶ and perhaps speaker, of the text is involved in governance according to Foucault's conception. All agents involved in determining the text – author, translator, scribe, anthologist/compiler, speaker – are involved in 'structur[ing] the possible field of action of others'⁶⁷ through texts which create and perpetuate 'cultural systems of power'.⁶⁸ Textuality produces the 'discourse within which [...] knowledge is given a normative content'.⁶⁹ As Lemke argues, 'the *textual*, in the broad sense of all the meanings we make [...] is deeply political [...]. Notions of text and discourse are complementary'.⁷⁰ In an Anglo-Saxon context, moralisation, or moral regulation discourse,

assumes that the individual – literate or illiterate – is educable, and that education is a socially [...] regulated process [...]. By intellectual argument and moral practice, it aims to direct the behavior of all Christians, who are defined as individual subjects by virtue of their relation to the Christian community. [...] It addresses the individual as a moral actor amenable to reason to a more complex extent than any other discourse of this period.⁷¹

⁶³ Jennifer Christine Brown, 'Writing Power and Writing-Power: The Rise of Literacy as a Means of Power in Anglo-Saxon England', *Medieval Perspectives*, 15 (2000), 42-56 (p. 46).

⁶⁴ Brown, 'Writing Power', p. 49. See also George Hardin Brown, 'The Dynamics of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 77 (1995), 109-42 (p. 110) (repr. in *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and the Toller Memorial Lectures*, ed. by Donald Scragg [Cambridge and Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 2003], pp. 183-212).

⁶⁵ Bernstein, *Pedagogy*, pp. 32-33.

⁶⁶ Or indeed translator, scribe or anthologist.

⁶⁷ Foucault, 'Subject and Power', p. 221.

⁶⁸ Brown, 'Writing Power', p. 49.

⁶⁹ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ Lemke, *Textual Politics*, p. 1 and p. 7.

⁷¹ Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing and Late Anglo-Saxon England*, *Medieval Cultures*, 19 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 109-110; Lees is specifically addressing the issue of didacticism rather than moralisation, but her points are equally as valid for the latter concept, and, indeed, didacticism is inherently related to moralisation.

In other words, the range of social agents governing the conduct of others, whether consciously or not, is determined by textual intermediaries;⁷² the range of individuals being governed is thus extensive, and moralisation requires their active, Bakhtinian, response to such discourse.

Marriage in Anglo-Saxon England: Dual Inheritances

The specific aspect of morality with which this thesis engages is marital. I propose to examine moral regulation projects of the late Anglo-Saxon period that attempted to influence the marital conduct of human agents,⁷³ and which governed the moral pattern of married people's lives. Marriage is a facet of Anglo-Saxon society which has been overlooked in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, primarily because of the paucity of extant sources on marriage when weighed against those for other elements of Anglo-Saxon society and culture.⁷⁴ However, since regulatory activity informs us of the concerns with which a

⁷² Brown, 'Writing Power', p. 44.

⁷³ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ The essential critical works which address Anglo-Saxon marriage include: Rosalind Hill, 'Marriage in Seventh-Century England', in *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones, Vol. I: The Anglo-Saxon Heritage*, ed. by Margot H. King and Wesley M. Stevens (Minneapolis: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, 1979), pp. 67-75; Sheila C. Dietrich, 'An Introduction to Women in Anglo-Saxon Society (c. 600-1066)', in *The Women of England: From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present, Interpretive Bibliographic Essays*, ed. by Barbara Kanner (London: Mansell, 1980), pp. 32-56; Marc A. Meyer, 'Land Charters and the Legal Position of Anglo-Saxon Women', in *Women of England*, ed. by Kanner, pp. 57-82; Anne L. Klinck, 'Anglo-Saxon Women and the Law', *Journal of Medieval History*, 8 (1982), 107-21; Rebecca V. Colman, 'The Abduction of Women in Barbaric Law', *Florilegium*, 5 (1983), 62-75; Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) (see esp. pp. 34-47, pp. 240-55); Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Past and Present*, 108 (1985), 3-34 (repr. in *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings*, ed. by David A. E. Pelteret, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 6 [New York and London: Garland, 2000], pp. 251-88); Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Andreas Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage in Old English* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986); James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), pp. 162-79; Theodore John Rivers, 'Adultery in Early Anglo-Saxon Society: Æthelberht 31 in Comparison with Continental Germanic Law', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 20 (1991), 19-25; Anthony Davies, 'The Sexual Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', in *A Wyf Ther Was: Essays*

society engaged, examining marriage as an institution in a moralised context may provide insight into this hitherto relatively neglected institution.

There exist two distinct strands which inform Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards, and practices of, marriage throughout the period: the Germanic, or indigenous, strand, and the Christian strand:

in Anglo-Saxon England, the Church did not enjoy exclusive jurisdiction over marriage as it did in the later Middle Ages, and Germanic marriage practices which existed prior to Christianity and which might have been at odds with its teachings – on subjects such as concubinage and divorce, for example – may have survived into the conversion period and afterwards.⁷⁵

Although Germanic marriage practices were ‘influenced by Christianity after conversion to the new faith’,⁷⁶ it is possible to trace some such practices, since ‘there are presumably early practices that we can see enduring after conversion’.⁷⁷ In terms of a Christian inheritance, the church brought with it to Anglo-Saxon England ‘erudite formulations’

in Honour of Paule Mertens-Fonck, ed. by Juliette Dor (Liege: University of Liege, 1992), pp. 80-102; Carole Hough, ‘The Early Kentish “Divorce Laws”: A Reconsideration of Æthelberht, chs. 79 and 80’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 23 (1994), 19-34; Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women, 450-1500* (London: Phoenix, 1995); Hugh Magennis, ‘Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery in Old English Hagiographical Texts’, *English Language Notes*, 33 (1996), 1-9; Julie Coleman, ‘Betrothal and Marriage: Invasion and Conquest’, in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King’s College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 89-115; Peter Jackson, ‘Ælfric and the Purpose of Christian Marriage: A Reconsideration of the “Life of St Æthelthryth”, lines 120-30’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 29 (2000), 235-60; Conor McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England: Law, Literature and Practice* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004); *Love, Sex and Marriage in the Middle Ages: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Conor McCarthy (London: Routledge, 2004). Papers on widowhood, which are peripherally interested in Anglo-Saxon marriage, have proliferated in the past two decades: see, for example, Rolf H. Bremmer Jr., ‘Widows in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Between Poverty and the Pyre: Moments in the History of Widowhood*, ed. by Jan Bremmer and Lourens van den Bosch (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 58-88; Julia Crick, ‘Men, Women and Widows: Widowhood in pre-Conquest England’, in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner, *Women and Men in History* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), pp. 24-36; Carole Hough, ‘The Widow’s Mund in Æthelberht 75 and 76’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 98 (1999), 1-16. The scholarly trend has been to concentrate on marriage and marriage laws in the early Anglo-Saxon period (especially with reference to the position of women, so that women, rather than marriage, is the primary focus), and to engage with the issue of widows and widowhood in the later Anglo-Saxon period. Few critical works address marriage in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

⁷⁵ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 110.

⁷⁶ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 8.

⁷⁷ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 14.

of,⁷⁸ and ambiguous attitudes towards, marriage as an institution, which both accorded, as well as conflicted, with Germanic customs, formulations, and attitudes.

The Germanic Inheritance

The Anglo-Saxons' Germanic, or indigenous, customs regarding marriage are difficult to reconstruct from the extant sources. The earliest source for Germanic marriage customs is Tacitus's *Germania* (written c. AD 100): 'Tacitus portrays a society which is largely monogamous, with only the uppermost reaches of society excepted, where adultery is rare and severely punished, [...] where virginity is preserved until marriage',⁷⁹ and where 'contraception and infanticide [are] unknown'.⁸⁰ However, as Goody cautions, Tacitus in his *Germania* 'is clearly acting as a moralist, using the *supposed* practices of the tribes to criticise the *actual* ways of the Romans',⁸¹ and Tacitus's reliability as a source for Germanic customs is therefore questionable. Beyond the *Germania*, as Margaret Clunies Ross points out,

a major problem concerning the assessment of documentary evidence relevant to sexual relationships and marriage customs among the Anglo-Saxons [... is that] the laws, particularly those of the earliest period, are very limited in their treatment of sexual relationships. Because women were not full legal persons as far as the law was concerned, dealings between men and women were only the subject of legislation when a breach of a man's guardianship (Old English *mund*, literally 'hand, protection') was involved.⁸²

Nevertheless, some general tendencies can be observed with regard to Anglo-Saxon customary marriage practices.

⁷⁸ Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 6.

⁷⁹ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 13. See also Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 127.

⁸⁰ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 37.

⁸¹ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 37.

⁸² Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 7.

Family and kin constituted the basic unit of Germanic society,⁸³ and, for Anglo-Saxon society, 'the primary bond was kinship, and marriage [was] a contractual relation between families; and, indeed, amongst members of the same family'.⁸⁴ Gies and Gies contend that, in Germanic society, marriage was 'family-governed and male-dominated'⁸⁵ and, in early Anglo-Saxon England, marriage practices adhered to such Germanic patterns, since marriage 'seems to have been a matter for the family rather than the individual'.⁸⁶ Clunies Ross proposes that 'a woman was normally under the *mund* of a male guardian and any violation of *mund* or proposed change of guardianship, such as a marriage contract, affected the guardian's honour and status directly'.⁸⁷ Thus, the prospective bride's kin, and specifically her male guardian, had personal, familial, and social obligations to arrange a suitable marriage for her; marriage as a practice had implications for the bride's guardian and kin and thus required their active participation.

The custom of close marriages seems also to have characterised Germanic, and early Anglo-Saxon, marriage practices.⁸⁸ Evidence for close marriage appears in the *Libellus Responsionum* of Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury (d. AD 604), recorded in Book I of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.⁸⁹ Four of Gregory's nine answers address issues of sexual relationships and marriage customs and, although the *Libellus Responsionum* is a church document, its proscriptions do indicate certain pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon

⁸³ Frances and Joseph Gies, *Marriage and the Family in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 31. On Anglo-Saxon kinship, see Lorraine Lancaster's seminal work, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society – Parts I and II', *British Journal of Sociology*, 9 (1958), 230-50 and 359-77.

⁸⁴ Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992; repr. 1998), p. 38. Anglo-Saxon kinship was organised bilaterally (or cognatically); see Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 21.

⁸⁵ Gies and Gies, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 33.

⁸⁶ Coleman, 'Betrothal and Marriage', p. 90.

⁸⁷ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 9. This point is also true for adultery; see Rivers, 'Adultery', 19-25. On *mund*, see H. Munro Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1905; repr. 1963), pp. 115-26.

⁸⁸ Lancaster, 'Kinship', pp. 240-41.

⁸⁹ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (London: Oxford University Press, 1969; repr. 1972) (henceforth *HE*; see above, List of Abbreviations, p. x), Book I; XXII (pp. 78-103).

customs current at the time of its composition.⁹⁰ In this document, it is implied that ‘practices of close marriage (presumably to cross-cousins, and possibly [...] to parallel cousins [...]) and of marriage to the widow of the brother or father (though not one’s own mother) must have been common in England, and indeed German, society’.⁹¹ Conceptions of incest (including consanguinity, compaternity, and affinity) marked one of the most entrenched tensions between Germanic and Christian customs: the Germanic practice of close marriages clashed with the church’s extensive range of marriage impediments.⁹²

Another aspect of Germanic marriage practices which stemmed from the familial control over marriage, and which was problematic in the eyes of the church, regarded consent. Whilst the church insisted upon the personal consent of the prospective bride and bridegroom and promoted affective marriages,⁹³ the consent of the parties and their mutual affection may not have been required in Germanic and early Anglo-Saxon society:⁹⁴ ‘until the eleventh century, fathers could bestow their daughters in marriage without regard for their consent’.⁹⁵ Betrothal was arranged by the bride’s kin on her behalf, and her consent was not required,⁹⁶ although presumably it might have been sought in particular cases.

In Germanic society, marriage had, at least in part, proprietary aims:

marriage always had implications for the transfer of property between kin. [...] Along with inheritance strategies, marriages were the major means by which families sought to establish economic viability for the succeeding generation. Marriages, then, were

⁹⁰ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 36.

⁹¹ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 36. See also Gies and Gies, *Marriage and the Family*, pp. 104-05.

⁹² See David Herlihy, ‘Making Sense of Incest: Women and the Marriage Rules of the Early Middle Ages’, in *Law, Custom, and the Social Fabric in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of Bryce Lyon*, ed. by Bernard S. Bachrach and David Nichols, Studies in Medieval Culture, 28 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1990), pp. 1-16; Davies, ‘Sexual Conversion’, pp. 91-92.

⁹³ See, for example, John T. Noonan, Jr., ‘Marriage in the Middle Ages: I, Power to Choose’, *Viator*, 4 (1973), 419-34.

⁹⁴ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 48.

⁹⁵ Coleman, ‘Betrothal and Marriage’, pp. 90-91.

⁹⁶ Gies and Gies, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 33; Clunies Ross, ‘Concubinage’, p. 8.

occasions on which property transfers, both symbolic and real, took place within and between families.⁹⁷

One facet of the nexus between Germanic marriage practices and property, which is frequently commented upon by critics, is the custom of ‘bride purchase’. The existence, or not, of ‘bride purchase’ in Anglo-Saxon society – in which ‘marriage may itself have been akin to a financial transaction’⁹⁸ – has been debated at length by scholars. Germanic ‘bride purchase’ required the agreement between two families and the transfer of property from the bridegroom or his kin, to the bride’s family.⁹⁹ Klinck argues that in early Anglo-Saxon England ‘marriage is regarded as a purchase. A wife is to be “bought for a price” (*ceapi geceapod sy*, Ethelbert 77); she can be sent back home and the money repaid if the bargain was dishonest’.¹⁰⁰ To Klinck, ‘there is no hint in these earliest laws themselves that what looks like purchase and ownership is actually something different’.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, McCarthy and Mezger conclude that such a conception of ‘bride purchase’ is oversimplified,¹⁰² and the question remains unanswered as to ‘whether it was the woman herself or the guardianship over her which was bought by the suitor’.¹⁰³ I agree with Lancaster and Goody that, whilst a payment may have been made for the bride (or for guardianship over her) to her father (or guardian) by the bridegroom and his kin, it is important to nuance this understanding of ‘bride purchase’, based primarily on Æthelberht of Kent’s law (chapter 77; c. AD 602-03), by reference to some of Æthelberht’s other laws on marriage.¹⁰⁴ The relevant laws state:

[77] Gif mon mægþ gebigeð, ceapi geceapod sy, gif hit unfacne is.
[77,1] Gif hit þonne facne is, ef þær æt ham gebrenge, 7 him man his scæt agefe.

⁹⁷ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 51.

⁹⁸ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 52. See also Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, pp. 19-20; Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 129. Marriage by ‘bride purchase’ is often referred to by critics by the German term, *kaufehe*.

⁹⁹ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 128.

¹⁰⁰ Klinck, ‘Women and the Law’, p. 109. See also Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, pp. 249-50; Hill, ‘Marriage in England’, p. 69.

¹⁰¹ Klinck, ‘Women and the Law’, p. 109.

¹⁰² See McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, pp. 52-55; F. Mezger, ‘Did the Institution of Marriage by Purchase Exist in Old Germanic Law?’, *Speculum*, 18 (1943), 369-71.

¹⁰³ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, pp. 240-50; Lancaster, ‘Kinship’, p. 243.

[78] Gif hio cwic bearn gebyreþ, healfne scæt age, gif ceorl ær swylteþ.

[79] Gif mid bearnum bugan wille, healfne scæt age.

[80] Gif ceorl agan wile: swa an bearn.

[81] Gif hio bearn ne gebyreþ, fæderingmagas fioh agan 7 morgengyfe.

77. If anyone buys a maiden, she is to be bought with a [bride] payment, if there is no fraud.

77.1 If, however, there is any fraud, she is to be taken back home, and he is to be given back his money.

78. If she bears a living child, she is to have half the goods, if the husband dies first.

79. If she wishes to go away with the children, she is to have half the goods.

80. If the husband wishes to keep [the children], [she is to have the same share] as a child.

81. If she does not bear a child, [her] paternal kinsmen are to have [her] goods and the 'morning-gift'.¹⁰⁵

The issues of divorce and inheritance will be addressed presently; firstly some points should be made regarding the construction of 'bride purchase' in these laws. Undoubtedly, chapter 77 implies that a payment is made for the bride (*gebicgan*, 'to buy', 'purchase'),¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English law codes are taken from Felix Liebermann's edition, *Die Gesetze der angelsachsen*, 3 vols (Halle: Niermeyer, 1898-1916; repr. Scientia Allen, 1960) (henceforth *Gesetze*); where possible, modern English translations of law codes are taken from Dorothy Whitelock's translation, *English Historical Documents: I, c. 500-1042*, 2nd edn (London: Methuen, 1979) (henceforth *EHD I*). For laws for which there are no translations in *EHD I*, translations are my own and will be noted as such. All further references to the law codes throughout this thesis will be given by short title and chapter, after quotations in the text. Other editions consulted are: *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. by F. L. Attenborough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922); *The Laws of the Kings of England From Edmund to Henry I*, ed. and trans. by A. J. Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925); *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, ed. by Benjamin Thorpe (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1840). I have used Whitelock's translation of the law codes where possible (with reference to Attenborough's and Robertson's translations) primarily because her translations make these often cryptic texts comprehensible. For a tabulated contextualisation of Æthelberht, chapters 77-81, see Patrick Wormald, *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience*, ed. by Patrick Wormald (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1999), p. 186.

¹⁰⁶ See *Dictionary of Old English*, ed. by Angus Cameron *et al.* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986-) (henceforth *DOE*); s. v, 'gebicgan', A.3.c.i. *DOE* has the definition of 'gebicgan' in Æthelberht ch. 77 as 'referring to a marriage settlement: to enter into a contract with / for (someone *acc.*)', with a supporting example in Ine's law code, ch. 31. Whilst the more neutral definition proposed by *DOE* is attractive, it seems likely that if *gebicgan* in Æthelberht and Ine refers to a marriage contract/settlement, then that settlement was negotiated according to, or perhaps sealed by, a payment or exchange, since 'to buy' is the base meaning of the term (see definition A). *Gebicgan* can probably be best understood as the process described by Fell as the payment of money, possibly to the woman herself, made 'within a contractual framework' (*Women in England*, p. 16). Cf. Coleman who (wrongly) describes 'settlement negotiations [...] finalized before a betrothal took place, including the agreement of a bride-price to be paid by the bride's family to the groom's to guarantee her financial security in case of death or divorce' (Coleman, 'Betrothal and Marriage', p. 90).

which is returnable if the ‘purchase’ is fraudulent (however that may be interpreted). However, as Goody observes, the bride herself receives an indirect dowry in the form of a morning-gift (*morgengifu*), a gift made to her (rather than to her father or kin) on the morning after the marriage is consummated (chapter 81);¹⁰⁷ that the morning-gift is her own property, legally speaking, is indicated by the fact that it reverts to *her* paternal kinsmen if she dies with no child to inherit her goods (she retains the morning-gift even if she is childless): that is, although the bride’s kin are paid by the bridegroom’s kin for her, so too, the bride herself is ‘paid’.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, she is a ‘conditional dower’, in that her marriage entitles her to half of her husband’s goods on his death (chapter 78-79).¹⁰⁹ In other words, whilst ‘bride purchase’ may have been current in early Anglo-Saxon England, the payment for the bride was made both to her kin and to her herself.¹¹⁰

Æthelberht’s laws indicate that ‘the dower and other forms of indirect dowry (transfers from the husband to the wife) are also related to the process of inheritance’,¹¹¹ and, as has been noted, Germanic marriage customs were intimately linked with property and inheritance. A bride could acquire property at her marriage (usually in the form of her morning-gift), and she could inherit it from her husband, or from others, although sometimes only for the duration of her own life. Similarly, she could bequeath her own property to her husband, her sons, or her daughters. As Æthelberht, chapter 81, indicates, ‘the real property she brought into the marriage remained in her possession’; however, its

¹⁰⁷ See Meyer, ‘Land Charters and Legal Position’, pp. 62-63.

¹⁰⁸ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 250.

¹⁰⁹ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 250.

¹¹⁰ The argument for the existence of ‘marriage by capture’ (*raubebe*) is ongoing (for example, see Colman, ‘Abduction of Women’). I agree with Fischer that, although the law code of Æthelberht (chapter 82); *VI Æthelræd* (chapter 39), and *II Cnut* (chapter 52) may indicate some currency of ‘marriage by capture’, ‘it is equally obvious [...] that it was already considered illegal (and thus punishable) from the time of Æthelberht, and that “marriage by purchase” was the common form’ (*Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 21). Thus, I will not address ‘marriage by capture’ here. See more generally, Shari Horner, ‘The Language of Rape in Old English Literature and Law: Views from the Anglo-Saxon(ist)s’, in *Sex and Sexuality*, ed. by Pasternack and Weston, pp. 149-81 (esp. pp. 152-62); Carole Hough, ‘Alfred’s *Domboc* and the Language of Rape: A Reconsideration of Alfred Ch. 11’, *Medium Ævum*, 66 (1997), 1-27.

¹¹¹ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 244. See also Gies and Gies, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 102.

‘maintenance was vested in her husband; he held the land and could do with it whatever he wished except permanently alienate it from his wife’s possession’.¹¹²

Germanic marriage appears not to have been indissoluble: that is, divorce may have existed,¹¹³ and ‘the indications are that Anglo-Saxon marriage was a contract entered into and terminated by mutual agreement’.¹¹⁴ Whilst I agree with Carole Hough that the laws of Æthelberht, chapters 79 and 80, do not refer to divorce initiated by a wife,¹¹⁵ other evidence exists for the custom of dissolving marriages. For example, in terms of royal marriages, ‘unilateral repudiation of wives by their husbands remained common in the ninth and tenth centuries in spite of ecclesiastical opposition’.¹¹⁶ The Germanic allowance for marriage to be dissolved, then, stood in sharp contrast to the Christian requirement for marriage to be a permanent union.

The ceremonies marking Germanic marriage are almost impossible to reconstruct. For example, ‘it is not clear whether there was a ceremony to mark betrothal or not. [...] The celebration of marriage seems to have included feasting, and the leading of the bride to the groom’s house’,¹¹⁷ although even these theories are based upon an interpretation of Old English marital vocabulary (for example, *bryd-ealu*, literally ‘bride-ale’, thus taken to mean ‘wedding party’ or ‘marriage feast’).¹¹⁸ It is possible to posit only that ‘a betrothal

¹¹² Meyer, ‘Land Charters and Legal Position’, pp. 61–62; see also Pauline Stafford, ‘The King’s Wife in Wessex 800–1066’, in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 56–78 (p. 60) (first publ., *Past and Present*, 91 [1981], 3–27).

¹¹³ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 48; Klinck, ‘Women and the Law’, p. 110. Cf. Hough, ‘Divorce Laws’, who argues that Æthelberht, chapters 79 and 80, have no reference to divorce; Lancaster, ‘Kinship’, who argues that ‘divorce as a *complete* severance of the marriage tie was not approved legally’ (p. 246).

¹¹⁴ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 62.

¹¹⁵ Hough, ‘Divorce Laws’: Hough translates these chapters in the context of the husband’s death in chapter 78. That is, if a husband dies ‘79. If she [the wife] wishes to live with the children, she is to have half the goods. 80. If she wishes to take (another) husband, (she is to have the same share) as a child’, (p. 34).

¹¹⁶ Stafford, ‘King’s Wife’, p. 58.

¹¹⁷ Coleman, ‘Betrothal and Marriage’, pp. 90–91.

¹¹⁸ DOE, s. v ‘bryd-ealu’; Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 56. See also Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 167.

[*bewedding*] was a stage in the process that led to a wedding [*gifta*], whether that took place at the same time or on some later date',¹¹⁹ and, although it seems likely that a betrothal 'consisted of the promise of marriage and the agreements on its terms', there is no evidence to suggest, as Gies and Gies do, that the betrothal 'was followed by a feast of the two families at which the actual payment of the brideprice by the groom's family took place'.¹²⁰ What is clear is that a wedding followed a betrothal, and that the wedding night concluded the wedding ceremony and 'marked the beginning of the state of marriage':¹²¹ that is, that consummation was integral to a wedding and marriage. Importantly, especially in the context of the church's distrust of sexual intercourse, consummation was crucial to the legitimacy of a marriage: 'sexual intercourse was essential to Germanic marriage [...] and no marital union was binding without it'.¹²²

Although 'we have no firm evidence about the sexual morality prevailing in Anglo-Saxon England before Augustine landed',¹²³ Clunies Ross has convincingly argued that concubinage was a current practice and existed alongside monogamy.¹²⁴ She states that 'the Anglo-Saxon evidence leads one to the conclusion that a concubine was a member of a man's household, at least in the early period, and that her children were able to inherit from their father if he so wished it'.¹²⁵ Clunies Ross identifies the concubinage relationship as being characterised by 'continuity and public or semi-public recognition but not by a formal betrothal and the exchange of gifts between the contracting parties'.¹²⁶ The implication of Clunies Ross's arguments for marriage is that 'there is no indication that early Anglo-Saxon law distinguished an institution of marriage that existed as a social

¹¹⁹ Coleman, 'Betrothal and Marriage', p. 104. See also Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 22.

¹²⁰ Gies and Gies, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 33. Cf. Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 21.

¹²¹ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 22.

¹²² Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 130.

¹²³ Davies, 'Sexual Conversion', p. 88.

¹²⁴ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage'; see also Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, pp. 40-41, pp. 76-77; Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 129-31.

¹²⁵ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 6.

¹²⁶ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 14.

model',¹²⁷ or alternatively, that 'Germanic law codes treat marriage as a union created by cohabitation, rather than a formal act. Marriage was a social act, not a legal status, in fifth- and sixth-century German society'.¹²⁸ Germanic marriage, then, required a formal betrothal, an exchange of gifts, and sexual consummation, but it was not a legal or social institution in and of itself.

Anglo-Saxon marriage was a secular practice, and 'from a legal point of view, a wedding in Anglo-Saxon England was a purely secular affair, and no church ceremony was necessary'.¹²⁹ Nevertheless marriage and marriage customs and practices were of interest to the church.¹³⁰ marriage was never under official ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Anglo-Saxon England, but the church, through its canons, penitentials, and other morally regulatory projects, did attempt to bring marriage into its domain and to regulate it. Instances of profound tension existing between Germanic customs and the church's marital ideology, included issues of consent, close marriages, divorce and sexual relations:

Germanic folklaw treated marriage as a union that was contracted, sealed, and symbolized by sexual relations between the parties and dissoluble at will, at least for the man. Church leaders, in contrast adopted the position that marriage created a lifelong bond between man and wife, contracted by their consent and that of their families. Germanic custom and Christian teaching saw the role of marital sex quite differently. [...] The Germans considered sexual relations essential to the definition of marriage, whereas Christian teachers [...] distrusted sex.¹³¹

It is possible to argue, then, that the deepest differentiation between Germanic customs and church attitudes towards marriage was in their variant perceptions of the role of marital sexual relations. It is thus necessary to question, as Foucault does, and as the Anglo-Saxons probably did, why the church problematised 'sexual conduct, why are the activities and pleasures that attach to it, an object of moral solicitude?'¹³²

¹²⁷ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 11.

¹²⁸ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 128.

¹²⁹ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 23.

¹³⁰ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 137.

¹³¹ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 135-36.

¹³² Foucault, *History of Sexuality, II*, p. 10.

The Christian Inheritance: Theological and Doctrinal Attitudes to Marriage

With the coming of Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons acquired a set of attitudes to marriage which rested 'on three main written sources, namely the recorded teachings of Jesus, the Pauline epistles and the ante-Nicene Patristic literature'.¹³³ The attitudes towards marriage which were captured in these written sources, however, were ambiguous and often contradictory. Due to this demonstrable ambiguity in church teachings and attitudes, the theological and doctrinal development of the church's attitude to marriage, including its struggle to define its position towards it, has been thoroughly analysed.¹³⁴ A brief survey of biblical and patristic positions on marriage will suffice to illustrate the confusing and conflicting opinions which the Anglo-Saxon church, and its practitioners, would have inherited.¹³⁵

¹³³ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 84.

¹³⁴ For some examples see: Christopher N. L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London and Boston: Faber, 1989; repr. 1991); Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*; Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*; Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London and New York: Verso, 1991); Liesl Ruth Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints in Ælfric's "Lives of the Saints": The Translation of an Ideal' (unpublished doctoral thesis, the University of Toronto, 2000).

¹³⁵ The following discussion is based upon the premise that the works of each of the authors discussed would have been known during the Anglo-Saxon period. The secondary resources used to collate this information are: *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, ed. by Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project, (available at: <<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>> [accessed September 2004]) (henceforth *Fontes*); Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 241 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001) (henceforth *Handlist*); J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin (670-804)* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936); J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597-1066* (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1967) and J. D. A. Ogilvy, 'Books Known to the English: Addenda and Corrigenda', *Old English Newsletter*, *Subsidia* vol. II (1985) (repr. from *Mediaevalia*, 7 [1981 (1984)], 281-326). These sources testify to particular authors and texts known in the Anglo-Saxon period.

The New Testament on Marriage

Marriage is not a prominent theme in the Bible, and the discontinuity between the polygamous marriages of the Old Testament and Christ's pronouncements on marital monogamy in the New presented particular problems in interpreting the biblical stance on marital unions.¹³⁶ In terms of the New Testament, marital issues were peripheral: Christ rarely commented on marriage,¹³⁷ and the weight of the New Testament attitude to marriage ultimately rested with the Pauline doctrine of I Corinthians.

It is possible to categorise Christ's comments on marriage into three sets: firstly, his pronouncements as reported in Mark 10:2-16, paralleled in Luke 16:18 and Matthew 19:3-15; secondly, those in Mark 10:28-30, paralleled in Luke 18:28-30 and Matthew 19:27-29; thirdly, the remarks made in Mark 12:18-25, paralleled in Matthew 22:23-30. Turning to the first set, Christ declared marriage an indissoluble and monogamous union, in which two become one flesh:

Et erunt duo in carne una itaque iam non sunt duo sed una caro quod ergo Deus iunxit homo non separet [...] quicumque dimiserit uxorem suam et aliam duxerit adulterium committit super eam et si uxor dimiserit virum suum et alii nupserit moechatur

And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God joined together, let not man put asunder. [...] Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery. (Mark 10:8-12)¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Brooke, *Idea of Marriage*, pp. 41-43.

¹³⁷ Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 8.

¹³⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of the *Vulgate Bible* are taken from the Stuttgart edition, *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam*, adiuvantibus Bonifatio Fischer OSB, Iohanne Gribomont OSB, H. F. D. Sparks, W. Thiele recensuit et brevi apparatus instruxit Robertus Weber OSB editio tertia emendata quam paravit Bonifatius Fischer OSB, editio minor (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984); all translations of the Old Testament are taken from the Doway translation, *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgat: Diligently compared With the Hebrew, Greek, and other Editions in divers Languages. And first published by The English College at Doway, Anno 1609. Newly revised, and corrected, according to the Clementin Edition of the Scriptures. With Annotations for clearing up the principal Difficulties of Holy Writ*, 3rd edn of Richard Challoner, 4 vols (1750); all translations of the New Testament are taken from the Rheims translation, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Translated out of the Latin Vulgat: Diligently compared with the original Greek. And first published by the English College of Rhemes, anno 1582. Newly revised, and*

In Matthew 19:3-15, the same dual points of marriage as a God-given and singular union were repeated; however, in Matthew, Christ's pronouncement on the absolutely binding nature of marriage was qualified, since, 'dico autem vobis quia quicumque dimiserit uxorem suam *nisi ob fornicationem* et aliam duxerit moechatur' ('and I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery'; Matt. 19:9; my emphasis). The question thus arises: did Christ teach, contrary to Jewish law, that marriage was a union which no man, or woman presumably, regardless of circumstances, might dissolve? Or, did Christ teach the contradictory doctrine that the union was dissolvable on the grounds of fornication? In the Mark episode, the disciples were silent after Christ's speech; in Matthew, 'dicunt ei discipuli eius si ita est causa homini cum uxore non expedit nubere' ('His disciples say unto him: If the case of the man with his wife be so, it is not good to marry'; Matt. 19:10). Christ's statement in Mark appears pro-matrimonial: indeed, the marital union was one which existed before the Fall with God as its architect. In Matthew, Christ tempered this pre-lapsarian image by associating marriage with fornication, a tempering which suggested an anti-matrimonial stance to the disciples.

There is similar ambiguity in the second set: in Mark 10:29-30, Christ stated that 'nemo est qui reliquerit domum aut fratres aut sorores aut matrem aut patrem aut filios aut agros propter me et propter evangelium' ('there is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my sake and for the gospel'; Mark 10:29) who will not receive a hundredfold reward in the afterlife. In Mark, there is no mention of the rewards promised for leaving a wife in Christ's name. In Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, Christ's reward is reserved for the man who: 'reliquit domum aut parentes aut fratres aut *uxorem* aut filios' ('hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or *wife*, or children'; Luke 18:29; my emphasis). A contradiction again exists between the

corrected according to the Clementin Edition of the Scriptures. With Annotations For clearing up modern Controversies in Religion, and other Difficulties of Holy Writ, 3rd edn of Richard Challoner, 2 vols (1752). All further references to the *Vulgate Bible* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

pro- (or, at least, neutral) matrimonial Mark text and the markedly anti-matrimonial Matthew text, here supported by Luke. Together, these three remarks suggest an inconsistency since marriage was pronounced indissoluble and natural in Mark, but the Matthew text contravened such indissolubility, effectively encouraging the separation of spouses if done for Christ's sake. In Matthew and Luke, a hierarchy was created so that dedication to marriage was superseded by dedication to Christ, and indeed they appear mutually exclusive. This stance is given support in the third set, when Christ proclaimed that 'cum enim a mortuis resurrexerint neque nubent neque nubentur sed sunt sicut angeli in caelis' ('when they shall rise again from the dead, they shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but are as the Angels in heaven'; Mark 12:25). That is, although marriage was a natural union (Mark 10:6-7), it was an earthly, not a heavenly, institution. Christ's assertion that 'both marriage and death cease to exist after the resurrection but humans will live as angels sets up an ugly equation between marriage and death for those predisposed to criticize marriage'.¹³⁹

Christ, then, 'seems not have envisioned the total disappearance of family structures [... and] insisted on monogamous marriage'.¹⁴⁰ Yet, he simultaneously set marriage in opposition to heaven and faith, and, ultimately, he did not refute his disciples' conclusion that 'non expedit nubere' ('it is not good to marry'; Matt. 19:10). It is in the Epistles that marriage became a more prominent theme, especially in I Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5:21-33. Indeed, 'the forty highly condensed verses that made up the seventh chapter of his [Paul's] First Letter to the Corinthians have been justly acclaimed as "the most important in the entire Bible for the question of marriage"'.¹⁴¹ From the 'somewhat contradictory statements of Jesus, Saint Paul built his interpretation [...], although his interpretations also often are not clear'.¹⁴² Paul's primary argument in I Corinthians 7 was

¹³⁹ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 41

¹⁴¹ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 53.

¹⁴² Vern L. Bullough, 'Introduction: The Christian Inheritance', in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York: Prometheus, 1994), pp. 1-12 (p. 2).

that although ‘bonum est homini mulierem non tangere’ (‘it is good for a man not to touch a woman’; I Cor. 7:1) and it is best for those who are unmarried or widowed to remain so (I Cor. 7:8), marriage was the institution through which sexual intercourse was separated from fornication: marital sexual intercourse prevented fornication and incontinence (I Cor. 7:2). Marriage was nevertheless a concession to sexual weakness (I Cor. 7:9): ‘hoc autem dico secundum indulgentiam non secundum imperium’ (‘but I speak this by indulgence, not by commandment’; I Cor. 7:6). Paul reiterated the opposition between the spiritual and the marital which Christ constructed in Mark 10, both intensifying the dichotomy and expanding Christ’s pronouncement by stating that those who are married are preoccupied with the world, whilst those who are unmarried are dedicated to God (I Cor. 7:32–34). Paul presented two points of view on marriage: on the one hand, ‘it had not been Paul’s concern to praise marriage; he strove, rather, to point out that marriage was safer than unconsidered celibacy’; on the other, ‘being married betrayed an absence of God’s call to continence. The married lacked the supreme quality of the undivided heart’.¹⁴³

These points of view were not contradictory – celibacy was the best and most holy way of Christian living; however, marriage was permissible for those who did not have the higher calling to virginal service to God.¹⁴⁴ However, they did conflict with Paul’s doctrine in Ephesians:

Viri diligite uxores sicut et Christus dilexit ecclesiam [...] ita et viri debent diligere uxores suas ut corpora sua qui suam uxorem diligit se ipsum diligit [...] propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem suam et adhaerebit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una sacramentum hoc magnum est ego autem dico in Christo et in ecclesia verumtamen et vos singuli unusquisque suam uxorem sicut se ipsum diligit uxor autem ut timeat virum

¹⁴³ Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 54–55, p. 56. See also Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ I disagree with Robin Scroggs who argues that in I Corinthians ‘Paul understands the purpose of marriage to be sexual enjoyment [and a...] legitimate union between two people who desire and care for each other’ (‘Paul and the Eschatological Woman’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 40 [1972], 283–303 [p. 296]).

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church [...]. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. [...] For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother: and shall stick to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself: and let the wife fear her husband. (Eph. 5:25-33)

Paul's allegorical comparison of the marital union to Christ's union with his Church, as well as his emphasis on the emotional, loving component of marriage (as opposed to the sexual, bodily one), diverged from 'the chill tone of Paul's answer to the Corinthians'.¹⁴⁵ The ambiguity in Paul was tonal, as well as thematic, since he permitted marriage whilst disparaging it in I Corinthians and then praised it as an ideal reflection of Christ and the Church in Ephesians.

Patristic Exegesis and Marriage

The biblical statements concerning marriage were not wholly contradictory or ambiguous, although contradictions and ambiguities are identifiable. However, the brevity of Christ's and Paul's comments was problematic for patristic writers who commented upon and analysed the Church's doctrine on marriage as expounded in the Bible. The Bible alone did not provide the detailed answers to the questions these patristic writers had regarding marriage: what constituted marriage; what defined marital experience; what was a moral marriage, and what made Christian marriage inherently different from and better than non-Christian marriage? Biblical brevity and ambiguity, then, necessitated imaginative creation: later authors invented doctrine to fill in the gaps left by the Bible.

Although some of the writings of Tertullian (d. c. AD 240) were known in the Anglo-Saxon world, his treatises on marriage and chastity were not necessarily among them.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁶ There is a s. xi/xii copy of Tertullian's *Apologeticum* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat.th.d.34) (*Handlist*, no. 653.2; see 'Index I: Authors and Texts', pp. 149-84). Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos* is a source

Indeed, ‘the evidence for a knowledge of Tertullian among the English is by no means overwhelming’.¹⁴⁷ Thus, although Tertullian’s ideas on marriage contributed to the ideas found in later patristic writers, his attitudes will not be addressed here. Ambrose (Bishop of Milan, d. AD 397) was certainly known in the Anglo-Saxon world; his works were used across the Anglo-Saxon period from Bede to Cynewulf.¹⁴⁸ His works on virginity and marriage were known also, both indirectly through authors such as Aldhelm¹⁴⁹ and directly (for example, there are four extant manuscripts containing the Ambrosian series *De Virginibus*, *De Viduis*, *De Virginitate* and *Exhortatio Virginitatis*).¹⁵⁰

Ambrose attempted to clarify the biblical teaching on marriage in most detail in his treatises on virginity and chastity, *De Virginibus* (to Ambrose’s sister, Marcellina), *De Viduis* (on widowhood and remarriage), *De Virginitate* (in defence of *De Virginibus* and often confused with it) and *Exhortatio Virginitatis* (sermon on widowhood). Yet Ambrose’s attempted clarification resulted in incongruities in his doctrine and indeed his series of treatises on virginity perpetuated the ambiguous status of marriage rather than clarifying it. Ambrose’s essential and conflicting tenets were, firstly, that marriage was a necessary evil since the institution was a remedy for the post-lapsarian weakness of sexual desire; marriage was not, however, a sin.¹⁵¹ Secondly, marriage was a source of toil, trouble

in Bede’s *HE*; his *Ad Martyres* and *De Spectaculis* are quoted in the Anonymous Old English translation of Orosius’s *History Against the Pagans* (*Fontes*).

¹⁴⁷ Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin*, p. 85.

¹⁴⁸ *Fontes*.

¹⁴⁹ Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin*; Ogilvy, *Books Known to English*.

¹⁵⁰ *Handlist*, nos. 175.5, 596, 599, 881.

¹⁵¹ ‘Illa non peccat, si nubat: haec si non nubat, aeterna est. Ibi remedium infirmitatis, hic gloria castitatis. Illa non reprehenditur, ista laudatur’ (‘The one sins not if she marries, the other, if she marries not, it is for eternity. In the former is the remedy for weakness, in the latter the glory of chastity. The former is not reprov’d, the latter is praised’; *De Virginibus*, I:VI.24, col. 0195D). Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *De Virginibus* are taken from J. P. Migne’s edition, Ambrosius, ‘De Virginibus Ad Marcellinam Sororem’, in *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 16 (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1904) (henceforth *PL*); all translations are taken from Ambrose, ‘Concerning Virgins, To Marcellina, His Sister’, in *Some of the Principal Works of St. Ambrose: St. Ambrose: Select Works and Letters*, trans. by H. de Romestin, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 2, 10 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 363-87. All further references to *De Virginibus* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

and misery;¹⁵² however, it was not un-praiseworthy. Thirdly, the sexual act within marriage, and the offspring produced, caused despair to the wife and mother or husband and father; yet, they were the gifts of marriage and marriage's gifts to society. Although Ambrose saw no inherent contradiction in these divergent positions, doctrinally and practically his statements were difficult to resolve: it was difficult to make a practical distinction between Ambrose's stricture that 'non ergo copula nuptialis quasi culpa vitanda' ('the marriage bond is not then to be shunned as though it were sinful'; *De Viduis*, XIII.81, col. 0259D), and his alternative that marriage should be 'quasi necessitatis sarcina declinanda' ('rather declined as being a galling burden'; XIII.81, col. 0259D).¹⁵³ Ambrose's attitudes stemmed from his perception that marriage was inseparable from sexual intercourse: to Ambrose, marriage, through its necessary association with coitus, was potentially shameful and contemptible.¹⁵⁴

Like Ambrose, Jerome's (d. AD 420) treatises on virginity and marriage had the express purpose of clarifying the complicated and ill-defined doctrine of marriage that he had inherited. Specifically, his most famous work, *Adversus Jovinianum*, was written to refute the heretical work of Jovinian who, also wishing to clarify Church attitudes to marriage, argued that marriage was a God-given good which equalled virginity as a Christian ideal.¹⁵⁵ Although *Adversus Jovinianum* was warily received, even in Jerome's time, for its uncompromisingly anti-matrimonial attitude, the treatise was still widely read and disseminated.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² A typical sentiment about the misery of marriage is Ambrose's conclusion that 'Nabit et plorat' ('she marries and weeps'; *De Virginibus*, I:VI.25, col. 0196D).

¹⁵³ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations from *De Viduis* are taken from Migne's edition, Ambrosius, 'De Viduis', in *PL*, vol. 16; all translations are taken from Romestin's translation, 'Concerning Widows', in *Principal Works of St. Ambrose*, pp. 391-407. All further references to *De Viduis* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁵⁴ Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 359-62.

¹⁵⁵ Elizabeth A. Clark, "Adam's Only Companion": Augustine and the Early Christian Debate on Marriage', in *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World*, ed. by Robert R. Edwards and Stephen Spector (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 15-31 (pp. 18-19).

¹⁵⁶ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 377.

Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum* is found in three extant manuscripts of the late Anglo-Saxon period (s. xi/xii)¹⁵⁷ and was thus known to the Anglo-Saxons directly, at least in the late period.¹⁵⁸ The work was also known to Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin.¹⁵⁹ Jerome's Letter to Eustochium and Furia (including the *Eustochium de virginitate*) survive in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of s. xi.¹⁶⁰ Jerome was scathing of marriage in both his various *Epistolae* on virginity and his *Adversus Jovinianum*, in which he stated:

Si autem nubentibus etiam in carne tribulatio est, in qua sola videbantur habere delicias, quid erit reliquum propter quod nubant, cum et in spiritu, et in anima, et in ipsa carne tribulatio sit?

But if they who are married have tribulation even in the flesh, which is imagined to be the sole source of their pleasure, what else is there to marry for, when in the spirit, and in the mind, and in the flesh itself there is tribulation. (I.13, col. 0229D)¹⁶¹

Like Ambrose, Jerome criticised marriage as an institution which produced sorrow and misery and was a burden.¹⁶² This sorrow stemmed immediately from the constitutively sexual nature of marriage.¹⁶³ To Jerome, marriage was undoubtedly and primarily sexual and bodily; thus it was an institution hard to defend and almost impossible to recommend, except as less evil than extra-marital fornication.¹⁶⁴ Jerome, then, added

¹⁵⁷ *Handlist*, nos. 426, 544, 805.5.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Ogilvy who states that there appears to be no English manuscript of *Adversus Jovinianum*. Ogilvy justifies that 'the number of manuscripts of Jerome surviving from Anglo-Saxon England is surprising small' because 'probably the excellent twelfth-century editions of his works superseded the older texts and led to their destruction (*Books Known to English*, p. 174 and p. 182).

¹⁵⁹ Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin*.

¹⁶⁰ *Handlist*, no. 264.

¹⁶¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *Adversus Jovinianum* are taken from Migne's edition, Hieronymi Stridonensis, 'Adversus Jovinianum', in *PL*, vol. 23; all translations are taken from Jerome, 'Against Jovinianus', in *The Principal Works of St. Jerome: St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, trans. by W. H. Fremantle, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 2, 6 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1954), pp. 346-416. All further references to *Adversus Jovinianum* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁶² See 'Ad Pammachium', *Epistola XLVIII*.14 and 'Ad Ageruchiam', *Epistola CXXIII*.5. Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of Jerome's *Epistolae* are taken from Migne's edition, Hieronymi Stridonensis, 'Epistolae', in *PL*, vol. 22; all translations of his *Epistolae* are taken from Fremantle's translation, in *Principal Works of St. Jerome*, pp. 1-295. All further references to the *Epistolae* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁶³ For example, see 'Ad Eustochium', *Epistola XXII*.19, col. 0406.

¹⁶⁴ See 'Ad Furiam', *Epistola LIV*.18. Although John Oppel's sympathetic reading of Jerome's writings on marriage is attractive, it is difficult to reconcile with Jerome's works and seems a more suitable summary of

another dimension to the range of Church attitudes to marriage, not necessarily in the ideas which he adduced regarding marriage, but rather in his conclusion about the irredeemability of the institution.

From the biblical comments of Christ and Paul to the writings of Ambrose and Jerome, Church attitudes to marriage had never been clearly articulated, or, if they had, the ideas within the articulation had not received the absolute approval of and adoption by the Church at large. The pendulum swung between and within authors as to the nature of marriage (was it inherently sexual or could it exist spiritually without sexual taint?) as well as to its theological importance (was marriage intended by God before the Fall or was it God's concession to humankind's post-lapsarian sexual desire?). Augustine of Hippo (d. AD 430) joined this debate and, in his complex and careful analysis of marriage, attempted both to amalgamate and to refine the distinct ideas that characterised church attitudes to marriage. By doing so, Augustine both reiterated old ideas and introduced new ones, thus elucidating and complicating the doctrine of marriage.

For Augustine, marriage was not the contemptible institution conceived of by Jerome, and he envisioned marriage within a dual pre- and post-lapsarian construction. Augustine theorised that Adam and Eve, as sexual beings, would have participated in pre-lapsarian sexual intercourse, characterised by the lack of lust (concupiscence) and the presence of self-control, will, and choice (over erections, for example).¹⁶⁵ The implication of this doctrine for post-lapsarian sexual intercourse was that 'the sin did not reside in copulation

Tertullian than Jerome. Oppel states that what Jerome 'is in favor of, I am inclined to think, is love in marriage, which he has the wisdom to acknowledge is different from love outside it. Jerome, thus, interprets the Song of Songs as, of course, on one level, an allegory of chastity but, on another, as an allegory of love in marriage – monogamous marriage, in which the husband/wife relationship is subsumed under the brother/sister one, and one has, instead of the merger of two bodies, that of two minds' (John Oppel, 'Saint Jerome and the History of Sex', *Viator*, 24 [1993], 1-22 [p. 11]).

¹⁶⁵ Peter Brown, 'Late Antiquity – East and West: The New Marital Morality', in *A History of Private Life I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. by Paul Veyne, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 297-311 (p. 306).

itself [...] but in the lust that accompanied it'.¹⁶⁶ However, since 'ideal intercourse could not exist after the Fall, people had to do the best they could to approach the ideal. Marriage provided the structure for virtuous sex outside Paradise'.¹⁶⁷ That is, post-lapsarian sexual intercourse was always lustful and thus was, at least by association, tainted by sin; marriage worked to temper the post-lapsarian taint of concupiscence.¹⁶⁸ However, since post-lapsarian marriage involved necessarily lustful sexual intercourse, Augustine encountered difficulties in exonerating marriage absolutely, despite his conception of the pre-lapsarian lustless potential of marital sexual intercourse.

Augustine's preoccupation with married sexual intercourse betrayed his unease with the sexual side of marriage and his exegesis produced a conspicuous ambiguity in that it both raised the possibility of the sinless potential of marriage, but also undermined this possibility by associating marriage with post-lapsarian (that is, lustful) sexual intercourse. He lessened his anxiety, and the contradiction, by further separating post-lapsarian marriage from its problematic alliance with post-lapsarian coitus. Augustine denied 'that sexual consummation was integral to the definition of marriage. [Rather,] the essence of marriage was in the intention'.¹⁶⁹ He saw marriage as a companionate union which originated in a mutual practice of abstinence and spirituality, rather than in sexual relations.¹⁷⁰ Ideally, then, marriage would not include post-lapsarian sexual intercourse at

¹⁶⁶ John Bugge, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal*, Archives Internationales D'Histoire des Idées, Series Minor, 17 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 28-29. See also Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Salisbury, *Independent Virgins*, p. 46.

¹⁶⁸ See *De bono conjugali*, §5, §6, col. 0377. Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *De bono conjugali* are taken from Migne's edition, Augustinus Hipponensis, 'De bono conjugali', in *PL*, vol. 40; all translations are taken from Augustine, 'De bono conjugali', in *St Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, ed. by Philip Schaff, trans. by C. L. Cornish, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 1, 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956), pp. 399-413. All further references to *De bono conjugali* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁶⁹ Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine's Writing on Women* (London: Longman and Todd, 1995), p. 105.

¹⁷⁰ Power, *Veiled Desire*, p. 105. Salisbury agrees with this interpretation of Augustine's thought: 'Augustine believed that marriage was instituted by God to satisfy people's need for companionship. He saw the tie between man and wife as the "first natural tie of human society," and marriage provided an institution for "[...] the natural companionship between the two sexes." The natural and divinely ordained institution of

all in order that it might mimic the pre-lapsarian vision of the marital union. In other words, since pre-lapsarian intercourse was impossible, then chaste marriage most closely followed God's original plan for marriage.¹⁷¹ Thus, the original concept of a union of two people in love and friendship remained the ideal for post-lapsarian marriage.¹⁷²

Augustine's exegesis on marriage was detailed and meticulous; it remained, however, contradictory. Alongside his careful construction of marriage divorced from sexual intercourse, or at least in which sexual intercourse was an adjunct to the central purpose of the institution, Augustine also wrote:

Qui enim nostri temporis homines Christiani nuptiarum vinculo liberi valentes ab omni concubitu se continere, cum jam *tempus* esse perspicerent, sicut scriptum est, *non amplectendi, sed abstinendi ab amplexu* non potius eligerent vel virginalem vel vidualem continentiam conservare, quam tribulationem carnis, *sine qua conjugia esse non possunt* [...] nullo jam cogente humanae societatis officio sustinere?

What Christian men of our time being free from the marriage bond, having power to contain from all sexual intercourse, seeing it to be now 'a time,' as it is written, 'not of embracing, but of abstaining from embracing,' would not choose rather to keep virginal or widowed continence, that (now that there is no obligation from duty to human society) to endure the tribulation of the flesh, *without which marriage cannot be?* (*De bono conjugali*, §15, col. 0383; my emphasis)¹⁷³

This contradiction (that marriage was constitutively both sexual *and* non-sexual) stemmed, in part, from Augustine's need to defend the primacy of virginity over marriage.¹⁷⁴ It was usually in the context of his comparison of marriage with virginity that

marriage brought three specific benefits to the partners: offspring, fidelity and sacrament [...as] referring to the indissolubility of the bond' (*Independent Virgins*, p. 46).

¹⁷¹ Thus, 'conjugalibus enim concubitus generandi gratia, non habet culpam; concupiscentiae vero satandae, sed tamen cum conjugis, propter thori fidem, venialem habet culpam: adulterium vero sive fornicatio lethalem habet culpam. Ac per hoc melior est quidem ab omni concubitu continentia, quam vel ipse matrimonialis concubitus' ('intercourse of marriage for the sake of begetting hath not fault; but for the satisfying of lust, but yet with husband or wife, by reason of the faith of the bed, it hath venial fault: but adultery or fornication hath deadly fault, and, through this, continence from all intercourse is indeed better even than the intercourse of marriage itself'; *De bono conjugali*, §6, col. 0377).

¹⁷² Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 89. See also Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 403-04.

¹⁷³ See also Augustinus Hipponensis, *Confessionum*, in *PL*, vol. 32; 4.8.13; Power, *Veiled Desire*, p. 105.

¹⁷⁴ Augustine understood the necessity of this hierarchy as it had biblical foundations: 'Addidit tamen, Tribulationem autem carnis habebunt hujusmodi, ego autem vobis parco: hoc modo exhortans ad virginitatem continentiamque perpetuam, ut aliquantulum a nuptiis etiam deterreret, modeste sane, non

Augustine was unable to apply the distinction between spiritual marriage and bodily marriage, since ‘jure divino continentia connubio, et nuptiis pia virginitas anteponitur’ (‘by divine rights continence is preferred to wedded life, and pious virginity to marriage’; *De sancta virginitate*, §1, col. 0397).¹⁷⁵ In other words, if the division between virginity and marriage relied on the difference of one’s being non-sexual and the other’s being sexual, then Augustine’s assertion that marriage was by definition non-sexual could not be maintained.

Brooke identifies another contradiction in Augustine’s thought: Augustine

accepted in principle that it was consent not consummation which made a marriage [...]. Yet when all was said and done his voice was heard to say that the first aim of marriage was to have children – and so, that there was something incomplete about marriage unconsummated.¹⁷⁶

In other words, since one of the praiseworthy attributes of marriage lay in the creation of children, how could marriage be also non-sexual?¹⁷⁷ Yet Augustine *did* attempt to look ‘past the physicality of married intercourse’¹⁷⁸ and in so doing complicated, and indeed challenged, other of his ideas. Undoubtedly, Augustine stood in contrast to Ambrose and Jerome who both ‘shared an instinctive, largely unanalyzed, assumption about the origins of marriage and of sexuality. Marriage, intercourse and Paradise were as incompatible, in

tanquam a re mala et illicita, sed tanquam ab onerosa ac molesta. Aliud est enim admittere carnis turpitudinem, aliud habere carnis tribulationem’ (‘Yet he [Paul] added, “But such shall have tribulation of the flesh, but I spare you.” in this manner exhorting unto virginity, and continual continence, so as some little to alarm also from marriage, with all modesty, not as from a matter evil and unlawful, but as from one burdensome and troublesome. For it is one thing to incur dishonour of the flesh, and another to have tribulation of the flesh’; *De sancta virginitate*, §16, col. 0403). Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *De sancta virginitate* are taken from Migne’s edition, Augustinus Hipponensis, ‘De sancta virginitate’, in *PL*, vol. 40; all translations are taken from Cornish’s translation, Augustine, ‘De Virginitate’, in *Doctrinal and Moral Treatises*, pp. 417–438. All further references to *De sancta virginitate* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁷⁵ See also Peter Brown, ‘The Notion of Virginity in the Early Church’, in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff, World Spirituality: An Encyclopaedic History of the Religious Quest, 16 (London: Routledge, 1986), pp. 427–43 (pp. 427–29).

¹⁷⁶ Brooke, *Idea of Marriage*, p. 56.

¹⁷⁷ Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 401–02.

¹⁷⁸ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 402.

their minds, as Paradise and death'.¹⁷⁹ However, in attempting to reconcile this incompatibility and re-define marriage, Augustine created new inconsistencies and uncertainty in the search for a doctrine of marriage.¹⁸⁰

The Anglo-Saxon church's received position on marriage was primarily Augustinian: to the Anglo-Saxon church, marriage was considered to be 'indissoluble, monogamous, and directed towards procreation [...]',¹⁸¹ and

the missionary church's idea of marriage was a mysterious union in which two distinct corporeal entities inextricably merged and lost their distinctness of being to become a single entity, and as the process was irreversible, it followed that it ought not to be repeatable by either party outside the marriage.¹⁸²

Yet the Anglo-Saxon church similarly inherited Augustine of Hippo's (and indeed Ambrose's and Jerome's) anxiety about marital sexual intercourse. The *Libellus Responsionum* inscribes the marital and sexual concerns of the early Anglo-Saxon church.¹⁸³ As noted, four of Augustine of Canterbury's nine questions concern marriage and sexual relations,¹⁸⁴ and Gregory's most detailed and longest response is reserved for Augustine's eighth question on marital sexual relations and ritual purity associated with sexual intercourse.¹⁸⁵ Such evidence indicates that the regulation 'of "lawful marriage" was a paramount concern' to the church,¹⁸⁶ which regarded such regulation of marriage as a regulation of sexual relations. However, as has been demonstrated in this survey of customary Germanic perceptions of marriage and the inherited Christian perceptions,

¹⁷⁹ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 399.

¹⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that Augustine himself identifies the contradictions evident in patristic writings regarding marriage (and virginity). In *De sancta virginitate*, in his discussion of the rewards of chastity, Augustine admits the confusion concerning patristic exegesis of the rewards of chastity: the hundred-fold reward, he says, belongs to either the virgin, or the martyr, or the virgin-martyr, depending on the author; the sixty-fold reward may be for widows, or for those practising continence, or for virgins, or for married martyrs. The thirty-fold reward is always reserved for the married (*De sancta virginitate*, §46).

¹⁸¹ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 13. See also Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 247.

¹⁸² Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 37.

¹⁸³ See discussion above, pp. 17-18.

¹⁸⁴ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 20; Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, pp. 35-42.

¹⁸⁵ Bede, *HE*, Book I; XXII (pp. 78-103).

¹⁸⁶ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 38.

social relations in Anglo-Saxon England were different from the ones with which the missionaries were familiar [...]. It may be safely concluded that the Anglo-Saxons with whom the church came into contact also differed in not sharing its conception of marriage as an indissoluble and exclusive union by which two people became mystically one.¹⁸⁷

The question lastly remains, then, as to whether, and how, these two distinct strands had merged by the late Anglo-Saxon period, the era with which this thesis is immediately concerned.

Marriage in Late Anglo-Saxon England

In terms of the church, in the late tenth- and early eleventh-centuries, in Anglo-Saxon England, as elsewhere, an orthodox position on marriage was still at least a century away from being agreed upon, and

in the years between 600 and 900 the church failed to secure clear-cut control of matrimonial matters, but ecclesiastical authorities continued to elaborate their opinions about sexual ethics. In retrospect it is clear that Christian spokesmen were in the *process of formulating* a theology of sex and marriage.¹⁸⁸

Scholars generally understand the attempt to define an orthodox attitude to marriage (in terms of a concrete, unified theology) as beginning wholeheartedly in the late eleventh century and continuing well into the twelfth; it was then that the church sought 'a uniform, clear, enforceable definition of what lawful and valid marriage may comprise [... and] to define the nature of the act and its symbolism'.¹⁸⁹ Cartlidge identifies Ivo, Bishop of Chartres (d. AD 1116), at the beginning of this process since Ivo asserted a singular definition of marriage based on consent not consummation 'since even an unconsummated marriage fully symbolizes the relationship between Christ and the Church'.¹⁹⁰ Most scholars, however, identify the primary influence for this process towards

¹⁸⁷ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁸⁸ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 137; my emphasis.

¹⁸⁹ Brooke, *Idea of Marriage*, p. 56.

¹⁹⁰ Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 16.

marital orthodoxy as the release of the *Concordia discordantium canonum* (*Decretum*) of Gratian in AD 1140.¹⁹¹

In the late Anglo-Saxon period, then, an orthodox Christian position on marriage was lacking, as it was in the early period. To the Anglo-Saxon church, marriage was not considered a sacrament, a development that was proposed only in the twelfth century.¹⁹² Similarly, the marital institution remained in the late period, as in the early period, in the secular domain: the church did not gain strict authority over marriage during the Anglo-Saxon era, although, as we shall see throughout this thesis, it did attempt to increase its influence on the institution.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, Anglo-Saxon marriage in the later period had developed somewhat toward an amalgamation of Germanic and Christian traditions. Brief reference to a unique document may illustrate this development in the status and practices of marriage in late Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁹⁴

Be wifmannes beweddunge ('Concerning the betrothal of a woman') was 'a prescriptive text',¹⁹⁵ written c. AD 975-1030 (probably later than earlier and possibly contemporaneously with Cnut's laws),¹⁹⁶ 'describing how marriage agreements are to proceed'.¹⁹⁷ The first chapter indicates some fundamental changes to perceptions of

¹⁹¹ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 229-324; Margaret McGlynn and Richard J. Moll, 'Chaste Marriage in the Middle Ages: "It were to hire greet merite"', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern A. Bullough and James A. Brundage, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1696 (New York and London: Garland, 1996), pp. 103-22 (p. 108).

¹⁹² Goody, *Development of the Family and Marriage*, p. 46.

¹⁹³ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 23.

¹⁹⁴ This discussion will be continued in more detail in Chapter 1, in which I discuss the law-codes of Æthelræd and Cnut which pertain to marriage in the late period. See below, pp. 120-38.

¹⁹⁵ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁶ See *Gesetze*, pp. 442-45 and *EHD I*, p. 467.

¹⁹⁷ McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 20. Whitelock notes that the text is extant in the *Textus Roffensis*, in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 383, and in *Quadripartitus* (in Latin) (*EHD I*, p. 467). CCC, MS 383 is entitled, 'Hu man mæden weddian sceal; 7 hwylce forewarde þær aghon to beonne' ('How a man shall betroth a maiden; and what agreement there ought to be'). Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of *Be wifmannes beweddunge* are taken from *Gesetze*, pp. 442-44; all further references to *Be wifmannes beweddunge* throughout this thesis will be made after quotations in the text.

marriage, although whether or not its prescriptions were enacted in the reality of late Anglo-Saxon marital practices is impossible to determine:¹⁹⁸

1. Gif man mæden oððe wif weddian wille, ⁊ hit swa hire ⁊ freondan gelicige, ðonne is riht, ðæt se brydguma æfter Godes rihte ⁊ æfter woroldgerysnum ærest behate ⁊ on wedde sylle ðam, ðe hire forsprecan synd, þæt he on ða wisan hire geornige, ðet he hy æfter Godes rihte healdan wille, swa wær his wif seal; ⁊ aborgian his frind ðæt.

1. If a man intends to betroth a maiden or a widow, and it so pleases her, and her relatives, then it is right that the bridegroom, following God's law and following secular customs should first promise and give with a pledge to those who are her speakers, that he desires her in such a way that he, following God's law, will maintain her as a husband should his wife; and his relatives are to be surety for that.¹⁹⁹

The first point to note is that issues of personal consent to, and kin authority over, marriage had merged. This document suggests that both the bride, and her kin, should consent to the marriage. In other words, the Germanic customary familial role remained current (they should consent to the marriage, and it is to them that the bridegroom pledged his intention),²⁰⁰ but it is supplemented by the church's requirement of personal consent.²⁰¹ By the eleventh century, then, 'marriage had developed from a contract between two men (guardian and suitor) to one in which the woman also had her say'.²⁰² Equally striking is the frank acknowledgement in *Be wifmannes beweddunge* that late Anglo-Saxon marriage practices were informed both by God's law and by secular customs: it is within the context of this acknowledgement that familial (that is, secular custom) and bridal (that is, God's law) approval for a marriage is ideally required.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ As Klinck points out, 'it is evidently not a statement of universally binding law, but an account of a procedure which the author considers desirable' ('Women and the Law', p. 113).

¹⁹⁹ On the translation of *freond* as 'relative', see *DOE*, s. v, 'freond', 3.b: 'in laws, referring to relatives in the context of legal obligations, rights, etc'.

²⁰⁰ This is also evident in chapters 6 and 7 which direct that the bride's kin should make the marriage contract, and stand as surety for her if she moves to another district.

²⁰¹ See D. L. D'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 124-25; Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, pp. 254-55.

²⁰² Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 19.

²⁰³ The role of kin in marriage agreements is similarly emphasised in the two extant marriage agreements: 'A Worcester Marriage Agreement' and 'A Kentish Marriage Agreement'. The Worcester agreement is made between Wulfric and Archbishop Wulfstan, regarding Wulfstan's sister; the Kentish agreement is made between Godwine and Brihtric, regarding his daughter. Printed as LXXVI (Sawyer, 1459) and LXXVII (Sawyer, 1461) respectively, in *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. by A. J. Robertson (Cambridge:

Chapters 2-5 concern contractual payments and inheritance, and indicate that the customary association of marriage with property transfer was still relevant in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Chapter 2 specifies that a payment should be made to those who reared the bride, that is, a 'rearing fee'.²⁰⁴ This 'fee' appears to be an innovation on the 'brideprice', which allowed the acquisitive outcome of the 'bride purchase' marriage to remain as in the early period, but which downplayed the aspect of 'bride purchase'.²⁰⁵ Such an interpretation of this innovation is supported by chapter 3, which prescribes, 'cýþe se brydguma, hwæs he hire geunge, wið þam ðet heo his willan geceose' ('let the bridegroom announce what he will grant to her in return for her acceptance of his suit'). That is, the indirect (bridal) dowry,²⁰⁶ possibly the morning gift or possibly in addition to it, was to be made explicit by the bridegroom, and its requirement as part of the marriage contract was also made explicit in the document. Chapters 3-5 articulate the requirement for the bride's inheritance from her husband to be made similarly explicit (she should be entitled to half of his goods if they are childless, and to all of his goods should they have a child).²⁰⁷ Meyer's observation that 'many [noble] women controlled sizeable estates [...]'. Most of them obtained lands through marriage endowment and the customary laws of the descent of real property to widows²⁰⁸ is perhaps the practical realisation of the

Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 148-51; see also *The Electronic Sawyer: An Online Version of the Revised Edition of Sawyer's Anglo-Saxon Charters, Section One [S 1-1602]*, ed. by S. E. Kelly and S. M. Miller, rev. edn (available at: <<http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/eSawyer.99/eSawyer2.html>> [accessed October 2005]). Further, Fell argues that the Kentish agreement indicates the currency of the 'acceptance of the suit by the woman herself, not by her kinsmen on her behalf' (*Women in England*, p. 58).

²⁰⁴ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 254.

²⁰⁵ See Stephanie Hollis, "'The Protection of God and the King': Wulfstan's Legislation on Widows", in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. by Matthew Townend, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 443-60 (p. 456).

²⁰⁶ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 254.

²⁰⁷ These facets of *Be wifmannes beweddunge* are also echoed in the Worcester and Kentish marriage agreements. Both include substantial grants of land to the bride. The Kentish agreement makes note of inheritance issues; the Worcester agreement alludes to her right to bequeath her property. The Kentish agreement parallels *Be wifmannes beweddunge* by stating that a gift to the bride was given to persuade her to accept his suit.

²⁰⁸ Marc A. Meyer, 'Women's Estates in Later Anglo-Saxon England: The Politics of Possession', *Haskins Society Journal*, 3 (1991), 111-29 (p. 118).

prescriptions found in *Be wifmannes beweddunge*, at least for the aristocracy. Interestingly, however, the author adds the caveat that the bride's inheritance (dower) was assured 'bute heo eft wær ceose' ('unless she chooses a husband again'; chapter 4), perhaps indicating the church's attempted intervention in Germanic customs of divorce and remarriage.

Coleman observes that 'by the end of the tenth century, priests were blessing marriage [...]. A wedding was still legally binding without such a blessing, but the Church encouraged its performance for first marriages and forbade it for subsequent unions'.²⁰⁹ Chapter 8 thus prescribes that 'æt þam giftan sceal mæssepreost beon mid rihte, se sceal mid Godes bletsunge heora gesomnunge gederian an ealre gesundfulnesse' ('at the marriage, there should be by rights a mass-priest who shall, with God's blessing, join their union in all prosperity'). In other words, this clause suggests the church's attempted appropriation of control over marriage and marriage ceremonies by asserting that a priest is desirable and recommended; the qualification, 'by rights', however, implies that the presence of a priest was neither required nor a given. A similar suggestion is noticeable in chapter 9, which requires that the parties take note of marriage impediments: 'wel is eac to warnianne, ðæt man wite, ðæt hy ðurh mægsibbe to gelænge ne beon, ðe læs ðe man eft twæme, ðæt man ær awoh tosomne gedydan' ('it is also well to take heed that one knows that they are not too closely related in kinship, lest one afterwards separates into two [those] whom one previously wrongfully brought together'). Although it is ambiguous to whom this 'one' who might divide the couple refers, it presumably would have been an agent of the church. Thus, this sentence is a threat that the church will dissolve an improperly conducted marriage. Finally, the construction of 'two into one' recalls the Christian rhetoric of the indissolubility of the marital union: *Be wifmannes beweddunge* is a document which signifies the embedding of Germanic customs into the rhetoric and principles of Christian marriage.

²⁰⁹ Coleman, 'Betrothal and Marriage', pp. 90-91.

In this thesis, I will examine the moralised views on marriage of several Anglo-Saxon voices as extant in texts written in Old English in the period between c. AD 950 and c. AD 1020, in order to ‘show how profoundly early medieval literature is animated by an awareness of the tensions between the social and emotional dimensions of marriage; and how seriously it examines marriage as a complex and important mechanism for expressing links between individuals’.²¹⁰ Whilst differences between these voices and texts exist, and often deep tensions can be observed, points of connection are also evident, especially in ‘the richness and subtlety of all of their treatments of marriage’.²¹¹ Since ‘governing rarely involves exclusively instrumental or external action directed at the governance of the conduct of others’,²¹² and ‘moral regulation as a form of regulation is not itself static; it changes its forms, its language’,²¹³ it is important to survey a range of texts which bear witness to a diversity of attitudes and moralising practices. From the proscriptions in legislative and penitential texts, to the nuanced prescriptions in riddles and hagiographies, marriage was at once both an immediate moral concern for Anglo-Saxon authors, and a point of divergence and friction. As Clare Lees observes, it is clear that regulatory literature, in its concern with ‘issues of the body, marriage, [and] sexuality’, can manifest ‘obedience to the law’, but can be simultaneously structured ‘according to the logic [...] of reward and offering (gift or sacrifice)’.²¹⁴ Such diversity is characteristic of the reaction to the ‘live issue’²¹⁵ of marriage in the late Anglo-Saxon period: Anglo-Saxon ‘texts about marriage vary greatly according to the situations for which they were written. The function of each text and the purpose of its speaker or writer affect the perspective taken

²¹⁰ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 1.

²¹¹ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 3.

²¹² Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 6.

²¹³ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 17.

²¹⁴ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 139.

²¹⁵ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 2. See also Clare A. Lees, who makes a similar point for sexual representation (‘Engendering Religious Desire: Sex, Knowledge, and Christian Identity in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 27 [1997], 17-45 [p. 18]).

on marriage as a social, religious, and sexual phenomenon'.²¹⁶ This thesis is consequently not concerned with synthesising late Anglo-Saxon attitudes to marriage – marriage, like moral regulation, was evolving rather than static.

In Chapter 1, I will consider the cooperative effort of the church (through its representative, Wulfstan of Worcester and York, d. AD 1023) and king (Æthelræd and Cnut) to regulate morality in late Anglo-Saxon England, with emphasis on the Benedictine Reform context in which such cooperation occurred. The principle of reform for both church and king was the translation of Christian morality into socio-cultural ideal; by such idealisation, morality was made vocational for Anglo-Saxons. Conversely, however, those social values which coincided with Christian morality were given an added motivational source by their inclusion in Christian discourse. The focus of this chapter is on one manuscript which demonstrates these tendencies: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201. MS 201, closely associated with Wulfstan, provides a case-study in the collusion of church and king. Of particular interest are the points of connection in the legal texts collected therein with the penitential texts also in the manuscript. With particular attention paid to legislation and penitential regulation pertaining to the marital relationship, these texts provide evidence for the moralisation of legislation as well as for the development of legislating morality. In these texts, king and church are as one inseparable and assimilated entity regulating the morality of their collective people. MS 201 is also a unique witness to the Old English translation of the romance of *Apollonius of Tyre*; this romance, the earliest example of the genre in English and the only Anglo-Saxon example of it, will be analysed for the marital morality it contains in the context of the whole manuscript.

Chapter 2 considers the vernacular riddles in the *Exeter Book* as discourses of moral regulation. By considering the moralised context of the *Exeter Book* as a manuscript, this

²¹⁶ Rüdiger Schnell, 'The Discourse on Marriage in the Middle Ages', trans. by Andrew Shields, *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 771-86 (p. 771).

chapter explores the possibility that the riddles were projects of moral regulation, as well as addressing the marital moralisation which they recorded. Like *Apollonius of Tyre*, the riddles are literary texts. As such, they provide an important counterweight to the historical and theological texts with which the other chapters are primarily concerned. As Todorov reminds us, literature teaches us about the ‘human condition’, and ‘the truth of literary texts is not narrowly referential; it is intersubjective’.²¹⁷ It is thus necessary to consider literary moralisation and, more specifically, marital moral regulation in literature, both to analyse what is taught about the ‘human condition’ and to provide a different context, or point of reference, for the other texts studied.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine Ælfric’s vernacular saints’ lives. In Chapter 3, Ælfric’s *Life of St Agnes* is analysed as anomalous in an Anglo-Saxon context in its concentration on the *sponsa Christi* (as distinct from the *ecclesia sponsa Christi*) motif. I will argue that Agnes’s *Life* establishes Ælfric’s ideal moral marriage and prescribes a specifically marital morality. Chapter 4, then, considers Ælfric’s application of the ideal that he had constructed in the *Life of St Agnes*. Ælfric’s inclusion of three married saints’ lives in his *Lives of Saints* (the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, the *Life of St Cecilia*, and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*) is read as pro-matrimonial polemic. In Ælfric’s moralised treatment of marriage in his *Lives*, it becomes obvious that he engaged with marriage ‘precisely because [... he] felt that the relationship between marriage and the married could be a dramatic, exciting and even tragic one, and because its realities often clashed with [... his] ideals’.²¹⁸ Importantly, hagiography, as an ‘institutional, ecclesiastical’ genre contributes to the body of evidence

for the preaching mission of the later Anglo-Saxon church and thus for how it was both constructed and received. [It is...] evidence for a specific cultural process in which the traditional structures of the early medieval church – its institutional knowledge, its genres, its beliefs – combine to produce a new Anglo-Saxon formation: preaching in English [... which was] a powerful rhetorical, social and epistemological process.’²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. xi.

²¹⁸ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 1

²¹⁹ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, pp. vvii-viii.

Hagiography, then, constitutes another, separate, moralising practice;²²⁰ in Ælfric's hands, it is a practice which seeks to govern marital conduct, and it is significant that, of all of the Anglo-Saxon authors who wrote in the vernacular, Ælfric engaged the most with marriage and marriage symbolism.²²¹ Furthermore, hagiography is classifiable neither as literary nor as historical: 'precisely because it is a traditional and social (that is, socializing) genre, the study of vernacular religious prose must be situated at the juncture between the disciplines of literature and history – both social and ecclesiastical'.²²² In this sense, hagiography both complements and provides a bridge between the texts examined in Chapters 1 and 2.

The texts analysed in this thesis include penitentials and legislation, the Old English translation of the romance of *Apollonius of Tyre*, the riddles of the *Exeter Book*, and Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*. Despite the diversity of genre, and thus of moralising practices, these texts are all 'products of religious institutions', although 'given the nature of the evidence available, the works [...] are perhaps as broadly representative of English literary culture in this period as is possible'.²²³ Nevertheless, despite their immediate socio-religious contexts, these texts represent *individuals'* interpretations of their received social and religious consciousness and morality. Hunt urges that 'it is necessary to reject the Durkheimian focus on "social control" by insisting that it is never "society" that acts, but always and only people who act';²²⁴ in the Anglo-Saxon context of this thesis, the Durkheimian focus on 'social control' and 'state', rather than being categorically rejected, should be supplemented by the appreciation that such 'state'-instituted 'social control' is propounded and regulated by individual agents of the 'state'. This thesis is thus founded upon the caveat that the texts which it examines are representative not necessarily of the unified perspective of Anglo-Saxon society but that of individual Anglo-Saxons.

²²⁰ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 6.

²²¹ D'Avray, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 34.

²²² Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 7

²²³ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 3.

²²⁴ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 19.

Todorov eloquently argues that ‘the internal plurality of each being is the correlative of the plurality of people who surround him, the multiplicity of roles that each one of them assumes’.²²⁵ Whilst it is possible to isolate the predominance in Anglo-Saxon society of Todorov’s ‘recognition of conformity’, the multiplicity of normalised conduct, values, or culture to which an individual is encouraged to conform is limited only by the ‘plurality of people who surround him’.²²⁶ That is, each text (or set of texts) examined in this thesis moralises a different vision of marriage: some differences (for instance those between the riddles and Ælfric’s hagiography) are vast and fundamental; others are subtle or tonal. Genre and context (variously defined) are important factors in accounting for such differentiation; just as important, however, is Hunt’s reminder that ‘always and only *people* [...] act’.²²⁷ Wulfstan, the anonymous translator of *Apollonius*, the *Exeter Book* riddler, and Ælfric, each contribute to the plurality of marital experience in Anglo-Saxon England, and are in turn affected by the plurality of experience and knowledge which they witness and to which they are exposed. Their views on marriage need not necessarily combine. Points of independent distinction, as well as cultural connection, point to the multiplicity of the Todorovian, and, indeed, Anglo-Saxon, society.

²²⁵ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 122.

²²⁶ Todorov, *Life in Common*, p. 122.

²²⁷ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 19.

Chapter I

Legislating Morality, Moralising Legislation: Marriage in its Manuscript Context

I.I Cooperative Governance: Power Relations during the Benedictine Reform

The tenth-century monastic, or Benedictine, reform in England ‘has rightly been regarded as one of the most significant episodes in Anglo-Saxon history’.¹ Led primarily by Dunstan of Canterbury (d. AD 988), Æthelwold of Winchester (d. AD 984), and Oswald of York and Worcester (d. AD 992), during the reign of King Edgar (AD 959–75),² the English reform transformed ‘religious life, regenerated artistic and intellectual activities and forged a new relationship between church and king’.³ In this last pursuit, the reform altered not only *religious* life in late Anglo-Saxon England, but also the total social landscape: the cooperative governance of reformers and kings which resulted from this ‘new relationship between church and king’ had profound consequences for the social

¹ Catherine Cubitt, ‘The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 6 (1997), 77–94 (p. 77). See also Pauline A. Stafford, ‘Church and Society in the Age of Ælfric’, in *The Old English Homily & Its Backgrounds*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard F. Huppé (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), pp. 11–42 (p. 11). The most comprehensive overview of the reform, and its participants, remains David Knowles’s *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 940–1216*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 31–82. For more specific criticism on the reform see below, p. 50, n. 8 and n. 9.

² Stafford, ‘Church and Society’, p. 13.

³ Cubitt, ‘Benedictine Reform’, p. 77.

fabric of late Anglo-Saxon England,⁴ and the relationship between these two agencies is one of paramount importance in any examination of moralisation in the period.

Hunt argues that, frequently, ‘various combinations of regulatory agents act in concert’⁵ to form and promulgate moral regulation projects. An especially conspicuous alliance in moralisation projects in late Anglo-Saxon society was that of church and king, or more generally, religious and secular powers. That the church (represented by the reformers, who were ‘the self-styled spiritual leaders of later Anglo-Saxon England’⁶) and king (or, as it has been termed, ‘the ruling dynasty’⁷) functioned in cooperation during the reform is not an original observation: it is one of the most conspicuous aspects of the English reform and has thus occasioned frequent comment by critics.⁸ Indeed, fervent royal and aristocratic support for monastic and church reform is often cited as a fundamental reason for the reform’s success.⁹ During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, then, it is

⁴ Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 186; Gunhild Zimmerman, *The Four Old English Poetic Manuscripts: Texts, Contexts, and Historical Background*, Anglistische Forschungen, 230 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1995), pp. 10–11.

⁵ Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*, Cambridge Studies in Law and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 5.

⁶ David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 181.

⁷ Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 125.

⁸ For some examples, see: Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 57; Eric John, ‘The King and the Monks in the Tenth-Century Reformation’, in *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies*, ed. by Eric John (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), pp. 154–81 (pp. 166–79) (first publ. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 42 [1959], 61–87); Patrick Wormald, ‘Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast’, in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. by Barbara Yorke (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988), pp. 13–42 (pp. 32–42); Barbara Yorke, ‘Æthelwold and the Politics of the Tenth Century’, in *Bishop Æthelwold*, ed. by Yorke, pp. 65–88; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 167, p. 173; Nicholas Brooks, ‘The Career of St Dunstan’, in *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult*, ed. by Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks and Tim Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 1–23; Robert Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination, 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 192–214; Donald Bullough, ‘St Oswald: Monk, Bishop and Archbishop’, in *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. by Nicholas Brooks and Catherine Cubitt (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 1–22; Cubitt, ‘Benedictine Reform’, p. 80, p. 83; Mary Clayton, ‘Ælfric and Æthelred’, in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King’s College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 65–88 (p. 66).

⁹ See for example, D. J. V. Fisher, ‘The Anti-Monastic Reaction in the Reign of Edward the Martyr’, *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1952), 254–70 (p. 261); Marc A. Meyer, ‘Women and the Tenth Century

apparent that ecclesiastics, even (or perhaps especially) those in high office, were often deeply concerned with, and implicated in, contemporary politics, and that their careers were often dependent upon, or intimately connected with, lay kinsmen or aristocratic or royal supporters.¹⁰ That is, there existed the mutual interest of ecclesiasts in secular affairs and of laymen in ecclesiastical affairs. This is not to say, of course, that such mutual interest had not been apparent prior to the reform: somewhat ironically, the reform was a reaction, in part, to secular interference in monastic affairs.¹¹ Nevertheless, the reform marks the transition from antagonistic relations, to (at least theoretically) cooperative and collaborative relations between religious and secular domains.

The cooperation of church and king in monastic (and, indeed, social) reform, is evidenced repeatedly in the careers of the leading reformists (Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald),¹² and in the pattern of the reform itself. Whilst Dunstan's installation at the sacerdotal seat at Glastonbury by King Eadmund (AD 939-46), and his revival of monasticism there, signals the embryonic stages of reform,¹³ as Eric John argues, 'one can very nearly give the

English Monastic Reform', *Revue Bénédictine*, 87 (1977), 34-61 (p. 61); Eric John, 'The World of Abbot Ælfric', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 300-16 (p. 303); Brooks, 'Career of Dunstan', pp. 22-23; Wormald, 'Æthelwold and his Counterparts', pp. 36-37; Janet M. Pope, 'Monks and Nobles in the Anglo-Saxon Reform', *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1994*, 17 (1995), 165-80 (p. 175) (see also Janet M. Pope, 'Aristocratic Patronage of the English Monastic Reform, 946-1016' [unpublished doctoral dissertation, the University of California at Santa Barbara, 1994]).

¹⁰ Yorke, 'Æthelwold and Politics', pp. 65-66. See also Meyer, 'Women and Reform', pp. 34-61, in which he argues that wealthy widows were influential in the support of the reform; Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, pp. 72-83, pp. 126-27. On the role of widows in Dunstan's career, see Brooks, 'Career of Dunstan', p. 23.

¹¹ Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 32-33.

¹² For an overview of these leaders' careers see (respectively) Brooks, 'Career of Dunstan'; Bullough, 'St Oswald'; Yorke, 'Æthelwold and Politics'. See also Cubitt, 'Benedictine Reform', pp. 83-85.

¹³ Brooks, 'Career of Dunstan', pp. 11-13; Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 31, p. 38. David Dumville has argued that the reform had its roots in King Alfred's educational and ecclesiastical programme. Whilst this argument has some merit, the monastic reform seems to have begun in earnest only during Edgar's reign and with his support and backing (*Wessex and England From Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Revival*, ed. by David N. Dumville, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon History* [Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992], pp. 185-205. See also, *Wulfstan's Canons of Edgar*, ed. by Roger Fowler, EETS 266 [London: Oxford University Press, 1972], p. xlviii). Also worth noting is Patrick Wormald's reminder that the early 'self-styled "Church of the English" laid ideological foundations for what would come later. [...] Because councils of the church in the later eighth and early ninth centuries were usually

Benedictine revival a precise date and place of origin: Easter, 964, and a *royal* synod, probably held at Winchester'.¹⁴ It was after this date (and certainly after 970)¹⁵ that wider monastic reforms were carried out more systematically, under King Edgar's *royal* direction and with *royal* support, beginning with the forcible expulsion in 964 of the clerics of the Old and New Minsters (Winchester), and their replacement by monks from Abingdon.¹⁶ Aristocratic support for reform was as patent and as essential as royal support: for example, Wulfstan of Dalham, a 'powerful and influential thegn', and Edgar's delegate, ensured the 'success and permanence' of the eviction of the clerics from Winchester.¹⁷

It is not my purpose here to rehearse the many, and lengthy, arguments regarding the development, purpose, and significance of the reform itself, but rather to reiterate the frequently made observation that the reform occurred 'with the support of King Edgar',¹⁸ and that the role, not only of Edgar and his successors, but also of the landed and wealthy

attended by the king and magnates of the dominant Mercian kingdom, they may have furthered [or suggested] notions of some common destiny between secular and ecclesiastical establishments' ('Anglo-Saxon Society and its Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; repr. 1996], pp. 1-22 [p. 8]). See also Nicholas Banton, 'Monastic Reform and the Unification of Tenth-Century England', in *Religion and National Identity*, ed. by Stuart Mills, Studies in Church History, 18 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), pp. 71-85 (p. 72).

¹⁴ John, 'The King and the Monks', p. 163; my emphasis. See the text commonly entitled 'Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries' (London, British Library, MS Cotton Faustina A. x, ff. 148^r-51^v, s. xii^l), which is considered to be Æthelwold's Preface to his Old English prose translation of the *Regula S. Benedicti*, printed in *Councils & Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, I: A.D. 871-1204, Part I: 871-1066*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, M. Brett and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 142-54. See also Eric John, 'St. Oswald and the Tenth Century Reformation', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 9 (1958), 159-71 (p. 168); Mechthild Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the Benedictine Reform*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 3, pp. 121-24, pp. 230-33.

¹⁵ Banton states that 'the year 970 was a turning point in the history of monastic reform in Edgar's reign' because thereafter the number of abbots witnessing royal charters doubled, indicating their attendance at the king's court. Moreover, all the new abbots at court at this time 'came from newly reformed houses' ('Monastic Reform', pp. 74-75). 970 was also probably the year during which a council, also held at Winchester, 'agreed that all the English monasteries would adhere to the *Regularis Concordia Anglica nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque*' (Barbara Yorke, 'Introduction', in *Bishop Æthelwold*, ed. by Yorke, pp. 1-12 [p. 4]). See also Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 42.

¹⁶ Yorke, 'Introduction', p. 3; Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 41.

¹⁷ Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, p. 236 and p. 235. See also Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 41. On aristocratic support for the reform, see Pope, 'Monks and Nobles', pp. 165-80.

¹⁸ Yorke, 'Introduction', p. 3.

aristocracy, was fundamental and integral to the reform movement.¹⁹ Equally as evident was the overt political awareness of the reformers themselves, and their participation in supporting particular royal and aristocratic interests is notable.²⁰ Yorke remarks that 'Æthelwold must have been a man of the world as well as of the cloister',²¹ and this comment may also be made for other leading reformers:²² the reform, then, marked the amalgamation of church and secular power.²³

The questions arise as to *why* and *how* church and secular powers established cooperative governance during the reform. The motivation of the reformers derived from their need for wealth, land and protection, and for the increase in power which royal patronage afforded. In the first place, monasteries 'could only be revived with the aid of large sums of money'²⁴ and, preferably, land.²⁵ The success of the reform 'depended on the acquisition of estates with their accompanying rights of jurisdiction and immunity, which were only obtainable from the landed aristocracy with the cognizance of the king'²⁶ or from the king directly. For example, the 'unequalled landed wealth of the monastery of Glastonbury in late Anglo-Saxon England' was amassed because Dunstan inspired 'a massive transfer of landed resources from the secular aristocracy to a religious aristocracy',²⁷ and it is evident that Dunstan's, Æthelwold's and Oswald's successes as reformers derived in part from the ecclesiastical endowments which they obtained from their secular advocates.²⁸

¹⁹ Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 190.

²⁰ For example, as evidenced in the *Regularis Concordia* and Æthelwold's *Benedictional*, or in Edgar's second coronation at Bath (AD 973). See Yorke, 'Introduction', p. 10; Robert Deshman, 'Benedictus monarcha et monachus: early medieval ruler theology and the Anglo-Saxon Reform', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 22 (1988), 204-40 (pp. 205-06); Stafford, 'Church and Society', pp. 20-21; Cubitt, 'Benedictine Reform', p. 82; Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, pp. 238-41.

²¹ Yorke, 'Æthelwold and Politics', p. 65.

²² As Bullough does for Oswald ('St Oswald', p. 22).

²³ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 7.

²⁴ Yorke, 'Æthelwold and Politics', p. 65.

²⁵ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 17.

²⁶ Meyer, 'Women and Reform', p. 37.

²⁷ Brooks, 'Career of Dunstan', p. 23.

²⁸ As Stafford points out, there is an absence of reformed houses in the diocese of York (despite 'the successive rule as archbishop of York of Oswald and Wulfstan') because in the north the church seems not to have had enough wealth to support the revival, 'nor were there any number of lay patrons prepared to

Wealth and land imparted power to reformed houses and their leaders, and such power facilitated governance and social control.²⁹ If we accept that one purpose of the monastic reform was *social*,³⁰ whereby reformers constructed ‘an ideology of an ordered theocratic society [... and were] interested in developing [...] a highly organized Christian society in which the religious fuses with the secular’,³¹ then possession and control of property provided ecclesiasts with the necessary power to implement their ideology. One method by which reformers organised society was the establishment of loyalty and tenurial networks between reformed houses and the nobility, with the bishop (or abbot) holding some sovereignty over the network. For example, Oswald’s many grants and leases of land, which were possible only because of the (donated) landed wealth of Worcester, resulted in ‘the creation of a network, an intermeshing, of high-status individuals [...], with its central knot in Worcester and the *domus* of the bishop’;³² such leases ‘were among the means by which he [Oswald] secured for the church of Worcester the possibility of an *effective exercise* of its spiritual’, and indeed social, ‘responsibilities’.³³ In other words, wealth and power, both consequences of royal and aristocratic support, extended the church’s purchase over secular life and were a ‘means of integrating the lives of the laity into the machinery of the church’.³⁴ Like the related Continental reforms before them,

endow monasteries. As a result the monastic movement did not spread north until after the Norman Conquest’ (‘Church and Society’, p. 14). Such an observation highlights the necessity for aristocratic as well as royal support for the reform.

²⁹ Stephen D. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The ‘Laudatio Parentum’ in Western France, 1050-1150* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 30. Although White is discussing Continental reforms, the English reform, at least in this respect, was very similar.

³⁰ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 164.

³¹ Hugh Magennis, ‘St Mary of Egypt and Ælfric: Unlikely Bedfellows in Cotton Julius E.vii?’, in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. by Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), pp. 99-112 (p. 107).

³² Bullough, ‘St Oswald’, p. 12.

³³ Bullough, ‘St Oswald’, p. 13; my emphasis. See also White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts*, pp. 30-31. On Oswald’s leases and administration see Vanessa King, ‘St Oswald’s Tenants’, in *St Oswald*, ed. by Brooks and Cubitt, pp. 100-16; Patrick Wormald, ‘Oswaldslow: An Immunity?’, in *St Oswald*, ed. by Brooks and Cubitt, pp. 117-28; Steven Bassett, ‘The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century’, in *St Oswald*, ed. by Brooks and Cubitt, pp. 147-73.

³⁴ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 188.

then, the English reform gained for the church ‘power and influence, claiming the right to order the lives, not merely of those who had chosen to give it their allegiance, but of whole populations’;³⁵ reform represented ‘an increasing bid for ecclesiastical control of both the laity and monastic’ women and men.³⁶

Royal patronage moreover ensured protection for the reform. The necessity of royal protection is perhaps most eloquently illustrated after Æthelwold’s death in 984, when King Æthelræd II (AD 978–1016) revoked royal support for the reform, and attempted to reclaim monastic lands which had been granted under Edgar. This move prompted wider social discord and attempts by secular aristocrats to regain monastic lands.³⁷ Edgar’s patronage, then, appears in retrospect to have provided not only wealth and power, but also the protection by which both could be maintained by reformers: without secular protection, monastic lands were vulnerable to those hostile to reform and to the extension of church wealth and power.

The reform was mutually beneficial for the church and the king, although the motivation for Edgar’s (and his successors’) support for reform, as well as that of his aristocracy, is perhaps less tangible than the church’s rationale. For the king, the reform augmented his power in two ways.³⁸ Firstly, it forged ‘an alliance with the wealth and influence of the church’, and guaranteed the loyalty of powerful and aristocratic bishops and abbots.³⁹ Royal appointments of bishops were ‘used to reward friends and followers, to manipulate,

³⁵ Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992; repr. 1998), p. 11.

³⁶ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 11.

³⁷ See Clayton, ‘Ælfric and Æthelred’, pp. 67–68, p. 74; John, ‘World of Ælfric’, pp. 302–03. The so-called ‘anti-monastic reaction’ that occurred on Edgar’s death in AD 975, whatever its motivation, is another example of the reform’s need for royal support and protection (see Fisher, ‘Anti-Monastic Reaction’, esp. pp. 265–70; Stafford, ‘Church and Society’, p. 17).

³⁸ Stafford, ‘Church and Society’, p. 17.

³⁹ Stafford, ‘Church and Society’, pp. 19–20. The king in fact nominated the bishops, who were often drawn from monastic communities, and, according to the *Regularis Concordia*, abbatial elections were ‘subject to the royal prerogative’ (Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 45; see also Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000–1066: A History of the later Anglo-Saxon Church*, 2nd edn [London and New York: Longman, 1963; repr. 1979], pp. 109–110).

or succumb to factions [..., and] to advance men we judge as having the interests of the church at heart'.⁴⁰ Secondly, reformers promoted (presumably, or at least partially, as justification for their involvement with and in secular affairs, and *vice versa*)⁴¹ a particular 'ideology of kingship which has been termed a theocracy or a "pastoral kingship"'.⁴² As Clayton, and others, has argued, 'Edgar was regarded as a type of Christ and of the abbot, and the reformed monasteries were centres of "royalist propaganda", where prayers for the royal family featured prominently in the liturgy'.⁴³ Deshman's excellent analysis of the regal imagery in Æthelwold's *Benedictional* (London, British Library, MS Additional 49598) is especially compelling and supports the contention that since 'the reform was very much a court movement that depended heavily on the goodwill and authority of the monarchy',⁴⁴ Æthelwold's emphasis on a Christological image of regality in his *Benedictional* betrays his political concerns and aspirations. As Deshman argues, the imagery justifies secular intervention and support in church reform

in terms of a divinely ordained transcendental order that governed all human institutions and activities [... and] can be interpreted as the visual statement of the celestially sanctioned concept of rulership that Æthelwold believed to be the theological rationale for the partnership of the court and the Church during the reform.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), p. 199.

⁴¹ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 193.

⁴² Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', p. 66.

⁴³ Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', p. 67. See also John, 'The King and the Monks'; Deshman, 'Benedictus monarcha et monachus'; Deshman, *Benedictional*, pp. 192-214; John, 'World of Ælfric', pp. 309-12; Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 27.

⁴⁴ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 192.

⁴⁵ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 193. Deshman goes on to argue that images of: Christ's baptism and the Adoration of the Magi paralleled the coronation ritual of a temporal leader and established a hierarchy of rulership governed by Christ, and through Christ, Edgar (pp. 193-95); Christ as King and Judge suggested that 'Edgar reformed himself by conforming to the heavenly model of the righteous judge Christ who ruled him' (p. 196), and that Edgar was thus a model for his people (pp. 195-97); the entry into Jerusalem 'likened King Edgar establishing the pure monks in the monastery to the heavenly judge Christ' (pp. 198-200 [p. 198]); the Deity and Choirs of Saints invoked the church's prayers of intercession and praise for Edgar and represented 'the Christological governance that Æthelwold and King Edgar sought to emulate in the reform' (pp. 200-02 [p. 202]); Benedict as monarch and monk emphasised the commonality between the ideal of the abbatial office and Edgar's royal office, and similarly emphasised an ideal of 'monasticised' monarchy (pp. 202-04); the Coronation of the Virgin implied a Mariological paradigm for Edgar's queen, Ælfthryth, so that Edgar's emulation of the 'regal abbot Benedict' was paralleled in Ælfthryth's emulation of the heavenly queen (pp. 204-07 [p. 207]). See also his 'The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia and the English Monastic

Such imagery endorsed the king, and elevated his position in society.⁴⁶ Through the reform movement, Edgar's divine role was articulated and elaborated: he ruled as 'the vicar of God'⁴⁷ and his secular powers were wrapped and enhanced in the 'spiritual mantles of Christ and Saint Benedict'.⁴⁸ Edgar, 'like a Christ-like abbot [...represented] the ideal of celestial harmony that Æthelwold sought to realize in the terrestrial union of the Anglo-Saxon *regnum et sacerdotium*'.⁴⁹ In this sense, then, 'the marriage of royal and ecclesiastical power produced a consolidated England under a strong [...] king',⁵⁰ further strengthened by church rhetoric.

The reformers also provided the king with indispensable support in areas in which his own power was weak, since 'a chronic problem for all early medieval monarchs was that of finding loyalty and effective servants, particularly for the administration of the more remote and more recalcitrant provinces'.⁵¹ Monastic benefactions from the king were thus 'instrumental in establishing Edgar's control of the kingdom'.⁵² On the one hand, then, the reformed church promoted the power of the king as Christological ruler; on the other, it was an agent of governance for that extended power. Such Foucauldian implementation of power, whereby power was deployed by a 'system of relations spread

Reform', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, Studies in Medieval Culture, 20 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 261-82.

⁴⁶ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 207.

⁴⁸ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 214.

⁴⁹ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 214. See also Wormald, 'Æthelwold and his Counterparts', p. 32; Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, pp. 7-10. Deshman's argument is given added credence by Rollason's analysis of Anglo-Saxon hagiography, in which he finds it 'striking' that 'royal involvement was emphasized [...]. Close association with the king was in effect being presented as one of the qualifications of sanctity' (*Saints and Relics*, p. 173).

⁵⁰ Meyer, 'Women and Reform', p. 51.

⁵¹ Bullough, 'St Oswald', p. 9.

⁵² Meyer, 'Women and Reform', p. 53. Barlow argues that 'in England to strengthen the influence and discipline of the church was to reinforce royal authority. The bishops [...] were the servants of the king' (*English Church*, p. 140).

throughout society’,⁵³ facilitated Edgar’s ‘large-scale innovatory programme crucial to which w[as] centralisation *under* the king [...]’. Secular and religious centralisation went hand in hand’.⁵⁴ The ‘use of monastic benefaction to advance secular power’⁵⁵ should be noted for nobles as well as for royalty: ‘the sources imply that the aristocrats made donations for religious reasons, but they never lost sight of the familial, social, and political bonds of society’.⁵⁶ The aristocracy made gifts to the church ‘as a means of enhancing their own prestige in the secular world and as a way of establishing, consolidating, and extending their own political power’.⁵⁷ Ecclesiastical endowments forged resilient alliances between aristocrats and, often powerful, abbots and bishops.⁵⁸

Such political considerations should not, of course, undermine the spiritual aspect of the reform: piety motivated kings’ and aristocrats’ patronage of the reformed church, which secured them the prayers of the church and the support of God.⁵⁹ The reward for monastic endowments was the prayers said by monks for the soul of the donors and their families for their pious generosity. Thus a motivation for aristocratic donations of ‘lands and moveable wealth to abbeys is the one which they themselves often gave – for the good of their own and their family members’ souls’.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, although faith cannot be discounted as a large component of the impetus towards reform and its defence,⁶¹ it was a

⁵³ Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault*, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 35.

⁵⁴ James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York: Hambledon, 2000), pp. 161-63.

⁵⁵ Meyer, ‘Women and Reform’, p. 51.

⁵⁶ Pope, ‘Monks and Nobles’, p. 165.

⁵⁷ White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts*, p. 30. Although White is discussing the Continental situation, as Pope notes, his ‘theories based on continental evidence seem to fit the English situation as well’ (‘Monks and Nobles’, p. 173).

⁵⁸ Pope, ‘Monks and Nobles’, p. 173.

⁵⁹ For example, the *Regularis Concordia* ruled that prayers should be offered daily for the king and queen who were recognised as ‘*ex officio* patrons and guardians of the whole monastic institute’ (Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 45). See also Brooks, ‘Career of Dunstan’, pp. 22-23; Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 209; Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 76, p. 193; White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts*, p. 30; Wormald, ‘Æthelwold and his Counterparts’, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Pope, ‘Monks and Nobles’, p. 166 and see also pp. 168-69.

⁶¹ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 190.

persevering consequence of the reform's affiliation of church with secular authority, that the power of the church, of the king, and of his magnates was significantly increased.

The religious-secular collaboration and cooperation inspired by the reform was characterised by kings' and aristocrats' donations of land and wealth to the church, and their provision of support and protection for reform; donations and protection simultaneously extended the power, prestige and governance of secular kings and magnates *by* alliance with, and *through* the administration of, the church. In late Anglo-Saxon England, then, the *boundary* between 'church' and 'state'⁶² was indistinct and muted, although the two institutions existed independently. Stafford's summary of the status of governance in this period is worth quoting in full:

the church played a very important role in [...] society. The relationship between the human and the divine was seen as a very real one. Men felt a need to harmonize that relationship if their affairs were to prosper, and the church was the essential bridge, the interpreter of the divine will and the placater of divine wrath. The church could and did exercise political powers of an administrative and executive kind. [...] There was no clear line of demarcation between the concerns of the king and the concerns of the great bishops, which is scarcely surprising when one considers the extent to which the church had formulated these concerns. Both had as a prime aim the ordering of society according to the divine model.⁶³

That is, the church and the king had the unified aspiration of systematising and regulating society within a Christian ideal;⁶⁴ the reform provided the practical model whereby secular and religious interests and concerns could be *integrated*, instituted, articulated and normalised *in unanimity*.⁶⁵ Secular and religious authorities united to promote the religious revival of the nation, through the encouragement of the reformed monasteries,⁶⁶ and through creating 'a consolidated Anglo-Saxon kingdom with its strong centralized monarchy, whose customs and social and political institutions'⁶⁷ were grounded

⁶² See Introduction above, p. 6, n. 30.

⁶³ 'Church and Society', p. 18.

⁶⁴ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 7.

⁶⁵ For example, the role of churchmen in the *witan*; see Stafford, 'Church and Society', pp. 20-21, p. 28.

⁶⁶ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁷ Meyer, 'Women and Reform', p. 61.

in the 'divine model'. The church was enlisted to communicate the profoundly Christianised customs and values of the king. It is thus more correct to associate governance during the late Anglo-Saxon period with the more generalised and inclusive category of 'those in power', since the delineation between religious and secular governance was ambiguous.

The regulation, or governance, of society, then, was administered by 'those in power', a category including *both* the church and the king operating in 'close cooperation' for 'mutual benefit'.⁶⁸ The church governed on behalf of the king, who granted to it the power to govern. In response, the church enhanced the power of the king, and thus supported his word and decree as divinely inspired, as well as assuring that they accorded with church aims. As Ridyard explicates:

kingship, as every medieval churchman knew and as every medieval ruler was informed, was instituted by divine concession: it was exercised *Dei gratia*. The kingdom, accordingly, had the status of a divine trust, in relation to which the ruler functioned not in or by his own right but rather as God's vice-gerent upon earth – as the holder of an office with more or less well-defined rights and duties and with a more or less well-defined scope and purpose. In general terms, that scope and purpose may be described as protection of the trust. And because the definition of kingship became, in the post-conversion centuries, exclusively a prerogative of the church, that protection was directed towards a very special group and was given a very special character: it was the protection of the Christian church and of Christian society.⁶⁹

The Foucauldian strategies of power and governance in late Anglo-Saxon England, then, stretched from Edgar and his successors (who were, of course, governed by God and the church),⁷⁰ to the reformers who promulgated royal decrees and governed in the king's name, and who ideologically supported 'kingship' as Christological. Thus both the church and the king held power and implemented it in their own name and on behalf of their counterpart and partner.

⁶⁸ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 32.

⁶⁹ Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 11.

To appreciate fully the interconnected and complex strategies of power and governance deployed in late Anglo-Saxon England, it is necessary to recognise firstly, the mutual control exercised by church and secular authorities in the reform context, and, secondly, the implications of the nexus between textuality, by which ‘texts themselves had an impact in creating the cultural environment’,⁷¹ and literacy, by which ‘the text itself – and *writing* as a consequence – was [...] a locus of cultural power’.⁷² Since ‘literacy was acknowledged as the means for the tapping, diffusion, and control of the power’,⁷³ each person concerned with the creation of the *text*, which inscribed and transmitted ideologies, and was ‘the source of wisdom’,⁷⁴ was implied in relations of power.⁷⁵ Those persons who *wrote* (broadly defined), whether as an author, compiler, anthologist, or scribe, created the *text*, and thus exercised a particular strategy for ‘perpetuating cultural systems of power’.⁷⁶ Literacy, then, was an attribute of ‘those in power’, and was primarily (although not solely) a religious trait;⁷⁷ it was nevertheless often utilised on behalf, or with the authority, of the king and his secular élite.

⁷¹ Jennifer Christine Brown, ‘Writing Power and Writing-Power: The Rise of Literacy as a Means of Power in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Medieval Perspectives*, 15 (2000), 42–56 (p. 48).

⁷² Brown, ‘Writing Power’, p. 49; my emphasis. See also discussion above, Introduction, pp. 12–13.

⁷³ George Hardin Brown, ‘The Dynamics of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 77 (1995), 109–42 (p. 110) (repr. in *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and the Toller Memorial Lectures*, ed. by Donald Scragg [Cambridge and Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 2003], pp. 183–212). See also Brown, ‘Writing Power’, p. 48.

⁷⁴ C. P. Wormald, ‘The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and Its Neighbours’, *TRHS*, 5th Series, 27 (1977), 95–114 (p. 107).

⁷⁵ See discussion above, Introduction, p. 13.

⁷⁶ Brown, ‘Writing Power’, p. 49.

⁷⁷ The laity certainly could be literate: the famed example of Ealdorman Æthelweard (d. c. AD 998) is evidence. Nevertheless, ‘literacy was attained by a small minority of the population, *mostly clerics*’ (Brown, ‘Dynamics of Literacy’, p. 111; my emphasis). See also Wormald, ‘Uses of Literacy’, who describes the situation as an ‘effective clerical monopoly’ (p. 96, p. 113), and suggests ‘that the general impression is not one of extensive lay literacy, and the exceptions tend to explain themselves away: as royalty, as ladies, or as men whose bookishness was shortly to lead them to a wholesale renunciation of secular life’ (p. 111; see generally pp. 104–13). See also Patrick Wormald, *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1999), p. 32; Brown, ‘Dynamics of Literacy’, p. 121; H. R. Loyn, *The Governance of England, 500–1087* (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), pp. 106–08; Simon Keynes, ‘Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 226–57 (pp. 256–57).

One aspect of governance illustrates this reticulated structure of power strategies and networks: legislation. I will return later in the chapter to legislation (and to the issue, most notably raised by Patrick Wormald,⁷⁸ of the status and purpose of *written* legislation); however, in the context of extended governance, legislation illustrates the cooperative and interrelated concepts of power operations current in late Anglo-Saxon England, particularly in the context of textuality and literacy. Legislation was issued by the king, with the guidance, advice, and approval of high religious authorities:

the importance of the bishops and abbots among the *witan*, [...] seen in their influence over the king's ecclesiastical patronage, is further illustrated by their success in using royal government for urging the observance of Christian standards in political behaviour, for the reformation of morals, and for the maintenance of the church's discipline. They exploited the traditional power of the king to legislate on any subject, and put to work in their service the machinery which existed to enforce royal decrees.⁷⁹

Thus, the king's law was formulated in collaboration with the church, which was 'a major force in the governance and national identity of England', and which subsumed secular legislation 'within a new Christian, activist vision of the law'.⁸⁰ Legislation, then, is a manifestation of the shared hegemony exercised by secular and church authorities.

Legislation 'was not formally promulgated *by the king* in written form';⁸¹ the king rather *orally* decreed law. Law codes, however, despite their oral promulgation, existed concurrently in *written* form. Regarding the *writers* of such written legislation, Keynes notes that:

⁷⁸ See in particular his chapter, '*Lex Scripta* and *Verbum Regis*: Legislation and Germanic Kingship from Euric to Cnut', in his volume *Legal Culture*, pp. 1-43 (first publ. in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. by I. Wood and P. H. Sawyer [Leeds: The School of History, 1977], pp. 105-38).

⁷⁹ Barlow, *English Church*, p. 137, see also p. 138.

⁸⁰ Mary P. Richards, 'The Body as Text in Early Anglo-Saxon Law', in *Naked Before God: Uncovering the Body in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Benjamin C. Withers and Jonathon Wilcox, Medieval European Studies, III (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2003), pp. 97-115 (p. 115). Knowles notes that bishops and abbots 'were among the most powerful men in the land, both as owners of property and as counsellors of the king. In consequence the interests of religion, or what were conceived to be such, were almost uniformly consulted' (*Monastic Order*, p. 57). For a primary example see the law code *VIII Æthelræd*, which codifies the reform ideology of kingship: 'forðam Cristen cyning is Cristes gespelia on Cristenre þeode; and he sceal Cristes abilgðe wrecan swiðe georne' ('for a Christian king is Christ's deputy in a Christian people, and he must avenge very zealously offences against Christ'; 2,1).

⁸¹ Keynes, 'Royal Government', p. 229.

those who produced the texts were doing so on their own initiative and for their own purposes, and might have felt free (because there was no such thing as a 'definitive' written code) to vary their texts from what originally had been orally decreed.⁸²

In other words, the king's (church-advised and approved) oral decrees were interpreted by ecclesiasts who committed their interpretation to writing, allowing for subjective addition to, exclusion from, or construal of the oral decree: 'it was the church which was responsible for preserving the Anglo-Saxon laws. [...] The laws owe their written form to the interest of ecclesiasts, for whom law was the principal way to create and maintain an orderly society'.⁸³ Regardless of the administrative or practical purpose (or lack thereof) of written law,⁸⁴ legislation in textual form should be appreciated as having (to varying extents) ideological or cultural significance.⁸⁵ Firstly, as Wormald points out, some authorities were 'thinking of Divine Law when they issued and presented their *leges scriptae*. [...] Legislation [...] projected an image of society which corresponded to the *ideological aspirations*, as well as the practical needs, of what we might call its articulate classes'.⁸⁶ Secondly, as *text*, written legislation had cultural power, and

it would seem reasonable to conclude that royal government in the tenth and eleventh centuries depended to a very considerable extent on the use of the written word, and that late Anglo-Saxon society was well accustomed to such manifestations of 'pragmatic literacy'. [...] But [...] one should be careful not to imply that the extensive use of written documents in royal government was necessarily a guarantee of effective government, or that late Anglo-Saxon government was exclusively bureaucratic.⁸⁷

The Anglo-Saxon complement to a literate 'bureaucracy' was oral communication: 'literacy served as a basis for oral performance within society, community, and congregation',⁸⁸ and orality remained crucial throughout the period.⁸⁹

⁸² Keynes, 'Royal Government', p. 229. See also Loyn, *Governance of England*, pp. 108-09.

⁸³ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 29.

⁸⁴ See Wormald, *Legal Culture*, pp. 1-43.

⁸⁵ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 87.

⁸⁶ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 34; my emphasis.

⁸⁷ Keynes, 'Royal Government', p. 255.

⁸⁸ Brown, 'Dynamics of Literacy', p. 109.

⁸⁹ Brown, 'Writing Power', p. 49.

The concurrent use of oral and literate processes in administration and communication, as evidenced by legislation, raises a final point regarding the complexity of the networks of power and governance in late Anglo-Saxon England. Oral communication must be acknowledged as comprising more than spoken decrees (or oaths, *et cetera*): since the ‘common person within the culture may have been illiterate’⁹⁰ (and, indeed, even the extent of lay aristocratic literacy has been questioned⁹¹), oral communication must have also encompassed the reading or recitation of texts to illiterates,⁹² that is, the translation (and possible re-translation) of the literate to the oral. Returning to the specific example of legislation, it is evident, then, that every person involved in the initial *oral* decree should be appreciated as deploying individual power; so too, however, every person involved in committing the oral decree into writing should be recognised as deploying power. That is, there are multiple *authors* (oral and written) of legislation: the king, his advisers, the creator of the written code, the scribe. Moreover, those who orally transmitted (for example, by reading aloud, or preaching) the written decree to the populace were exercising power, as was anyone repeating the original oral decree with no reference to its written counterpart. All acted in processes of *governance*.⁹³

Legislation embodies strategies of cooperative governance (royal legislation issued with religious counsel and written down by ecclesiasts), and of power (delegated and exercised by various social agents on behalf of the agencies of church and king).⁹⁴ Legislation was thus a practice of governing, and ‘all practices of governing involve some element of moral regulation’.⁹⁵ Legislation, then, may be appreciated as a project of moral regulation since it

⁹⁰ Brown, ‘Writing Power’, p. 48.

⁹¹ Wormald, ‘Uses of Literacy’, p. 113.

⁹² Wormald, ‘Uses of Literacy’, p. 96.

⁹³ As Foucault explains, ‘power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation’ (Michel Foucault, ‘Two Lectures’, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by C. Gordon [Brighton: Harvester, 1980], pp. 78-108 [p. 98]).

⁹⁴ Barlow, *English Church*, pp. 118-19.

⁹⁵ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 6.

was a social action that ‘attempt[ed] to influence the conduct of human agents’.⁹⁶ Anglo-Saxon legislation embedded instructional discourse in regulative discourse to produce moralisation; it promoted conformity to the ideologies which it decreed, and penalised non-conformity to them; it proscribed conduct, values and customs and sought to modify the range of human activity to within the limits which it implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) prescribed.

Legislation, however, is just one example of the alliance of the regulatory agencies of church and ‘state’ in late Anglo-Saxon England, and just one manifestation of their concerted and unified endeavour to regulate morality. Issues of textuality and literacy, and their implication in the exercise of power, require the acknowledgement that *all* texts are potentially regulatory. Approached with a Bakhtinian and Bernsteinian understanding, all texts (as inscribed utterances) take an evaluative stance, and so encode instructional discourse to varying degrees.⁹⁷ Late Anglo-Saxon texts of moral regulation, such as legislation (or, indeed, other less explicitly regulative texts, such as *Apollonius of Tyre*, which will be analysed later in this chapter), ‘serve as a lens through which to observe [...] the secular and the spiritual as a locus of intersection’,⁹⁸ and the text is a site of the performance of both cooperative governance and moral regulation.⁹⁹ This interrelation and performance of cooperative governance and moral regulation is made manifest in a manuscript of the mid-eleventh century. The manuscript – Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201 – is a witness to the complexity and sophistication with which the church and king *together* approached the moral regulation of the English. The texts contained within it are often explicitly morally didactic; its homilies, law codes, and

⁹⁶ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 4.

⁹⁷ See Mikhail M. Bakhtin, ‘The Problem of Speech Genres’, in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. by Vern M. McGee, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 8 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 60–102 (p. 84); Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education (London: Taylor and Francis, 1996), p. 46.

⁹⁸ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 149.

⁹⁹ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 149.

penitential texts combine instructional with regulative discourse to produce exhortatory moralisation. Moreover, many of its texts, when they are considered together, exemplify the cooperation between church and ‘state’ to systematise the morality of a theocratic society. Most notably, its ostensibly secular legislative texts prescribe specifically Christian morality and behaviour, and the provisions and proscriptions enunciated in its law codes are often echoed in the penitential literature which is also contained within the manuscript: the repeated and evident correspondences between ‘secular’ legislation and ‘religious’ penitentials signal the collusion of ‘those in power’ to govern the morality of the English people.

1.2 *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201: A Case-study in Cooperation*

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201 (‘C’) is ‘a compact, utilitarian book with no illustrations or illuminated capitals’;¹⁰⁰ it has also been observed that C is a ‘hodge-podge’ of texts, ‘a miscellaneous and not particularly careful compilation with no very evident sense of order’.¹⁰¹ It is certainly true that the contents of C are heterogeneous and resist uncomplicated categorisation. Nevertheless, C is a manuscript which manifests the principles of cooperative governance: it is clearly a religious manuscript, but its interests are as firmly located in the realm of secular concerns as in that of church concerns. Further, the unity of C as a manuscript may be explicable if it is considered as a project of moral regulation. Examination of every text in C is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, an analysis of the legislative and penitential texts incorporated into the manuscript illustrates the ways in which C may be appreciated as morally regulatory. Such an appreciation may thus give new insight into other of C’s contents, such as *Apollonius of*

¹⁰⁰ *The Old English Poem ‘Judgment Day II’: A Critical Edition with editions of ‘De die iudicii’ and the Hatton 113 Homily ‘Be domes dæge’*, ed. by Graham D. Caie, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 2 (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Peter Clemoes, cited in Caie, *Old English ‘Judgement Day II’*, p. 10.

Tyre, a text which appears, at least to modern commentators, incongruously placed within this manuscript.¹⁰² Before such analyses can be undertaken, however, it is necessary firstly to describe C briefly and, secondly, to consider the implications of its Wulfstanian connections.

1.2.1 Manuscript Description

C is a composite manuscript consisting of two distinct parts, which were bound together in the sixteenth century, probably by (or for) Matthew Parker:¹⁰³ Part I (pp. 1-178) is the focus of this chapter; Part II (pp. 179-272)¹⁰⁴ is 'quite unrelated' to Part I,¹⁰⁵ and was written in Latin and Old English at Exeter (s. xi^{med}). Part II was formerly bound with CCCC, MSS 191 and 196, and principally contains the *Capitula of Theodulf* (of Orleans) in Latin and Old English translation.¹⁰⁶ The provenance of Part I is uncertain (possibly written at Worcester, York, Canterbury, Winchester, or at a combination of houses)¹⁰⁷ and the extant evidence to determine Part I's provenance is far from conclusive.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² For example, see *Old and Middle English: An Anthology*, ed. by Elaine Treharne, Blackwell Anthologies (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000), p. 236.

¹⁰³ See Caie, *Old English 'Judgment Day II'*, p. 1; for a full description of the manuscript (including a catalogue of its contents) see discussion below, Appendix 1, pp. 404-18.

¹⁰⁴ Parker has paginated the manuscript, thus reference to C will be made by page numbers; Part II is frequently paginated incorrectly.

¹⁰⁵ Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Vol. 1: Legislation and Its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999; repr. 2000), p. 206.

¹⁰⁶ I agree with Neil R. Ker and James M. Ure that there is no evidence to suggest that C was once three volumes, and that the palaeographical evidence rather suggests only two volumes (Part I and Part II, here). See Neil R. Ker, *A Catalogue of Manuscript Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; first publ. 1957), pp. 82-90; *The Benedictine Office: An Old English Text*, ed. by James M. Ure (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957), p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ For Worcester see: Humphrey Wanley cited in Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Vol. 1: Nos 1-250* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 485; Cuthbert H. Turner, ed. by J. M. Wilson *Early Worcester Manuscripts: Fragments of Four Books and a Charter of the Eighth Century Belonging to Worcester Cathedral* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1916), p. lvii; *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 2; *Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, 3rd rev. edn (London: Methuen, 1963; repr. 1967), p. 2; Caie, *Old English 'Judgment Day II'*, pp. 7-10 (cf. Roger Fowler, who argues against a Worcester origin in 'A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor', *Anglia*, 83 [1965], 1-34 [p. 2] [henceforth 'Handbook']; see also *Handlist*, p. 34). For York see: Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 2; Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos*, p. 2, pp. 22-31; Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208 (cf. Wormald, *Legal Culture* in which he states that is 'from neither

Part I of C principally contains: an Old English translation of the *Regularis Concordia*, modified for a female audience; a range of anonymous homilies, written in Wulfstanian style; a large proportion of works written by, ascribed to, or associated with Wulfstan (Bishop of Worcester, Archbishop of York), including pastoral letters, homilies, law codes (of Æthelræd and Cnut), the *Institutes of Polity*, the *Northumbrian Priests' Law*, the *Canons of Edgar*, and his Old English translation of the so-called 'Benedictine Office'; non-Wulfstanian law codes (of Æthelstan, Eadmund and Edgar); a penitential text, now entitled 'A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor'; the Old English translation of the romance, *Apollonius of Tyre*; Old English texts on saints and their burial places; a partial Old English translation of Genesis; some Old English verses (the so-called *Judgement Day II*, *An Exhortation to Christian Living*, *Summons to Prayer*, *Lord's Prayer II* and *Gloria I*); and forms of absolution and confession in Latin.¹⁰⁹

C, Part I, is divided into two major sections, and seven minor subsections: Section A (s. xiⁱⁿ), including subsection i (*Regularis Concordia*, pp. 1-7), and subsection v (verse, pp. 161-67), and Section B (s. xi^{med}), including subsection ii (Wulfstaniana, legal and penitential material, and *Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. 8-145), subsection iii (texts on saints, pp. 147-51), subsection iv (Genesis, pp. 151-60), subsection vi (verse, pp. 167-70), and subsection vii (forms of absolution and confession, pp. 170-76).¹¹⁰ Part I was written by

York nor Worcester' [p. 241]). For Canterbury see: Leslie Whitbread, 'CCCC 201: A Note on its Character and Provenance', *Philological Quarterly*, 38 (1959), 106-12 (p. 110, p. 112); Leslie Whitbread, 'The Old English Poem *Judgement Day II* and its Latin Source', *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (1966), 635-56 (p. 637, p. 641). For Winchester see: Mildred Budny, David Wilson and R. I. Page, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue*, 2 vols (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), p. 477. For a combination of houses see: Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 477; Wormald, *Making of Law*, pp. 208-10.

¹⁰⁸ See discussion below, Appendix I, pp. 404-06; see also, Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, pp. 7-9.

¹⁰⁹ For a full description of the manuscript, and a catalogue of its contents, see below, Appendix I, pp. 404-18.

¹¹⁰ On the dating of C, see Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, pp. 9-10; for a schematic representation of the sectional divisions of C, see Wormald, *Making of Law*, pp. 204-05. Major sections are indicated by the use of capitals (Section A, Section B); minor sections are indicated by the use of lower case (subsections i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii). See also Appendix I below, pp. 404-18.

four scribes: Scribe 1 wrote the majority of Section A; Section B was written principally by Scribe 2 who wrote subsections ii, iii and vi; Scribes 3 and 4 account for only seventeen pages of Part I (subsection iv and vii, respectively). Scribe 2 began writing in the remaining space on p. 167 (end Section A, subsection v), indicating 'that Section A is older than Section B and that the scribe or collator of the second section wished to integrate his work into the existing manuscript'.¹¹¹ Wormald, in his detailed analysis of the 'sectional character' of C, concludes that the volume has overall unity and integrity,¹¹² but that subsection ii (which Wormald terms 'section b') 'originated as a self-contained unit'.¹¹³ Subsection ii is the primary focus of this chapter.

C has received considerable critical attention. In part, this attention has been stimulated because C records a considerable amount of Wulfstanian material.¹¹⁴ As Whitelock notes of it, 'while it does not always give the best text of the works it contains, it has Wulfstan material that survives in no other manuscript'.¹¹⁵ Roger Fowler has had occasion to mention the manuscript in his editions of Wulfstan's *Canons of Edgar* and the anonymous 'Handbook'.¹¹⁶ Since C has the longest (although not original) example of the 'Handbook', and is one of the few examples of vernacular penitential literature,¹¹⁷ it has been commented upon in scholarly investigations into penitentials.¹¹⁸ The *Regularis Concordia* (partially adapted, as it is, for a female audience) has occasioned comment, especially from

¹¹¹ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 4.

¹¹² *Making of Law*, pp. 207-08.

¹¹³ *Making of Law*, p. 208.

¹¹⁴ For example see Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos*; Dorothy Whitelock, 'Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut', *English Historical Review*, 63 (1948), 433-52; Bethurum, *Homilies*; Dorothy Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. by Eric Gerald Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 210-46 (pp. 242-43); *Wulfstan's Eschatological Homilies* (online resource), ed. and trans. by Joyce Tally Lionarons (2000) (text available at: <<http://webpages.ursinus.edu/jlionarons/wulfstan/Wulfstan.html>> [accessed 27 July 2005]).

¹¹⁵ Whitelock, 'Laws of Cnut', p. 437.

¹¹⁶ See Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, pp. xi-lxi, and 'Handbook', pp. 1-15, respectively.

¹¹⁷ 'Handbook', pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁸ In particular, see the work of Allen J. Frantzen, especially *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983), pp. 139-41, pp. 175-76.

Joyce Hill,¹¹⁹ and *Apollonius of Tyre*, although relatively ignored by critics, has inspired more comments regarding the manuscript.¹²⁰ C's five Old English poems have similarly stimulated comment. Graham Caie has been particularly attentive to the trio of verses *Judgement Day II*, *Exhortation to Christian Living* and *Summons to Prayer* (Section A, subsection v), which, he has convincingly and repeatedly argued by detailed reference to their manuscript context, are in fact one poem which is penitential in subject.¹²¹ James Ure and Leslie Whitbread, among others, have been preoccupied with the two poems, *Lord's Prayer II* and *Gloria I* (Section B, subsection vi), and their relationship, or not, to the Old English 'Benedictine Office' also found in C (Section B, subsection ii).¹²²

The analyses executed by Caie and Ure in particular recommend the methodology of considering texts with close reference to their manuscript context, and by particular

¹¹⁹ Joyce Hill, 'The "Regularis Concordia" and its Latin and Old English Reflexes', *Revue Bénédictine*, 101 (1991), 299-315.

¹²⁰ In particular by its editor, Peter Goolden (see *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. by Peter Goolden, Oxford English Monographs [London: Oxford University Press, 1958], pp. xxxii-xxxiv).

¹²¹ For example, see: 'The Source MS for the Old English *Judgement Day II*', in *Essays Presented to Knud Schibbye*, ed. by Michael Chesnutt *et al.*, (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), pp. 27-31; 'On Editing Old English *Judgement Day II*', in *Proceedings from the Second Nordic Conference for English Studies*, ed. by Håkan Ringbom and Matti Rissanen (Åbo: Akademie, 1984), pp. 3-10; 'The Vernacular Poems in CCCC 201 as Penitential Literature', in *A Literary Miscellany Presented to Eric Jacobsen*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and H. Nørgaard, Publications of the English Department, Copenhagen University, 16 (Copenhagen: Academic Press, 1988), p. 72-78; 'Text and Context in Editing Old English: The Case of the Poetry in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201', in *The Editing of Old English*, ed. by Donald G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 155-62; *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, pp. 1-32. See also Eric G. Stanley, '"The Judgement of the Damned" (from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201 and Other Manuscripts), and the Definition of Old English Verse', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 363-91; Fred C. Robinson, '"The Rewards of Piety": Two Old English Poems in Their Manuscript Context', in *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*, ed. by Patrick Gallacher and Helen Damico (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 193-200.

¹²² See James M. Ure: 'The "Benedictine Office" and the Metrical Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in MS. C.C.C.C. 201', *Review of English Studies*, 4 (1953), 354-56; *The Benedictine Office*. See Leslie Whitbread: 'Two Notes on Minor Old English Poems', *Studia Neophilologica*, 20 (1947), 123-29; 'CCCC 201', pp. 106-12; 'The Old English Poems of the "Benedictine Office" and Some Related Questions', *Anglia*, 80 (1962), 37-49; 'Old English *Judgement Day II*', pp. 635-56. See also, Peter Clemoes, 'The Old English Benedictine Office, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 190, and the Relations between Ælfric and Wulfstan: A Reconsideration', *Anglia*, 78 (1960), 265-83. Further, it is generally agreed (although not by Ure) that the Old English 'Benedictine Office' in C was composed by Wulfstan (for example see, Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 47; Clemoes, 'Old English Benedictine Office'; cf. Ure, *The Benedictine Office*, pp. 25-46 who argues that the prose translation may have been Ælfric's originally, and later modified by Wulfstan).

comparison to other texts contained within the manuscript.¹²³ By such method, these scholars have been able to determine thematic and structural unity, both internally in the poems with which they are concerned, and also within the manuscript more generally. More strikingly, this method has helped to identify the ‘clues that might point to readership or use in the eleventh century’.¹²⁴ The profitability of this method suggests that a comparison between texts within a manuscript, or a consideration of manuscript context, may lead to new insight into the purpose of the manuscript or of its individual texts. Since ‘one of the major unifying elements’ in C ‘is that many items are by Wulfstan [...] or are of Wulfstanian in style and content’,¹²⁵ then a significant contextual feature of C which must be acknowledged before any analysis of its texts can be undertaken, is its connection and association with Wulfstan.

1.2.2 Connections and Implications

Wulfstan of Worcester and York (d. AD 1023) belonged to the second generation of reformers,¹²⁶ and to the second period of reform, during which

the impetus of the monastic revival attained its maximum force [...]; the chief bishoprics and abbeys were occupied by the ablest disciples of the three leaders; within the monasteries the religious and intellectual life developed along the lines laid down by the founders, and both abbots and bishops received support from a number of the most

¹²³ See above, p. 70, n. 121 and n. 122; see also Graham D. Caie, ‘Codicological Clues: Reading Old English Christian Poetry in its Manuscript Context’, in *The Christian Tradition: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. by Paul Cavill, Christianity and Culture: Issues in Teaching and Research (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 1-14.

¹²⁴ Caie, ‘Codicological Clues’, p. 5.

¹²⁵ Caie, *Old English Judgment Day II*, p. 10.

¹²⁶ Whilst I acknowledge Patrick Wormald’s comment that ‘there is strikingly little evidence that our Wulfstan was educated in the Æthelwoldian style, and not a lot that he was even a monk: perhaps he came from the pre-reform stage in one or other of these abbeys’ (‘Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. by Matthew Townend, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 10 [Turnhout, Brepols, 2004], pp. 9-27 [p. 13]), Joyce Hill’s excellent article in the same volume makes it clear that Wulfstan was undoubtedly interested in, and profoundly contributed to, the Benedictine Reform (‘Archbishop Wulfstan: Reformer?’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 309-24).

powerful landowners. [...] The generation taught by Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald was everywhere in authority.¹²⁷

Wulfstan's career, as far as it may be reconstructed, is well-traversed ground.¹²⁸ He was Bishop of London (AD 996-1002), Bishop of Worcester (AD 1002-16) and Archbishop of York (AD 1002-23), and

he shouldered the burden of ecclesiastical and even national leadership in the dark days of Scandinavian attack; he produced laws for King Æthelred II and then for his successor, the Danish conqueror Cnut; he forged a distinctive prose style, supremely suited to the requirements of oral delivery; he studiously turned to Carolingian models for inspiration and guidance; he put together a canon law collection unparalleled in pre-Norman England; he consecrated both churches and bishops; he was responsible for the compilation of the first extant cartulary in England; he wrote works on political theory, clerical status, church sanctuary; in short, he taught, preached, rebuked, urged, reformed, administered, and pronounced through three decades of episcopal activity and national turmoil, and himself played a major role in bringing that turmoil to an end.¹²⁹

Wulfstan's achievements throughout his known career reveal him to be a figure who represented the principles of cooperative governance, and who understood and exploited current strategies of power: he 'is one of the best examples of how churchmen could be involved in all contemporary concerns of society'.¹³⁰ He was certainly concerned with ecclesiastical affairs: a quantity of his work has as its focus the internal organisation, and continued reform and maintenance, of the secular church.¹³¹ However, Wulfstan's interests lay equally with affairs of the state. Not only was he interested in lay religious observance, he was moreover preoccupied with social order and harmony;¹³² with 'the need to regularize, to codify, to provide the basis of order',¹³³ and with the support of his ideal,

¹²⁷ Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 58.

¹²⁸ See most recently Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builders', pp. 9-27. Wormald's chapter also includes a summary and evaluation of the history of Wulfstan studies to date. See also Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 18-19.

¹²⁹ Matthew Townend, 'Introduction', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 1-8 (p. 1).

¹³⁰ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 22.

¹³¹ Hill, 'Wulfstan: Reformer?', p. 315.

¹³² Hill, 'Wulfstan: Reformer?', p. 309.

¹³³ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 25.

‘holy society’¹³⁴ ‘by sound laws and social structure, the linchpin for [which...] was the person of the king’.¹³⁵ He utilised tenurial resources to forge secular alliances,¹³⁶ and his effective estate administration enabled him ‘to recover certain archiepiscopal estates which had been despoiled [...] before he became Archbishop’.¹³⁷ Moreover, Wulfstan governed through written and oral communication: he is as famed as an orator, as he is as an author.¹³⁸ Further still, whilst his own exercise of power was paramount, Wulfstan was equally concerned about the ways in which his clergy would exercise *its* spiritual power over its congregations for the good of the church and the nation. As Christopher Jones summarises, Wulfstan ‘is one of relatively few early medieval figures [...] for whom the sources reveal the deep affinities between liturgy, law, and preaching’ by himself and his clergy ‘as media to proclaim the ordinances of God’ and the king.¹³⁹

Wulfstan, then, more so than his counterparts Ælfric or Byrhtferth (the two other leading second-generation reformers), understood and exploited the potential of cooperative governance.¹⁴⁰ Unlike Ælfric’s corpus, Wulfstan’s corpus ‘is much more diverse and in some respects harder to identify, his tone is altogether different, and his context is the *secular* church and *secular* society’;¹⁴¹ that is, his reform aspirations were broadly directed

¹³⁴ See Patrick Wormald’s chapter, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society’, in his volume, *Legal Culture*, pp. 225–51 (esp. pp. 244–51) (first publ. in *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings*, ed. by David A. E. Pelteret [New York, 1999], pp. 191–224).

¹³⁵ Hill, ‘Wulfstan: Reformer?’, p. 320.

¹³⁶ Dorothy Whitelock, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman’, *TRHS*, 4th Series, 24 (1942), 25–45 (p. 41).

¹³⁷ Stephen Baxter, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Administration of God’s Property’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 161–205 (p. 162). See also Julia Barrow, ‘Wulfstan and Worcester: Bishop and Clergy in the Early Eleventh Century’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 141–59 (pp. 147–58).

¹³⁸ Joyce Tally Lionarons, ‘Napier Homily L: Wulfstan’s Eschatology at the Close of his Career’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 413–28 (p. 413); Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, p. 18; Janet Bately, ‘The Nature of Old English Prose’, in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 71–87 (p. 81).

¹³⁹ Christopher A. Jones, ‘Wulfstan’s Liturgical Interests’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 325–52 (p. 350).

¹⁴⁰ See Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, pp. 19–22.

¹⁴¹ Hill, ‘Wulfstan: Reformer?’, p. 311; my emphasis. Hill concludes that Wulfstan’s ‘interests are overwhelming oriented towards the secular [rather than the monastic] church – a position which allies him

to the secular clergy and to the laity. Wulfstan recognised that expansive social and church reforms required the cooperation of secular authorities, and thus he is also renowned as a statesman and politician, ‘operating in the service of the king’s interest [and having...] a preoccupation with law and social order in maintaining a *res publica christiana*, in which the role of the king was crucially important’.¹⁴² For example, Wulfstan served as one of Æthelræd’s chief advisers and lawmakers.¹⁴³ Wulfstan’s influence, however, did not cease with Æthelræd’s death:¹⁴⁴ he was equally (if not more) influential over the Danish King Cnut (AD 1016–35), and was a ‘pivotal part of [...his] government’.¹⁴⁵ During his years in attendance on Kings Æthelræd and Cnut, Wulfstan’s preoccupation was with the moral regeneration of the nation (secular and ecclesiastical), particularly by the codification of law and the dissemination of law through preaching. It has been observed that some of Wulfstan’s homilies ‘suggest the function of preaching for secular purposes, transmitting laws, royal orders, and the message of obedience and loyalty to the king’,¹⁴⁶ and that Wulfstanian manuscripts, such as C, ‘provide the strongest evidence we have that the church played a major role in communicating the laws through religious instruction’.¹⁴⁷ Wulfstan’s corpus itself thus signals his recognition that church and social reform were possible only through the cooperative efforts of church and secular authorities: in other words, Wulfstan’s own writings betray his involvement in, and contribution to, cooperative governance.

more directly with continental metropolitans than with the more monastically oriented first-generation reformers in England. There is nothing intrinsically monastic about Wulfstan’s liturgical materials and, given the positions he held, one would hardly expect there to be. But it is in the larger tradition of the reform that he stands, in his practice, his aspirations, and his textual resources’ (p. 317).

¹⁴² Hill, ‘Wulfstan: Reformer?’, p. 318.

¹⁴³ Another was Æthelweard, one of Ælfric’s patrons who will be discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4 (see discussion below, pp. 264–66, p. 315; see also above, p. 61, n. 77.).

¹⁴⁴ Although Æthelred was succeeded by his son, Eadmund II, Eadmund only ruled between April 23 and November 30, 1016. On his death he was succeeded by Cnut.

¹⁴⁵ Gareth Mann, ‘The Development of Wulfstan’s Alcuin Manuscript’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 235–78 (p. 275).

¹⁴⁶ Stafford, ‘Church and Society’, p. 22. See also Mary Richards, ‘The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation’, in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 171–92 (pp. 186–87).

¹⁴⁷ Richards, ‘Manuscript Contexts of Laws’, p. 176.

Importantly, Wulfstan, along with other reformers, most often chose to write in the vernacular; by so doing he fostered a vision of a theocratic, unified and ordered nation, and furthered his ideology of a 'holy society'.

In a clerical discourse such as preaching, the choice of English is highly ideological. English fosters a sense of identification within a particular speech community across a range of audiences – clerical and lay, aristocratic and ecclesiastical – while downplaying the differences of social power between them. The use of the vernacular thereby creates a concept of an English Christian community.¹⁴⁸

Whilst writing in the vernacular was certainly not peculiar to Wulfstan, it is clear that his dedication to the vernacular reflected his significant contribution to 'the administrative and psychological unification of England'.¹⁴⁹ Wulfstan, then, is the embodiment of combined church-state governance.

Wulfstan was undeniably, although not necessarily personally, connected with C. As noted above, many works written by him, or written in his style and expressing his concerns (that is, 'Wulfstanian'), are extant in the manuscript, and comprise the greater part of Section B, subsection ii. In terms of his homilies C represents, along with Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 113, 'one of the two archetypes of the extant homilies [of Wulfstan]'.¹⁵⁰ The majority of Wulfstan's homilies are thus present in C, which also includes approximately thirty other homilies in Wulfstanian style. Wulfstan's homilies are most often not built around Gospel passages, but are instead exhortatory appeals to Christian conduct, frequently invoking imagery of the Last Judgement, and of penance and repentance.¹⁵¹ In his homilies, Wulfstan is actively both prescriptive and proscriptive, enunciating on the one hand the Christian conduct and values which should be practised by all, and on the other, denouncing antithetical (anti-Christian) conduct usually within

¹⁴⁸ Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing and Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures, 19 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 34.

¹⁴⁹ Campbell, *Anglo-Saxon State*, p. 41.

¹⁵⁰ Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 3.

¹⁵¹ See Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, p. 19.

the context of the harm (both current, social harm, as well as future, individual, eschatological harm) which such immoral conduct would occasion.

Such eschatological imagery is one characteristic which unifies both the Wulfstanian and non-Wulfstanian texts in C. Lionarons notes that five of Wulfstan's extant homilies have eschatology as their primary focus (the 'eschatological homilies') and each of these is represented in C.¹⁵² Moreover, the Latin 'De Antichristo', the 'outline or set of notes [...] on which the eschatological homilies are based',¹⁵³ is also in C. Eschatology is also an evident theme in other of Wulfstan's (non-'eschatological') homilies present in C; whilst it is not necessarily the primary subject of them, it was 'one that occupied him [Wulfstan] throughout his career'¹⁵⁴ and is repeatedly evident in his works in C.¹⁵⁵ Eschatological concern is found elsewhere in the manuscript as well. Graham Caie notes that a 'unifying theme throughout the manuscript is [...] eschatology'.¹⁵⁶ The anonymous and untitled eschatological homily (*In die iudicii*), which Stanley has named 'The Judgement of the Damned' (pp. 78-80 of C)¹⁵⁷ is an example of a non-Wulfstanian text which engages with the theme of eschatology at length. The poem, *Judgement Day II* (pp. 161-65 of C) is also eschatological and its imagery of Judgement Day parallels closely that in Wulfstan's eschatological homilies.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² See Lionarons, *Wulfstan's Eschatological Homilies* (online resource). The five eschatological homilies are Bethurum, Ib: 'De Anticristo' (pp. 67-68 in C); II: 'Lectio Sancti Evangelii Secundum Matheum' (pp. 71-72 in C); III: 'Secundum Lucam' (pp. 72-74 in C); IV: 'De Temporibus Antichristi', (pp. 74-78 in C); V: 'Secundum Marcum' (pp. 68-71 in C). See also Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, pp. 105-16.

¹⁵³ Lionarons, *Wulfstan's Eschatological Homilies*; Bethurum, Ia: 'De Anticristo' (pp. 66-67 in C).

¹⁵⁴ Lionarons, *Wulfstan's Eschatological Homilies*.

¹⁵⁵ Lionarons cites Bethurum VI: 'Incipiunt Sermones Lupi Episcopi' (pp. 10-15 in C); VII: 'De Fide Catholici' (pp. 15-19 in C); XIII: 'Sermo Ad Populum' (pp. 19-21 in C), and XX: 'Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos' (pp. 82-86 in C) as other homilies which have an eschatological preoccupation: these, too, are all extant in C (*Wulfstan's Eschatological Homilies*).

¹⁵⁶ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 11.

¹⁵⁷ 'The Judgement of the Damned', pp. 363-91.

¹⁵⁸ Compare, for example, Wulfstan's eschatological homily Bethurum, III: 'Secundum Lucam', in which fire and flood are evoked as images of Judgement Day – 'and witodlice ealswa flod com hwilum ær for synnum, swa cymð eac for synnum fyr ofer mancynn' (7-8) – with the description in *Judgement Day II* – 'ðæt reðe flod ræscet fyre | and biterlice bærnð ða earman saula' (166-67). (Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English and Latin quotations of Wulfstan's homilies are taken from Bethurum's edition, *Homilies*; all Old English

In *Judgement Day II*, as in ‘The Judgement of the Damned’, eschatology is thematically paired with penitential matters. *Judgement Day II* begins with a meditative contemplation of a Paradisal garden, which is disturbed by the narrator’s remembrance of the certainty of Doomsday, a certainty which leads him to recall the necessity of confession and penance. *Judgement Day II* (and with it, *Exhortation to Christian Living* and *Summons to Prayer*) is a poetic homily, or exhortation, to penance, and, like other exhortations to repentance, ‘eschatology – and particularly the Last Judgement – is the touchstone’.¹⁵⁹ As Caie notes, ‘the eschatology homily had a particular moral teaching in relation to penance’,¹⁶⁰ and it is interesting to note in this context a second point of unity in the manuscript: a concern with penance. Such concerns are evident, for example, in the metaphorical correspondences within the manuscript: the metaphor of Christ (or confessor) as Physician (*Christus medicus*) and sin as wound is found across texts in C, in which ‘the image of the wound is used to establish an analogy between the confessor [or Christ] and a doctor, the penitential process and the process of healing’.¹⁶¹ Caie analyses in detail the occurrence of this metaphor in *Judgement Day II* (see, for example, lines 80-84),¹⁶² but this imagery is found also in the ‘Handbook’,¹⁶³ and Cowen argues that it is central to the imagery of sin found in Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi*.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Cowen concludes that Wulfstan’s common homiletic opening and ending, ‘utan don swa us þearf is’ or ‘utan don swa us neod is’ (‘let us do as is necessary for us’), should be read ‘as an instruction to

quotations of the poem *Judgement Day II* are taken from Caie’s edition, *Old English ‘Judgement Day II’*. All further references to Wulfstan’s homilies and to *Judgement Day II* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.)

¹⁵⁹ Milton McC Gatch, ‘Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies’, *Traditio*, 21 (1965), 117-65 (p. 159).

¹⁶⁰ Caie, *Old English ‘Judgement Day II’*, p. 65.

¹⁶¹ Alice Cowen, ‘Byrastas and bysmeras: The Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 397-411 (pp. 401-03).

¹⁶² Caie, *Old English ‘Judgement Day II’*, pp. 70-72.

¹⁶³ In the section entitled ‘be dædbetan’, pp. 121-24 (lines 305-07; 317-25). (Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the ‘Handbook’ are to Fowler’s edition; all further references to the ‘Handbook’ throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.)

¹⁶⁴ Cowen, ‘The Wounds of Sin’, pp. 397-411.

repent'.¹⁶⁵ This formula, which sometimes occurs with the intensifying *mycel*, appears in ten of Wulfstan's homilies printed by Bethurum, and in many instances it occurs more than once in each homily. Of these ten homilies, only one is not represented in C.¹⁶⁶ Wulfstan's preoccupation with repentance and penance is thus evident in many of his homilies extant in C, and the manuscript moreover includes many other texts related to penitential concerns, not least of which is the 'Handbook' itself, and the Latin forms of confession and absolution which close the manuscript, and *Judgement Day II* which, as 'vernacular literature that was catechetical, that prepared one for penance and put one in the correct spiritual mood' for penance, complemented the 'specific' and 'orthodox formula[e] for penance' found in the 'Handbook'.¹⁶⁷

Wulfstan held the 'view that the emergencies of the time demanded more concentrated attention to the Law of God and His Church, the first principles on which the laws of kings were necessarily based'.¹⁶⁸ Thus, as has been noted, Wulfstan wrote a number of law codes on behalf of his kings, and his church, and some of these are found in C. The law codes attributed to Wulfstan and included in C (in the order in which they appear in the manuscript) are: *VIIa Æthelræd*, *V Atr*, *VIII Atr*, *I Cnut* (part), *II Cn* (part), and *VI Atr* (part),¹⁶⁹ although it must be noted that these 'laws are scattered among other pieces

¹⁶⁵ Cowen, 'The Wounds of Sin', p. 411.

¹⁶⁶ It also occurs regularly in Napier's Wulfstanian collection. For example, Wulfstan utilises it in his specifically penitential homily, 'Bemislicum Gelimpum' (pp. 28-29 in C) (Collated in Napier as XXXV: 'Be mistlican gelimpan', pp. 169-72) (see *Wulfstan: Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit*, ed. by Arthur S. Napier, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler in kritischen Ausgaben, IV [Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1883] [henceforth Napier]).

¹⁶⁷ Caie, 'Text and Context', p. 169; see also Caie, 'Vernacular Poems', pp. 72-75.

¹⁶⁸ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER', p. 17.

¹⁶⁹ See Simon Keynes, *Anglo-Saxon History: A Select Bibliography* (online resource), 2nd edn., Richard Rawlinson Center for Anglo-Saxon Studies and Manuscript Research: Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University (1998) (text available at:

<<http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/research/rawl/keynesbib/home.htm>> [accessed 19 April 2005]), JII 'Aspects of Royal Government'; Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', pp. 210-46 (pp. 223-24). See also manuscript contents, Appendix I, pp. 409-18. The other non-Wulfstanian laws in C are: *II Edgar*, *III Ed*, *I Æthelstan*, *I Eadmund*. C well illustrates Mary Richards's point that Anglo-Saxon 'legal collections are highly individual with respect to the particular selection of laws', which are 'never arranged chronologically in the

rather than forming a legal collection within the codex'.¹⁷⁰ These codes 'have been shown to be couched in such perfect Wulfstan phraseology and so deeply concerned with his own especial interests that he would appear to have written them in their entirety'.¹⁷¹ The notable feature of Wulfstan's earliest laws (for example, *V* and *VIIa Atr*) is that they are 'startlingly lacking in detail, notably in specified penalties',¹⁷² and the crimes which they proscribe are generalised crimes against society and sins against Christianity. As Wormald notes of Wulfstan's *Atr* codes in general, the idiom of them is 'massively ecclesiastical'.¹⁷³ The partial, later laws of Cnut found in C are considered to be Wulfstan's own composition and represent the basis upon which the full *I* and *II Cn* were later written:¹⁷⁴ 'the version in D [C] lies between VI *Atr* and I and II Cnut'.¹⁷⁵ The intermediary version of *I* and *II Cn* found in C encodes more specificities regarding various crimes and their punishments, but nevertheless builds upon the earlier codes. As Wormald notes, *I* and *II Cn* are 'Wulfstan's work for *his* Conqueror: this blurs the boundaries between the kingdoms of Æthelræd and Cnut, in that Wulfstan drew heavily on the codes he had drafted for the former, as on earlier laws, especially Edgar's'.¹⁷⁶ *I Cn* is designated as a primarily ecclesiastical code; *II Cn* was intended as the complementary secular code to *I Cn*. Despite this ostensible differentiation between ecclesiastical and secular laws, for Wulfstan:

the ecclesiastical and the secular spheres are not binary opposites; they correlate (*for Gode and for worolde*). Cnut's law-code gestures towards the traditional distinctness of

manuscripts' ('Manuscript Contexts of Laws', p. 171). On the *Atr* and *Cn* codes see Wormald, *Making of Law*, pp. 330-45, pp. 345-66 (respectively).

¹⁷⁰ Richards, 'Manuscript Contexts for Laws', p. 178.

¹⁷¹ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 31.

¹⁷² Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 16.

¹⁷³ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 341.

¹⁷⁴ See, Whitelock, 'Laws of Cnut', pp. 433-52; Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 3. It is worth noting that *I*, *II Cn* drew on *II*, *III Ed*, which are also extant in C (see Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', p. 225; Richards, 'Manuscript Contexts of Laws', p. 177).

¹⁷⁵ Whitelock, 'Laws of Cnut', p. 435. See also Dorothy Whitelock, 'Wulfstan's Authorship of Cnut's Laws', *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 72-85. I agree with Whitelock that unless 'one is content to leave the D [C] version as an entirely motiveless piece of work [...], it is difficult to account for its compilation *after* the issue of the full code of Cnut's laws' ('Wulfstan's Authorship', p. 78). See also A. G. Kennedy, 'Cnut's Law Code of 1018', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 57-83 (p. 60).

¹⁷⁶ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 15.

secular and ecclesiastical law by dividing the legislation into two sections [*I, II Cn...*]. But, in his desire to reorder society in accordance with the most stringent moral ideals, as Patrick Wormald demonstrates, he blurred the boundaries between secular and ecclesiastical concerns.¹⁷⁷

Importantly, then, in C, *I Cn* and *II Cn* are not presented as two separate codes. In C, the presentation of *I, II Cn* (and *VI Atr*) is:

I Cn, 1-2,2 (drawn from *VI Atr*, 1; 1,1; 13; 14)
II Cn, 1-4,2; 6-7,1 (drawn from *VI Atr*, 8; 8,1; 10,2; 10,3; 10, 10,1; 9, 7)
I Cn, 6-7,3 (drawn from *VI Atr*, 2; 2,2; 5; 5,1; 5,3; 11-12,2)
VI Atr, 16-28,1; 30-32,3; 40-40,1
II Cn, 15,1-15,3 (drawn from *III Ed*, 3)
VI Atr, 42-49¹⁷⁸

The significance of this presentation is that the ostensibly ‘ecclesiastical’ *I Cn* is effectively merged with the ostensibly ‘secular’ *II Cn*. In C, secular and religious laws are interconnected. Moreover, *II Cn*

goes way beyond anything previously written by the Archbishop on such crimes as *morð*, theft, and adultery, and on court machinery. [...] This is thus an attempt to re-emphasize what he had written – and preached – over the previous fifteen years, and to encapsulate, as it were codify, what he considered most important in laws stretching back to the seventh century.¹⁷⁹

One of the main objectives of *I* and *II Cn*, then, was to develop further the later Æthelræd codes which Wulfstan had written ‘to make law less a response and more a comprehensive and *practical* approach to society’s ills and misdemeanours – even if shot through by yet more “clerical” thinking even than Wulfstan’s earlier codes’.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Stephanie Hollis, “‘The Protection of God and the King’: Wulfstan’s Legislation on Widows”, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 443-60 (p. 459). See also M. K. Lawson, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element in the Laws of Æthelred II and Cnut’, in *The Reign of King Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway*, ed. by Alexander R. Rumble (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), pp. 141-64 (p. 158).

¹⁷⁸ See Whitelock, ‘Laws of Cnut’, pp. 434-35; Whitelock, ‘Wulfstan’s Authorship’, p. 72.

¹⁷⁹ Wormald, ‘Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER’, p. 20.

¹⁸⁰ Wormald, ‘Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER’, p. 20. See also Henry Loyn, ‘*De Iure Domini Regis*: A Comment on Royal Authority in Eleventh-Century England’, in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Carola Hicks, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, III (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), pp. 17-24 (p. 18).

Heslop observes that ‘Wulfstan was certainly not beyond putting words into kings’ mouths: it is in effect what his law-codes are doing’.¹⁸¹ It is not surprising, then, that a number of the laws codified in C reflect Wulfstan’s concerns evident in his homilies. For example, Wulfstan’s persistent concern with the payment of tithes and dues to churches is attested in his homilies, as well as in the law codes, found in C. In his homily, ‘Secundum Lucam’ (untitled, pp. 72-74 in C), Wulfstan admonishes ‘leofan men’ (‘beloved men’) for defiling the earth with sins; for ignoring God’s law, and for refusing to grant to God ‘þæt þæt we scoldon’ (‘what we should’), specifically refusing to pay tithes (*teodūng*) and alms (*ælmesse*). Perhaps because ‘God’s law’ was being ignored by Englishmen, Wulfstan’s concerns for the populace to pay appropriate tithes and alms is repeatedly codified into his secular law¹⁸² (in *V Atr*,¹⁸³ *VI Atr*,¹⁸⁴ *VIIa Atr*,¹⁸⁵ *VIII Atr*,¹⁸⁶ and the *Northumbrian Priests’ Law*¹⁸⁷), as well as being recorded in law codes found in C but not written by Wulfstan (*I Æthelstan*,¹⁸⁸ *I Eadmund*,¹⁸⁹ *II Edgar*¹⁹⁰). Another concern expressed in both Wulfstan’s homilies and his law codes concerns the rights and protection of widows. In his famous *Sermo Lupi* he laments that widows are forced into subsequent marriages unjustly, and this image is one which signals social depredation to Wulfstan; he thus legislates in his law codes for a widow’s right to protection and to choose not only whether to remarry, but also whom to remarry. Thus in *V Atr*, Wulfstan prescribes that:

[21] si ælc wuduwe, þe hi silfe midrihte healde, on Godes griðe 7 on ðæs cynccges.

[21,1] 7 sitte ælc XII monað werleas; ceose siððan þæt heo sylf wille.

¹⁸¹ T. A. Heslop, ‘Art and the Man: Archbishop Wulfstan and the York Gospelbook’, in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 279-308 (p. 284)

¹⁸² H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *Law and Legislation from Æthelberht to Magna Carta*, Edinburgh University Publications: History, Philosophy and Economics, 20 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), p. 26.

¹⁸³ For example, see chapters 11; 11,1; 12; 12,1; 12,2; 12,3.

¹⁸⁴ For example, see chapters 16; 17; 18; 18,1; 19.

¹⁸⁵ For example, see chapters 2,2; 3; 4; 4,1; 5.

¹⁸⁶ For example, see chapters 6; 7; 8; 9; 9,1; 10; 10,1; 11; 11,1; 12; 12,1; 14; 15.

¹⁸⁷ For example, see chapters 57,1; 57,2; 58. On this text, see discussion below, p. 93. See also the *Canons* 54-57 (Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, pp. 12-14).

¹⁸⁸ The whole of I Æthelstan is devoted to the payment of tithes and church dues.

¹⁸⁹ For example, see chapter 2.

¹⁹⁰ For example, see chapters 1; 1,1; 2; 2,1; 2,2; 2,3; 3; 3,1; 4; 4,1; 4,2; 4,3.

21. every widow who conducts herself rightly is to be under the protection of God and the king.

21.1 And each [widow] is to remain unmarried for twelve months; she is afterwards to choose what she herself will.

The concern for the protection of widows and their right to choose is repeated in *VI Atr* (chapter 26; 26,1).¹⁹¹ Wulfstan's 'prohibition against widows' premature remarriage', in *V, VI Atr*, however, 'clearly represents his own, strongly held view [... and] appears to represent [...] his success in imposing his own preoccupations', informed by his church context, on 'secular' legislation.¹⁹²

*VIIa Æthelræd*¹⁹³ specifically concerns penance on a national scale, and thus reiterates Wulfstan's concern for repentance and penance noted above:¹⁹⁴ it 'stands out as one of the most dramatic expressions of the labor of penance enacted as civil and ecclesiastical law in Anglo-Saxon England'.¹⁹⁵ Probably issued in AD 1009 during the repeated attacks on England by the Danish 'Great Army', and thus during a time of uncertainty and war, *VIIa Atr* significantly begins with the exhortation to 'geornlice earnian, þæt we Godes miltse 7 his mildheortnesse habban moton 7 þæt we þurh his fultum magon feondum wiðstandan' ('eagerly labour that we may obtain God's mercy and his compassion and that we may be able through his help to withstand our enemies'; Prologue). That is, the law code is introduced not as civil legislation, but as Christian exhortation; as Whitelock observes, *VIIa Atr* 'reads like a sermon'.¹⁹⁶ In *VIIa Atr*, 'Wulfstan's concern with penance meshes

¹⁹¹ Chapters 73; 73a; 73,1; 73,2; 73,3; 73,4 in *II Cn*, which introduce the penalties for a widow who remarries within twelve months, as well as for her subsequent husband, are not extant in *C*, which only includes part of *II Cn* (up to chapter 15,3). On the argument that the *Sermo Lupi* was in fact informed by *V, VI Atr*, see Whitelock, 'Homilist and Statesman', p. 37.

¹⁹² Hollis, 'Legislation on Widows', p. 444. Hollis is specifically concerned with *II Cn* (73-73,4), but her point is valid for the prohibition against remarriage within twelve months found in *V, VI Atr*.

¹⁹³ A Latin version, differing in expression and organisation, exists in *Quadripartitus*. *C* is the only vernacular witness to this law code.

¹⁹⁴ Whitelock notes that this code is written in 'Wulfstan's style' (*EHD I*, p. 447).

¹⁹⁵ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ Whitelock, 'Homilist and Statesman', p. 41. A similar point should be made of the first chapter of the version of Cnut's laws found in *C*. Chapter 1 states: '[1] Þonne is þæt ærest þæt witan geræddan . þæt hi ofer ealle oðre þingc ænne god æfre wurðodon . 7 ænne cristendom anrædlice healdan . 7 cnut cyngc . lufian . mid rihtan . 7 mid trywðan . 7 eadgares lagan . geornlice folgian . [...] [1.2] Nu wille we swutelian . hwæt us

with his political ideas',¹⁹⁷ so that the code 'enlists an image of a people united under one king and one faith in a penitential act intended to stem the tide of Danish invasions'.¹⁹⁸

The quasi-homiletic opening to *VIIa Atr* raises an important internal issue regarding Wulfstan's writings: the genre divisions between Wulfstan's homilies and his other works, especially his law codes, are ambiguous. For example, on the differentiation between Wulfstan's law codes and his homilies, Wormald states that:

the simple truth is that his earlier laws are heavily homiletic, and his later homilies are very like laws. The more juristic approach of the later series of homilies, almost wholly omitted by Bethurum, merely show how far the Archbishop was becoming embroiled in legalistic trains of thought.¹⁹⁹

Wormald also reminds us elsewhere that 'the significance of Wulfstan's later homilies is not that they fit neither homiletic nor legal categories but that they fit both',²⁰⁰ and a similar point should be made for his earlier laws. Certainly *VIIa Atr* is 'heavily homiletic', both in tone and content. In terms of its prescription for national penance, it corresponds as much with some of Wulfstan's homilies in C, as with the law codes to which genre it belongs: it is representative of Wulfstan's 'homiletic' law codes. It should also be noted

mæg to ræde for gode .] for worlde. gime se þe wille . [1.3] Uton swiðe georne fram sinnan acirran .] ure misdæda geornlice betan .] ænne god rihtlice lufian] wurðian .] ænne cristendom anrædllice healdan .] ælcne hæðendom georne forbugan .' ('[1] In the first place, the councillors decreed that, above all other things, they would always honour one God and single-mindedly hold one Christian faith, and love King Cnut with due loyalty, and zealously observe the laws of Edgar. [...] Now we wish to make it known what may be for our advantage in religious and secular matters, let him who will, take heed. [1.3] Let us turn very zealously from sins, and earnestly atone for our misdeeds, and duly love and honour one God, and single-mindedly hold one Christian faith, and zealously avoid every heathen practice') (Unless otherwise noted, all Old English quotations taken from the selection of law codes (partial *VI Atr*, *I Cn*, *II Cn*) found on pp. 126-30 of C are taken from Kennedy's edition, 'Cnut's Law Code', pp. 72-81, although the chapter divisions are as given by *Gesetze* to avoid confusion. All modern English translations are also Kennedy's. All further references to this series of law codes throughout this thesis are given after the quotation in the text, by short title and chapter as given in *Gesetze*. Kennedy's edition 'is printed from the manuscript [CCCC 201, pp. 126-30] and the orthography and punctuation of the manuscript are preserved, but word division is my own' [p. 71]).

¹⁹⁷ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 24.

¹⁹⁸ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER', p. 17.

²⁰⁰ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 243.

that Wulfstan's 'embroilment' in legalistic rhetoric in his homilies is well attested in C:²⁰¹ the untitled homily beginning 'Leofan men ælcne þara ic bidde' (pp. 24-25 in C)²⁰² and the homily entitled 'Bemislicum Gelimpum' (pp. 28-29 in C)²⁰³ are effective examples of Wulfstan's quasi-legislative homilies.

VIIa Atr raises a second, vital point regarding Wulfstan's works: such texts support the principles of cooperative governance, and are projects of moral regulation. The homiletic opening to the ostensibly secular *VIIa Atr* translates Christian morality into secular expectation: *VIIa Atr* constructs morality as law.²⁰⁴ In so doing, it implicitly asserts that morality is fundamental to law, both framing and informing it, and that morality is a legal obligation: that is, morality is legislated. *VIIa Atr*, then, manifests the cooperation of church and secular authorities in its legislation of morality – specifically, the moral requirement for performing penance – and it 'reminds us [that] the moral health of the entire English people is also an index of and response to political events'.²⁰⁵ It indicates a fusion of secular law and moral obligation.

VIIa Atr not only embodies the synthesis of secular and ecclesiastical interests, but is also morally regulatory, and these interrelated concepts are evident in many of Wulfstan's other writings. It illustrates the way in which Wulfstan's law codes more generally translated sin into crime. As Bethurum reminds us, in the laws 'what we would call sins and crimes are dealt with indifferently and are equally offensive to the Church and to the State'.²⁰⁶ Chapter 2 of *VIIa Atr* prescribes that 'every man' (*mann gebwilt*) is to go to church, to perform confession, to pay church dues, 'J clipian inweardre heortan georne to Criste' ('and to call on Christ eagerly from their innermost heart'; 2,1); Chapter 3

²⁰¹ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 17.

²⁰² Collated in Napier, pp. 116-18, no. XXIII.

²⁰³ Collated in Napier, pp. 169-72, no. XXXV.

²⁰⁴ On the seamless integration of *VIIa Atr* into the preceding homilies, see Richards, 'Manuscript Contexts for Laws', p. 178.

²⁰⁵ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 5.

²⁰⁶ Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', p. 224.

monetarily penalises those who do not conform to this prescription: ‘] gif hwa þis ne gelæste, ðonne gebete he þæt, swa swa hit gelagod is’ (‘and if anyone does not perform this, then he is to compensate for it as it is legally ordained’). The significance of these clauses is three-fold: firstly, the moral obligation to perform confession and seek Christ in one’s life is legalised – moral obligation is translated into legal necessity; secondly, non-performance of this moral obligation, which, in other contexts, would be designated ‘sinful’, is, in *VIIa Atr*, designated ‘criminal’ and punishable by secular law; thirdly, the reference to penalties that are ‘legally ordained’ implies the appropriateness of the translation of sin into crime and seamlessly integrates such moral crime into the larger body of pre-existing legislation.

In their morally regulatory agenda, Wulfstan’s homilies and law codes ‘are remarkably consonant in many ways. Wulfstan contrives to write law-codes laden with Christian morality while producing homilies which aim at social engineering’.²⁰⁷ Thus, whilst Wulfstan’s law codes equate sin with crime, his homilies convert crime into sin. His opening to his *Sermo Lupi* is illustrative of this trend. In the version extant in C, Wulfstan begins by stating that the world’s end is close, that the Antichrist is near, and that ‘þæt deofol þas þeode nu fela geara dwelode to swiðe’ (‘the devil has led this people now for many years into error too exceedingly’). Wulfstan goes on to describe the manifestations of such error: men piled ‘yfel æfter oðrum] unriht arærde] *unlaga* manega ealles to wide geond ealle þas ðeode’ (‘[one] evil upon others and committed wrongs and many *unlawful* acts all too widely throughout this entire people’; my emphasis). What is significant here is that Wulfstan conflates the ideas of the evil performed at the bidding of the devil, and the infringement of the law: in *Sermo Lupi*, *unlaga* (‘violation of law’) is connected with *yfel* (‘evil’). In the context of this particular homily, *yfel* has a moral sense, and thus, by association, so does *unlaga*. Wulfstan reiterates later in *Sermo Lupi* that a manifestation of English sinfulness is the deterioration of *folclaga* (‘laws of the people’),

²⁰⁷ Heslop, ‘Art and the Man’, p. 303.

and it is impossible to distinguish whether Wulfstan is deploring moral sin or illegal action in his infamous and lengthy list of grievances performed by the English.

Ac wearð þes þeodscipe, swa hit þyncan mæg, swyðe forsyngod þurh mænigfealda synna 7 þurh fela misdæda; ðurh morðdæda 7 ðurh mandæda, ðurh gytsunge 7 þurh gifernesne, ðurh stala 7 þurh strudunga, ðurh mansylene 7 þurh hæðene unsida, þurh swicdomas 7 þurh searocræftas, ðurh lahbrycas 7 ðurh æswicas, ðurh mægræsas 7 þurh manslihtas, ðurh hadbrycas 7 þurh æwbrycas, ðurh sibgelegeru 7 ðurh mistlice forlegeru.

But this nation, as it may appear, has become burdened with sin through manifold sins and through many misdeeds: through murders and through crimes, through avarice and through gluttony, through thefts and through robberies, through trafficking men and through heathen vices, through frauds and through treacheries, through breaches of law and through offences against the law, through attacks on relatives and through manslaughters, through injuries of ones in holy orders and through adulteries, through incest and through various fornications.

Wulfstan here fuses sin and crime: crime, represented by *lahbryce* and *æswice*, is listed as contributing to the manifold sins and misdeeds which burden the nation with sins. The other significant feature of this list is that it incorporates specific crimes (murder, theft, fraud, manslaughter) and designates them as sinful (in Wulfstan's list, they are grouped with sins such as avarice and gluttony). In other words, in *Sermo Lupi*, as elsewhere, crime is equated with sin, and the illegal is made immoral; in Wulfstan's complementary law codes, sin is equated with crime, and the immoral is made illegal.²⁰⁸ As Oakley observes, 'the secular laws of that time constantly reiterated that crimes were sins, and that secular penal law had a religious, as well as a punitive purpose'.²⁰⁹ Thus in *VIII Atr*, Wulfstan prescribes the payment of God's dues and the observance of festivals and fasts, and proscribes Sunday markets: these three moral obligations are not only codified into legislation, but the penalties attached to them are explicitly designated as civil, not religious. Thus, non-payment of tithes is punished by *worldlic steor* ('civil penalty'; 15); non-observance of religious festivals and fasts is penalised by a fine (16), and Sunday marketing incurs the *fulle worldwite* ('full civil penalty'; 17). Sins and religious obligations thus become incorporated into legislation, the penalties for which are civil: immorality is

²⁰⁸ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 138.

²⁰⁹ Thomas P. Oakley, 'The Cooperation of Mediaeval Penance and Secular Law', *Speculum*, 7 (1932), 515-24 (p. 516).

illegality. Wulfstan's works, then, are projects by which he may have regulated (whether by exhortation or by legislation) the morality of the nation: his access to the morality of the English occurs at both the legislative level, as well as the homiletic one.

Broadly speaking, Wulfstan's homilies and law codes provide us with a witness to a method by which morality became incorporated into political, social and cultural dialogue, and by which political, social and cultural dialogue became implied in Christian didacticism, in late Anglo-Saxon England. This trend is exemplified in *VI Atr*.

[42] And git we willað myngian freonda gehwlcne . ealswa us neod is . gelome to donne . þæt gehwa hine silfne georne beþence . 7 þæt he fram sinnum georne gecirre . 7 oðrum mannum unrihtes stire . 7 þæt he ofer ealle oðre þingc lufige . his drihten . 7 þæt he oft 7 gelome . hæbe on gemynde . þæt mannum is mæst þearf oftost to gemunnenne . þæt is þæt hi rihtne geleafan habban on ðone soðan god . þe is waldend 7 wirhta . ealra gesceafta . 7 þæt hi rihtne cristendom rihtlice healdan . 7 þæt hi godcundum lareowum . geornlice hyran . 7 godes larum 7 lagum rihtlice filigan

[42,3] And þæt hi godes circan . æghwar georne griðian 7 friðian 7 mid leohte 7 lacum gelome hig gegretan . 7 hig silfe þar georne gebiddan .

[42] And we wish further to exhort every friend, as there is often need for us to do, that he take serious thought for himself, and that he turn zealously from sins, and prevent other men from doing wrong, and that he love his Lord above all things, and that he continually have in mind what there is most need most often for men to remember, namely that they should have proper faith in the true God, who is the ruler and maker of all created things, and that they should duly observe the true Christian faith, and that they should zealously obey their spiritual teachers, and duly follow the teachings and laws of God.

[42.3] And that they everywhere diligently protect the churches of God and maintain their security, and visit them often with candles and offerings, and there earnestly pray.

In *VI Atr*, homiletic and didactic moralising is encoded into legislation, and thereby introduced into the politico-cultural discourse of late Anglo-Saxon England: Christian obligation and legal obligation are inseparable. Such manifestations of cooperative governance and moral regulation are evident in many of Wulfstan's works in C. In this sense, then, 'it is no surprise that laws and homilies should have been made to resemble

one another in Wulfstan manuscripts', one of which is C, since 'they are, as has often been observed, very similar types of text',²¹⁰ working towards a single purpose.

Also included in C are two of Wulfstan's pastoral letters; one of these is printed by Bethurum as a homily, indicating a further blurring of genre in Wulfstan's works. The other letter was written by Ælfric, 'first presented to Wulfstan in Latin, and then translated – or, more truthfully adapted – into an English form'.²¹¹ The version of Ælfric's Old English letter in C is a revised one, 'and the revision has been attributed to Wulfstan on the grounds of style and language'.²¹² In his revision of Ælfric's letter, Wulfstan does not substantially or significantly change the content, until close to the end of the letter.²¹³ At this point he modifies Ælfric's words considerably by totally excluding 'Ælfric's proscription of clerical involvement in secular justice'.²¹⁴ It is striking that Wulfstan removes 'the denunciation of clerical and episcopal involvement in secular justice',²¹⁵ especially given the manuscript context of C: the law codes, as well as the quasi-legislative homilies, found in C indicate that Wulfstan was an archbishop very much involved in secular justice, and presumably Ælfric's reproof ill suited Wulfstan's political and judicial interests.

Wulfstan's other pastoral letter in C is edited by Bethurum as the homily, 'Sermo ad Populum'.²¹⁶ Although for the most part C shares a common model for Wulfstan's

²¹⁰ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 242.

²¹¹ Hill, 'Wulfstan: Reformer?', p. 313. On this letter see Joyce Hill, 'Monastic Reform and the Secular Church: Ælfric's Pastoral Letters in Context', in *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. by Hicks, pp. 103-17 (pp. 103-06).

²¹² Malcolm Godden, 'The Relations of Wulfstan and Ælfric: A Reassessment', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. by Townend, pp. 353-74 (p. 361).

²¹³ Godden, 'Wulfstan and Ælfric', pp. 361-62.

²¹⁴ Godden, 'Wulfstan and Ælfric', pp. 361-62.

²¹⁵ Godden, 'Wulfstan and Ælfric', p. 360. I agree with Godden that the received explanation of the transmission of this letter is 'neither inherently probable nor supported by the evidence', and that the letter contained in C supports the contention that 'it was Wulfstan or an associate who quietly removed the offending final section before using or circulating the letter' ('Wulfstan and Ælfric', p. 361).

²¹⁶ Bethurum, *Homilies*, XIII: 'Sermo Ad Populum', pp. 225-32.

homilies with MS Hatton 113,²¹⁷ in the C version of ‘Sermo ad Populum’, ‘C has an important introductory sentence of address to the thanes which is wanting in the other manuscripts’.²¹⁸ The unique introductory sentence in the C version of this pastoral letter is thus significant, especially since it names the author of the homily as Wulfstan.²¹⁹

Wulfstan arcebisceop greteð freondlice þegnas on ðeode, gehadode 7 læwede, ealle gemænlice þa ðe him betæhte sindon for gode to wissianne. And ic bidde eow for Godes lufan þæt ge þises gewrites giman 7 on hwiltidum hit on gemynde habban. forðam þeah ðe hit leohtlic ::minegung þince hit is þeah þearflic, gime se þe wille.

Archbishop Wulfstan greets in friendship the thanes in the nation, ordained and lay, everyone in fellowship, those who are dedicated on behalf of God to instruct. And I entreat you, for the love of God, that you take notice of this treatise, and at times be mindful of it, because although this exhortation appears light, it is nevertheless necessary for the one who will observe it.²²⁰

It is noteworthy that Wulfstan addresses his pastoral letter (or homily) to both ordained and lay thanes, indicating that his message has application beyond those in holy orders: it is an edict directed at, and for the use of, those who teach others, that is, ‘those in power’. The letter implies Wulfstan’s recognition of the necessity of cooperative governance, since it is not only those in holy orders who must instruct and take notice of the edict, but also the laity.

His concern was with the whole English nation. As a statesman, legislator, and primate he was concerned with the fate of the whole body, political and ecclesiastical. Convinced that he lived in the last days, he exhorted priest and layman alike to resist the deceitful teachings of the God’s enemies and to present themselves as righteous followers of God’s law and of true Christian teaching at the Last Day.²²¹

Whilst the inclusiveness which is implied in this pastoral letter is not evident in all of Wulfstan’s works in C (for example, the Old English ‘De Antichristo’ exhorts each *priest*

²¹⁷ See the schematic representation of manuscript relations in Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 11.

²¹⁸ Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 3.

²¹⁹ Cf. Winfried Rudolf, ‘Style and Composition of Napier XVIII: A Matter of Person or a Matter of Purpose?’, in *Authors, Heroes, and Lovers: Essays in Medieval English Literature and Language*, ed. by Thomas M. Honegger, Variations Collections, 2 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001), pp. 107–49. Rudolf argues that ‘Archbishop Wulfstan’ could well refer to St Wulfstan (Bishop of Worcester, d. AD 1095). Considering that C is otherwise connected with Wulfstan (as opposed to St Wulfstan) this claim seems unlikely.

²²⁰ The text of this introductory sentence is printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XIII: ‘Sermo ad Populum’, as a note to line 3 (p. 225).

²²¹ Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, p. 116.

to instruct his congregation in his diocese), Wulfstan is patently concerned to teach the clergy – and the powerful laity in some cases – *what* to teach. His pastoral letters and homilies are often written to ensure that ‘those in power’ effectively, and correctly, exercise that power: ‘lay reform was to be accomplished by preaching and practical instruction by the clergy, and by their assiduous care over the spiritual needs of the congregation’.²²² It is in this context that we should understand the inclusion in C of Wulfstan’s *Institutes of Polity*, *Canons of Edgar* and *Northumbrian Priests’ Law*. Many of his works in this manuscript prescribe the role of the powerful in society, and delineate the duties and responsibilities of all constituents of a holy society.²²³ The remaining texts in C ascribed to Wulfstan address this issue of the rights and duties of every member of the nation;²²⁴ codify social order, and establish the hierarchy in which ‘those in power’ are constituted as ‘those who regulate’.²²⁵

Wulfstan’s *Institutes of Polity*²²⁶ (pp. 40-43 and 87-97 in C) is a treatise on social order which delineates the roles and responsibilities of the ‘three orders’ of society: those who pray, those who fight, and those who work (or labour). Like *Gepyncðo* (also found in C, and discussed below), *Polity* is ‘a major regulatory treatise on the ordering of authority in church and state’,²²⁷ and ‘a work defining the duties of all classes of men and attempting to clarify the relationship between Church and State’.²²⁸ it examines the limits of power of all ranks of men. Written during Cnut’s reign, it reflects the literary efforts of Wulfstan’s later career, during which he wrote most of his political theory. The preservation of the ‘first edition’²²⁹ of *Polity* in ‘an almost complete form’ in C²³⁰ corresponds to the general

²²² Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xlvii.

²²³ See Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. lii.

²²⁴ See Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xlvii.

²²⁵ In this pursuit they are paralleled by *V Atr*, chapters 4 and 4,1; *VIII Atr*, chapters 32, 36; *I Cn*, chapter 6.

²²⁶ According to Whitelock, *Polity* was undoubtedly authored by Wulfstan: *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, p. 24. See also Karl Jost, ‘Einige Wulfstantexte und ihre Quellen’, *Anglia*, NS 44 (1932), 265-315; Bethurum, ‘Wulfstan’, pp. 227-28.

²²⁷ Hill, ‘Wulfstan: Reformer?’, p. 315. See also Loyn, ‘De Iure Regis’, p. 23.

²²⁸ Bately, ‘Old English Prose’, p. 73.

²²⁹ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 230.

character of the manuscript in that *Polity* is a social and political treatise which moralised the duties of both the clergy and the laity. As Bethurum summarises:

there are strong statements about the duties of secular leaders and a lament about the decay of honesty among secular offices ‘since Edgar died’, [however,] by far the largest part of *Polity* deals with the church [...]. *Polity* ends with a long homiletic recapitulation of the whole duty of man, with many passages in common with Homily X c [pp. 56-61 in C, entitled *Her Onginneð Be Cristendome*] and the laws of Ethelred.²³¹

The sectional divisions of *Polity* indicate the broad social categories with which it was concerned:²³² *be cinincge* (‘concerning the king’); *be cinedom* (‘concerning the kingdom’); *be eorlum* (‘concerning noblemen’); *be sacerdum* (‘concerning priests’); *be gebadedum mannum* (‘concerning ordained ones’); *be abbodum* (‘concerning abbots’); *be munecum* (‘concerning monks’); *be minecenan* (‘concerning cloistered women’); *be preostum ⁊ nunnan* (‘concerning presbyters and secular vowesses’);²³³ *be læwedum mannum* (‘concerning laymen’); *be wudewan* (‘concerning widows’), *be circan* (‘concerning the church’), and *be eallum cristenum mannum* (‘concerning all Christian men’).²³⁴ In its definition of ‘the duties and responsibilities of the different social estates’,²³⁵ *Polity* engaged directly with cooperative governance and with the duties of ‘those in power’, both ecclesiastical and secular, and affirms Wulfstan’s belief in the role of the clergy in the social reform of the nation (see, *be sacerdum*).

Wulfstan’s *Canons of Edgar* is extant in C (pp. 97-101) and is a ‘comprehensive set of rules with application for clergy and laity alike’.²³⁶ Fowler describes Wulfstan’s purpose for the *Canons* as:

²³⁰ Caie, *Old English ‘Judgement Day II’*, p. 12.

²³¹ Bethurum, ‘Wulfstan’, p. 228.

²³² Richards, ‘Manuscript Contexts for Laws’, p. 179.

²³³ On the translation of *myneceanu* and *nunne* in Wulfstan’s writing and elsewhere, see Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England*, I (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 96-104.

²³⁴ These chapters of *Polity* are found on pp. 40-43 and pp. 87-97 of C.

²³⁵ Caie, *Old English ‘Judgement Day II’*, p. 12.

²³⁶ Roger Fowler, “Archbishop Wulfstan’s Commonplace Book” and the *Canons of Edgar*, *Medium Ævum*, 32 (1963), 1-10 (p. 3). See also Hill, ‘Wulfstan: Reformer?’, p. 314; Wormald, ‘Eleventh-Century State-

to instruct his priests how to serve God and how to teach their people in the manner best suited to stem the decline of morals. [...] The *Canons of Edgar* is a document designed to combat the immorality and laziness of the secular clergy and to give them practical guidance on the carrying out of their duties.²³⁷

He further argues that ‘the *Canons* may be important in establishing a consistent purpose in Wulfstan’s work: to effect certain far-reaching reforms by practical legislation (in the non-homiletic works) and by passionate exhortation’.²³⁸ The *Canons* articulate, on the one hand, priests’ church functions, and, on the other, lay matters ‘which the priest must regulate by preaching’.²³⁹ They drew ‘heavily on what were once called [...] the “Excerpts of Archbishop Egbert”’: a set of extracts from biblical, conciliar, patristic, and penitential literature’,²⁴⁰ and now recognised as Wulfstan’s canon law collection.²⁴¹ The *Canons* also drew on Carolingian sources, significantly, on the *Penitential of Pseudo-Theodore*, and on the *Old English Penitential* (or *Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert*).²⁴² The latter text was a translation of the penitential of Halitgar of Cambrai, and from it derives Part IV of the vernacular ‘Handbook’ found in C.²⁴³ The penitential connection between the *Canons of Edgar* and the ‘Handbook’ is thus demonstrable, and is further evidenced by Wulfstan’s exhortation to the clergy to administer confession and penance in the *Canons*,²⁴⁴ the ‘Handbook’ represents the practical instrument for the performance of that duty.

Builder’, p. 15. On Wulfstan’s authorship of the *Canons*, see Whitelock, ‘Homilist and Statesman’, p. 29; Bethurum, ‘Wulfstan’, p. 226.

²³⁷ Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xxix and p. 1.

²³⁸ Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xlvi.

²³⁹ Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. li.

²⁴⁰ Wormald, ‘Eleventh-Century State-Builder’, p. 15. See also Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xxxv, pp. xli–xlii, p. lvii.

²⁴¹ Wulfstan’s canon law collection is not found in C. It has been edited by J. E. Cross and Andrew Hamer in *Wulfstan’s Canon Law Collection*, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 1 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999).

²⁴² Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xxxv, pp. xlii–xliii. On the sources of the *Canons* see also Fowler, ‘Wulfstan’s Commonplace Book’, pp. 3–7.

²⁴³ Hill, ‘Wulfstan: Reformer?’, p. 315. On Wulfstan’s extensive incorporation of his own homilies into the *Canons*, see, Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, pp. xxix–xxxiv.

²⁴⁴ See Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, no. 68, p. 14.

The authorship of the *Northumbrian Priests' Law* is still contested: Wormald states that 'it is influenced by Wulfstan's style and views, but is unlikely to be his work',²⁴⁵ but Caie appears to believe that it is genuinely Wulfstan's, stating that it 'would have been written when Wulfstan was archbishop of York (1002-23)',²⁴⁶ and Fowler implies Wulfstan's authorship, arguing that the *Priests' Law* 'is a later rewriting of the Canons, perhaps intended for the secular clergy in the northern diocese'.²⁴⁷ The *Priests' Law*, extant uniquely in C (pp. 43-46), has two parts: chapters 1-45 'constitute a priests' law proper', and chapters 46-67 concern themselves 'with the behaviour of the laity in religious concerns, not with that of priests'.²⁴⁸ This text is thus also involved with both ecclesiastical and secular domains, and like many of Wulfstan's texts in C, the concerns of social order and of lay governance are included in an ostensibly ecclesiastical text.

Five short treatises, or legal statements, are found in C, which concern church and secular rankings; which Bethurum associates with Wulfstan,²⁴⁹ and which, in C, are compiled in full, in the probable intended order (pp. 101-03 in C).²⁵⁰ The first, *Gepýncðo*, 'opens with an explicit lament about the excessive social mobility of the times'.²⁵¹ *Norðleoda laga* ('the law of the North people') codifies the wergilds of men of various ranks in that region, as does *Be Mircna laga* ('concerning the law of the Mercians'). *Be mircscan aðe* ('concerning

²⁴⁵ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208, pp. 396-97, and see also his 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 12, and his *Legal Culture*, pp. 249-51; Hill 'Wulfstan: Reformer?', p. 319, n. 34; Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 196.

²⁴⁶ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 9. He later calls it 'Wulfstanian', p. 12. Whitelock sees no reason for it not to be Wulfstan's, but makes no definite conclusions: *EHD I*, pp. 471-72.

²⁴⁷ Fowler, 'Wulfstan's Commonplace Book', p. 9.

²⁴⁸ *EHD I*, p. 471.

²⁴⁹ Dorothy Bethurum, 'Six Anonymous Old English Codes', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 49 (1950), 449-63. She thinks that both *Gepýncðo* and *Hadbot* are genuinely Wulfstan's works, whilst the other three were written on Wulfstan's direction (*Homilies*, p. 70). Whitelock observes that all five 'betray Wulfstan's style, though he clearly incorporated earlier legal texts' (*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, pp. 23-24). See also Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', p. 226; Whitelock, 'Laws of Cnut', pp. 437-38; Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 12. Three of the codes (*Mircna laga*, *Að* and *Hadbot*) are extant in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 190 (another Wulfstanian manuscript). All five are in the *Textus Roffensis*, 'but not as a group or in order' (*EHD I*, p. 468).

²⁵⁰ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 391.

²⁵¹ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 19.

the Mercian oath') prescribes the values of oaths in Mercia, relative to wergild. Finally *Be gehadodra manna aðe, be hadbote* ('concerning the oath of ordained men, concerning compensation') includes a general statement about the status of the church in society, as well as specific provisions for compensation for crimes against those in orders. Wormald contends that 'the whole point of this collection was thus to re-establish traditional social gradations',²⁵² and Caie is right to note that the five codes 'reflect the concern shown by Wulfstan to create order and stricter organisation in English society'.²⁵³ These five tracts thus similarly support Wulfstan's other works in C by establishing a social order that was founded upon the divine model as suggested in *Hadbot*.

Finally, Wulfstan is generally accepted as the author of the translated version of the so-called 'Benedictine Office' found in C (and in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121).²⁵⁴ In the manuscript, the 'Office' is entitled *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (pp. 112-14 of C). C does not record the full 'Office'; rather, it 'contains only the vernacular version of the introductions to the canonical set offices of the day [... This] introductory material, influenced by Hrabanus Maurus, was intended not for liturgical use but for didactic purposes'.²⁵⁵ It is most likely that the 'Office' (a misnomer since the text is didactic rather than liturgical) was intended for a secular, or possibly secular clerical, audience.²⁵⁶ Caie describes it as a 'non-liturgical meditation, based on the need for penance'.²⁵⁷ It, too, then, corresponds to the contents of the manuscript in its penitential foundation, and 'the compiler of C' might have regarded the 'Office', and with it the vernacular (non-Wulfstanian) verse found in C, 'as works that prepared one for confession [...], given by the confessor to the penitent to instil the proper mood, and then the priest would follow the instructions in the "Handbook"'.²⁵⁸

²⁵² Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER', p. 19.

²⁵³ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 13.

²⁵⁴ See above, p. 71, n. 122; Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', pp. 226-27.

²⁵⁵ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 20.

²⁵⁶ Ure, *Benedictine Office*, pp. 62-63; Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, pp. 20-21.

²⁵⁷ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 21.

²⁵⁸ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 20.

Two points should be taken from this summary of Wulfstan's contributions to C. Firstly, as Wormald perceives, Whitelock's title for Wulfstan – 'Homilist and Statesman'²⁵⁹ – 'tends to bifurcate what was (or became) a unitary enterprise. [... Wulfstan's] career had a coherence and a dynamic that puts him in the front rank among early medieval state-builders'.²⁶⁰ In other words, the interrelations and intersections between Wulfstan's various works – homilies and law codes; homilies and pastoral letters; law codes, *Polity*, and treatises on rank – indicates a unified, cohesive and comprehensive approach to achieving his aims. In particular, his conflation of crime and sin, illegality and immorality, suggests a systematised attempt to architect a society that was regulated on the one hand by legal directives sustained by moral duty, and on the other by moral duty sustained by legal requirement. Secondly, the works of Wulfstan found in C represent the Archbishop as a reformer with particular, Carolingian-inspired, aims.

In Carolingian Francia [...], there is a great emphasis on law and social order, resulting in a substantial production of legal and theoretical texts, a process which was as much the proper business of the Reform as the production of exegetical material. The orders of society were defined, explicitly and implicitly, through law-codes issued by the king [...]. The secular church, as well as the monastic church, had its roles and responsibilities defined, as did secular society as a whole, and within this context the improvement of the secular church was a necessary objective. This is part of the original mainstream reform tradition, and it is here that Wulfstan fits, placing these concerns at the heart of his writings and giving them a direct and forceful expression not equalled by other English reformers.²⁶¹

Wormald charts the development of Wulfstan's thought from his *V Atr* (written AD 1008), which 'focused on the fundamentals of Christian belief and behaviour', to *Polity*, a 'ringing restatement of the principle that thrones were necessarily supported by society's Three Orders', to his 1014 release of the *Sermo Lupi*, to the 'mighty code' for Cnut (AD 1020-21) which 'stood as a consummation of the archbishop's campaign to organize the sort of society he was sure that the kingdom of the English had to be, if they were to keep

²⁵⁹ Whitelock, 'Homilist and Statesman', pp. 25-45.

²⁶⁰ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 226.

²⁶¹ Hill, 'Wulfstan: Reformer?', pp. 318-19.

the terms of [... God's] Covenant'.²⁶² Each of these stages of Wulfstan's philosophy is represented in C,²⁶³ and the manuscript thus reflects Wulfstan's appreciation of and contribution to cooperative governance, and represents the textual performance of his maturing vision of his 'holy society'. In terms of the manuscript:

the contents of C illustrate the breadth of Wulfstan's interests and responsibilities: the *Institutes of Polity* show his concern in the area of political theory as it lays down the duties for all people, lay and clerical alike, commenting on the interplay between church and state. The *Canons of Edgar* reflect Wulfstan's worries concerning the secular clergy. His sermons also demonstrate his sense of responsibility towards both laity and clergy [...]. The laws and codes that are attributed to Wulfstan [...] cover the legal sphere of his duties. His absorption with eschatological material reflects not only his spiritual fears but also his strong feelings about contemporary social and political evils. [...] The key to the unity in subject matter in C is undoubtedly to be found in the duties and interests of Wulfstan.²⁶⁴

If Wulfstan manifests the potential for cooperative governance particularly well, especially in the realm of moral regulation, then C is an excellent representation of both governance and regulation because of its strong connection with him. This is not, of course, to say that C is wholly by Wulfstan, or, indeed, written in his style.²⁶⁵ However, the 'unity the contents possess derives from their demonstrable associations with the activities of Wulfstan'.²⁶⁶ That is, the high predominance of his work in the manuscript, combined with the two facts that, firstly, the majority of his writing is represented in C, and, secondly, much non-Wulfstan material in C is written to imitate his style and concerns, may point to the purpose and intended audience of this manuscript.

The most convincing argument for the purpose of C thus far has been that it belongs to the collection of Wulfstan's so-called 'commonplace books'. The existence of a number of such 'commonplace books' – volumes of sources and documents intended to 'provide for

²⁶² Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 245.

²⁶³ Richards, 'Manuscript Contexts for Laws', p. 178.

²⁶⁴ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 21.

²⁶⁵ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208.

²⁶⁶ Whitbread, 'CCCC 201', pp. 108-09.

[...Wulfstan] the necessary guides for his multifarious duties²⁶⁷ – was most notably argued by Whitelock and Bethurum who, following Mary Bateson's lead, 'spotlight[ed] the link between Wulfstan's laws, tracts, and homilies, and manuscript collections of law, penance, and liturgy which looked very much as if they were his main sources'.²⁶⁸ Currently, eleven manuscripts are 'usually mentioned in connection with Wulfstan's Commonplace Book'.²⁶⁹

1. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 8558-63 (2498), ff. 80-131, ff. 132-53 (s. xi¹, s. xii¹)
2. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 190, pp. 1-294 (s. xi¹)
3. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 265, pp. 1-268 (s. xi^{med})
4. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS Gl. Kgl. Sam. 1595 (s. xiⁱⁿ)
5. London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A. I, ff. 70-177 (s. xiⁱⁿ)
6. London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, ff. 114-70 (s. xiⁱⁿ)
7. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 718 (S. C. 6464) (s. xii^{ex} or xiiiⁱⁿ)
8. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121 (S. C. 5232), ff. 9-110^v (s. xi^{3/4})
9. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 37 (S. C. 6464) (s. xii^{ex})
10. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Fonds Latin 3182 (s. x¹ or x²)
11. Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1382 (U. 109), ff. 1-183 (s. xi)

Wormald also lists C among Wulfstan's 'commonplace books';²⁷⁰ it has not, however, received unqualified identification as such.²⁷¹ Nevertheless, as Caie points out, the material in C which is attributable to Wulfstan recurs in MS 190; MS Nero A. i, and MS Gl. Kgl.

²⁶⁷ Dorothy Bethurum, 'Archbishop Wulfstan's Commonplace Book', *PMLA*, 57 (1942), 916-29 (p. 928). See also Fowler who describes such books as 'examples of a bishop's collection of key writings – a source-book or at least a reference-book' (*Canons of Edgar*, p. lv).

²⁶⁸ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 10. See also, Bethurum, 'Commonplace Book', and Mary Bateson, 'A Worcester Cathedral Book of Ecclesiastical Collections, Made c. 1000 A.D.', *English Historical Review*, 10 (1895), 712-31 (p. 712). On Wormald's criticisms of Bethurum's and Whitelock's conclusions, see Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 240. For a comprehensive survey of critical sources on Wulfstan's Commonplace Book, see the references provided in *Handlist* and in Hans Sauer, 'The Transmission and Structure of Archbishop Wulfstan's "Commonplace Book"', in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. by Paul Szarmach (New York, 2000), pp. 339-93 (first publ. as 'Zur Überlieferung und Anlage von Erzbischof Wulfstans "Handbuch"', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 36 [1980], 341-84).

²⁶⁹ Sauer, 'Transmission and Structure', pp. 340-42. See also Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. lv; Bethurum, 'Commonplace Book', pp. 916-17; Bethurum, 'Wulfstan', pp. 243-44.

²⁷⁰ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 10, as does Caie ('Vernacular Poems', p. 77) and Whitbread ('CCCC 201', p. 108).

²⁷¹ For instance C is not discussed by either Gneuss in his *Handlist* or by Sauer ('Transmission and Structure'), and Fowler dedicates a footnote to C: 'CCCC 201 [...] might be added to the list [of commonplace books]' (*Canons of Edgar*, p. lv, n. 2), although his reasoning for not including C in his list of commonplace books is not given.

Sam. 1595, all of ‘which are directly connected with Wulfstan’.²⁷² Importantly, the core of C

comprises a block of *Wulfstaniana* [...] of much the same type as Nero’s vernacular section, except that there is more of it. Once again, there is little difference in the style and none in layout between the prescriptive, the descriptive and the exhortatory.²⁷³

The close connection between C and other manuscripts accepted as Wulfstan’s, combined with an acknowledgement that ‘it is highly likely that Wulfstan had a commonplace book, a volume that contained texts and documents that he frequently required’,²⁷⁴ suggests that ‘MS C belonged to, or at least was connected with, such a work’.²⁷⁵ It is difficult to sustain the argument that C ‘may even be a version, at one or more removes, of a “master-copy” kept in Wulfstan’s cathedral libraries’:²⁷⁶ no palaeographical evidence exists to associate C *directly* with Wulfstan (most notably, Wulfstan’s own handwriting is not present in C, which is largely lacking in marginalia²⁷⁷), and, moreover, *Apollonius of Tyre* seems not to have been a text ‘frequently required’ by Wulfstan since it is not found in any other manuscript connected with him. Nevertheless,

the mixture of legal, homiletic, penitential, liturgical and other religious works in this volume would point to the fact that it might have been a handbook or commonplace book for what Mildred Budny calls ‘a statesman cleric’; she suggests that the inclusion of forms for confession and absolution ‘could indicate subsequent use in the field as well as in the study’.²⁷⁸

Similarly, Wormald argues that at least Section B, subsection ii (the majority of Part I of C) ‘is a copy of a typical Wulfstan manual of pastoral administration’.²⁷⁹ Whilst it is

²⁷² Caie, ‘Codicological Clues’, p. 7, n. 10.

²⁷³ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 242.

²⁷⁴ Caie, ‘Codicological Clues’, p. 7.

²⁷⁵ Caie, ‘Codicological Clues’, p. 7. See also Caie, *Old English Judgment Day II*, p. 11.

²⁷⁶ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208.

²⁷⁷ See Neil R. Ker, ‘The Handwriting of Archbishop Wulfstan’, in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 315–31.

²⁷⁸ Caie, *Old English Judgment Day II*, p. 15.

²⁷⁹ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 209.

unlikely that Budny's 'statesman cleric' would have been Wulfstan himself²⁸⁰ (the often careless copying left uncorrected sits ill with our knowledge of Wulfstan as a constant amender and corrector),²⁸¹ her argument that C was compiled for a 'statesman cleric' has great merit: the texts in C direct cooperative governance and promote clerical intervention in 'state' matters, and C itself is a manuscript intended as 'a handbook for both ecclesiastical and secular life'.²⁸² As Wormald argues, C is 'a textbook on Christian government',²⁸³ and, indeed, on Christian *governance*: it is 'a manual for the drilling of a Christian society'.²⁸⁴ If, as Richards argues, the 'commonplace book' is characterised by the inclusion of laws and 'moral precepts of the church' as 'related instructional materials',²⁸⁵ then C, in its undoubted inclusion of both law and exhortation, can be designated as such a 'commonplace' volume.

A chapter in *VI Atr* found in C is particularly revealing of Wulfstan's general aim and perhaps the manuscript's also.

[40] And smeage man symle on ælce wisan . hu man firmest mæg ræd aredian þeode to beafe . and rihtne cristendom swiðost aræran . ⁊ æghwilce unlaga geornost afillan . forðam þurh þæt hit sceal on earde godian to ahte . þæt man unriht alecge . ⁊ rihtwisnesse lufige . for gode . ⁊ for worlde

[40] And it should be constantly considered, in every way, how best to decide what should be decreed for the good of the people, and how best to promote true Christianity, and zealously suppress every misdeed, for improvement in the state of the land shall come through the suppression of wrongdoing and the love of righteousness, in religious and in secular matters.

The texts in C are unquestionably 'better appreciated if seen in the light of Wulfstan's ministry, [and] the aims of the Benedictine revival'.²⁸⁶ These texts reflect Wulfstan's

²⁸⁰ Caie suggests this possibility (*Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 15). Budny herself suggests that the manuscript is 'a handbook for Wulfstanian statesmen and clerics or statesmen and clerics' (that is, not a handbook for Wulfstan himself) (Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 477).

²⁸¹ See, for example, Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. xxviii; Wormald, *Legal Culture*, pp. 227-28.

²⁸² Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 475.

²⁸³ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 245.

²⁸⁴ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208.

²⁸⁵ Richards, 'Manuscript Contexts of Laws', p. 178.

²⁸⁶ Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, p. 21.

concern to establish and to disseminate what was advisable for the ‘good of the people’, or the national benefit: they promote Christianity, and are concerned with the definition of justice and social order. These texts also locate the national benefit in cooperative governance – in the promotion of justice and righteousness in both religious and secular matters by both religious and secular leaders. In this way, C is a meditation not only on the social order of a holy society, but on the ways by which that social order could be imparted to its constituents most effectively – through homilies, laws and penance. ‘For Wulfstan, builder of the Holy Society, the religious was political and the political was religious’:²⁸⁷ it is this principle which unifies Wulfstan’s works in C, and which indicates that the intended reader of this manuscript was one, who, like Wulfstan, saw the inherent continuities between religious and secular governance and who had firm interests in both the secular and clerical worlds. The two aspects which unify this manuscript are, firstly, the attempt to promote cooperative governance, and, secondly, the attempt to inculcate the morality of a holy society to *all* English people: clerical, secular, noble, servant. C is an example of how the systematisation of society into a unified and single theocratic one might be achieved, and how Wulfstan’s ‘moral fervour, combined with legalistic and moralistic terminology’ could regulate morality.²⁸⁸

1.2.3 Moralising Legislation, Legislating Morality

As indicated above, the homiletic styling of Wulfstan’s legislation, and the legislative styling of some of his homilies, has frequently been noted. For example, Lionarons states that:

the roles of homilist and statesman were rarely if ever separated in Wulfstan’s mind or in his works: his law-codes became increasingly homiletic as the reign of Æthelræd gave way to that of Cnut, while his homilies in turn became legalistic in terminology and method. The same themes recur in both: loyalty to God and king; adherence to secular and divine law; the keeping of Christian feasts and fasts; the payment of Church dues and tithes; social justice for the poor; almsgiving; absolute clerical celibacy and sexual

²⁸⁷ Cowen, ‘The Wounds of Sin’, p. 411.

²⁸⁸ Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, p. 21.

continence for the laity; repentance, prayer, and penance; and the continual reminder – both pre- and postmillenium – that the end of the world is close at hand.²⁸⁹

Such tonal intersection and thematic recurrence facilitated Wulfstan's fusion of sin and crime, and his translation of the immoral into the illegal (and *vice versa*).²⁹⁰ It has been less often observed that Wulfstan's laws codes incorporated penitential moralisation, and that the tone and content of penitential literature is strikingly apparent in the extant Wulfstanian law codes.

The connection between penitentials and law codes has not gone completely unnoticed: McNeill and Gamer, whose translation of the principal *Libri Poenitentiales* remains standard (although now considered among the 'untrustworthy editions'²⁹¹ of the texts), included a chapter on 'Penitential Elements in Medieval Public Law' in their volume, in which they cite (among others) *V* and *VII Atr* and *I* and *II Cn*.²⁹² Long ago, Oakley's doctoral dissertation was published as a monograph on the joint influence of penitential discipline and secular law in Anglo-Saxon England,²⁹³ and, later in his career, he concluded regarding this topic that:

secular laws and penitential canons constantly cooperated [...]. This cooperation in maintaining law and order and in promoting the extension of Christianity exerted profound effects upon the development of civilization; and, in these respects, the work of ecclesiastical and of secular penal law constitutes an important phase of social history.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ Lionarons, 'Wulfstan's Eschatology', pp. 413-14.

²⁹⁰ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 345.

²⁹¹ Pierre J. Payer, 'Confession and the Study of Sex in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1696 (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 3-31 (p. 5).

²⁹² *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal "Libri Poenitentiales" and Selections from Related Documents*, trans. by John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, Records of Western Civilisation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938; repr. 1990), pp. 383-87. In a similar way, David A. E. Pelteret included a chapter on laws and penitentials in his monograph on slavery (David A. E. Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England: From the Reign of Alfred until the Twelfth Century*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History [Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995], pp. 80-108).

²⁹³ Thomas P. Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law in their Joint Influence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923; repr. 2003).

²⁹⁴ Thomas P. Oakley, 'The Penitentials as Sources for Mediaeval History', *Speculum*, 15 (1940), 210-23 (pp. 214-25).

However, despite the acknowledgement that a connection existed between penance and law, the nexus has remained relatively little examined, and Oakley's monograph on the subject suffers from being written at a time when the study of penitentials was in its infancy, with reliable editions of the texts unavailable. Allen Frantzen's pioneering studies on the penitentials identify the need to redress this lack of attention – the preface to his *Literature of Penance* concludes with his observation that 'the penitentials are most usefully studied not in isolation, as lists of sins, but in the context of contemporary law and literature – their cooperation with secular law, their relation to homilies and catechetical texts, and their integration with prayer'.²⁹⁵ However, it was outside the remit of his research to undertake specific analysis of the cooperation of law and penance, and so such examination is still lacking.

C is a manuscript which suggests itself for this comparative analysis, incorporating, as it does, both secular law and penitential literature. The law codes in C are particularly appropriate for such examination for two reasons. Firstly, they are all connected to Wulfstan; even the non-Wulfstanian codes in C were sources for Wulfstan's own legislation and thus reflect his ideologies. Wulfstan's contribution to the climate of cooperative governance in late Anglo-Saxon England is witnessed in his legislation, in which the 'joint concerns of king and church come together so closely and clearly',²⁹⁶ and, given his concern for penance, it would be surprising *not* to be able to perceive the incorporation of penitential rhetoric into his laws. Secondly, in terms of moral regulation, Hunt calls for an exploration of 'the way in which law becomes involved, is created, invoked, deployed, avoided or just ignored in the process' of moral regulation;²⁹⁷ we should, he states, 'explore the ways in which legislation has resulted from specific moral regulation'.²⁹⁸ An examination of the contact between the legislation and the 'Handbook'

²⁹⁵ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. xii.

²⁹⁶ Stafford, 'Church and Society', p. 29.

²⁹⁷ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 11.

²⁹⁸ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 11.

in C may indicate the specific ways in which Wulfstan's law was involved and deployed in his morally regulatory programme.

Although it seems unlikely that Wulfstan himself authored the 'Handbook' extant in C,²⁹⁹ and it is probable that he did not author a penitential code at all, the 'Handbook' (like the manuscript's law codes) has undeniable associations with Wulfstan. Fowler cites five primary manuscripts, in addition to C, which contain the 'Handbook' (in various states):

1. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 8558-63 (2498)
2. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 265
3. London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii
4. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121
5. Bod. Lib., MS Laud Misc. 482³⁰⁰

Of these, MSS 265, Junius 121, and 8558-63, as has been noted, are considered among Wulfstan's 'commonplace books'.³⁰¹ Moreover, MS Laud Misc. 482 is associated with Worcester.³⁰² In other words, of the six manuscripts containing the 'Handbook', four are undeniably associated with Wulfstan, or attributed to him, and one probably originated in his bishopric: 'the fact that the *Handbook* is found in manuscripts connected with Wulfstan is perhaps the strongest argument in favour of his having assembled the work'.³⁰³ Another factor which strengthens the connection between the 'Handbook' and Wulfstan is source-based: the 'Handbook's primary source is the *Old English Penitential* (or *Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert*), copies of which 'are restricted almost exclusively to MSS of known connection with Wulfstan',³⁰⁴ and upon which Wulfstan's *Canons of Edgar* was partially based.³⁰⁵ Further still, the 'Handbook' has a number of 'points of contact' with

²⁹⁹ Stylistic analysis does not suggest Wulfstan's authorship, although some parts are 'Wulfstanian' (see 'Handbook', pp. 9-10).

³⁰⁰ 'Handbook', pp. 1-3.

³⁰¹ 'Handbook', p. 2.

³⁰² It is glossed in the 'tremulous' Worcester hand ('Handbook', p. 7). Those manuscripts containing fragments of the 'Handbook' also have associations with Wulfstan (see 'Handbook', p. 7).

³⁰³ 'Handbook', p. 7.

³⁰⁴ 'Handbook', p. 10.

³⁰⁵ See discussion above, pp. 91-92.

Wulfstan's works.³⁰⁶ Frantzen argues that Wulfstan's instruction in the *Canons* and in *Polity* was for 'the priest [...] to hear confessions and assign penance, and bishops [...] to make sure that their clergy perform these duties in accordance with canon law'.³⁰⁷ Certainly, the *Canons* required priests to administer confession and instruct penitents,³⁰⁸ and *Polity* instructed bishops to oversee the confessional work of their priests, who, in turn, were instructed to teach and administer penance.³⁰⁹ In other words, Wulfstan explicitly required his priests to administer confession, implying that he recognised the need for a penitential handbook.³¹⁰ Fowler's conclusion regarding Wulfstan's relationship with the 'Handbook' is sound: 'we might speculate that Wulfstan had the *Handbook* compiled (no more definite assertion of his hand in the compilation would be wise)'.³¹¹ Wormald similarly concludes that the 'Handbook', 'if not a work by Wulfstan, was certainly accessible to him'.³¹² Wulfstan, it appears, knew the 'Handbook', and probably directed its compilation; he may, or may not, have directly authored it.

Penitential handbooks have a long and complex textual and scholarly history which must be acknowledged, although it is not the primary concern of this chapter. The history of the penitential genre, in particular its inception during the transition from public to private penance, and its Irish, Anglo-Saxon and Continental (especially Frankish) components, has now been investigated.³¹³ Moreover, Allen Frantzen's pioneering work has given the penitentials respectability, ensuring that studying penitential literature now needs no justification and releasing the penitentials 'from the stigma identifying them as

³⁰⁶ See 'Handbook', pp. 10-11, n. 18.

³⁰⁷ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 144.

³⁰⁸ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 144.

³⁰⁹ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 144-45.

³¹⁰ Caie, 'Text and Context', p. 160; see also *Canons*, no. 65 (Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. 14).

³¹¹ 'Handbook', p. 12.

³¹² Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 353.

³¹³ See Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*; Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Tradition of Penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 23-56; Pierre J. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code, 550-1150* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 7-11, pp. 55-61; Julie Ann Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives: Penitentials and Nunnery Rules in the Early Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 15-39; McNeill and Gamer, *Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 3-71.

harsh, inhibiting, primitive, exotic’.³¹⁴ accusations of the penitentials’ prurient, or generally worthless, nature as history and literature have been answered.

Penitential handbooks developed concomitantly with the Irish movement toward monastic private penance; as the Irish monastic model of penance was adapted in early Anglo-Saxon England for lay penitents, so, too, the handbook was modified to meet the growing needs of confessors.³¹⁵ In Anglo-Saxon England, the first penitential, composed in Anglo-Latin, was concerned with lay penance, and was ascribed to Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, although actually written by ‘Discipulus Umbrensius’ (the *Penitential of Theodore*).³¹⁶ From its inception, the *Penitential of Theodore* was hugely influential, both in England and on the Continent. The similarly influential and Anglo-Latin *Penitential of Egbert* is ‘the strongest contemporary witness to the importance of Theodore’s Penitential [...] it cites Theodore by name and [...] borrows many of its provisions from his Penitential’,³¹⁷ as well as from earlier Irish handbooks.³¹⁸ Of the four *Penitentials* attributed to Bede (or ‘pseudo-Bede’), all ‘almost certainly cannot be genuine and probably are not English’,³¹⁹ and three ‘show the influence of Egbert’s handbook’.³²⁰ These early Anglo-Latin handbooks, along with some Continental examples, provided the foundation for Continental and, to a lesser extent, English, penitential practice from the seventh century even into the twelfth.³²¹

³¹⁴ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 200. As Smith notes, ‘the works of scholars such as Frantzen and Payer has rescued these texts from disrepute’ (*Ordering Women’s Lives*, p. 15).

³¹⁵ On ‘Ireland and the Origins of [Private] Penance’, see Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 19–60. See also Smith, *Ordering Women’s Lives*, p. 20.

³¹⁶ On the *Penitential of Theodore*, see Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*’, in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 141–74; Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, pp. 27–30.

³¹⁷ Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 30.

³¹⁸ Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 31.

³¹⁹ Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 32. On the complex issue of the penitentials attributed to Bede, see Allen J. Frantzen, ‘The Penitentials Attributed to Bede’, *Speculum*, 58 (1983), 573–97.

³²⁰ Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 34. On the Penitentials of Theodore, Bede and Egbert, see Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 61–93.

³²¹ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 204–05.

Primarily, it was the handbooks produced on the Continent between the eighth and the tenth centuries which ‘served as the sources of the later English penitentials’.³²² Most importantly for study of the ‘Handbook’, the significant *Penitential* of Halitgar, Bishop of Cambrai (d. AD 831; written c. AD 830)

is the ultimate, and the only, genuinely Frankish penitential [...]: it supplies a procedure to guide the administration of confession, the *ordo confessionis*; it provides for confession to God alone and to the priest, as well as for public penance; and it brings the handbook’s tariffs into alignment with canon law.³²³

The Anglo-Latin and Old English penitentials of the tenth century were derived from Continental models, like Halitgar’s handbook, ‘which had in turn been based on Irish and English penitentials of the seventh and eighth centuries’.³²⁴ There are three vernacular penitentials of the later Anglo-Saxon period, the major sources for which were the *Penitentials* of Theodore and Halitgar, although there was also considerable borrowing within the vernacular handbooks.³²⁵ The *Scriftboc*³²⁶ (or *Confessional of Pseudo-Egbert*) is the oldest of the vernacular codes; the *Old English Penitential*³²⁷ (or *Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert*) is probably of late Anglo-Saxon date.³²⁸ The latter text borrows from *Scriftboc*, and heavily from Halitgar’s *Penitential*.³²⁹ Whilst the ‘Handbook’ borrows extensively from the

³²² Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 36.

³²³ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 104. See also Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 37. On Halitgar’s *Penitential* see Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 103–05, pp. 130–37. On the interrelations between the Continental (specifically Frankish) penitentials with English versions, see Allen J. Frantzen, ‘The Significance of the Frankish Penitentials’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 30 (1979), 409–21.

³²⁴ Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, pp. 23–56.

³²⁵ See Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, pp. 40–49; Allen J. Frantzen, ‘Between the Lines: Queer Theory, the History of Homosexuality, and Anglo-Saxon Penitentials’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 26 (1996), 255–96 (p. 270).

³²⁶ The *Scriftboc* is edited by Robert Spindler, *Das altenglische Bussbuch (sog. Confessionale Pseudo-Egberti)*, Ein Beitrag zu den kirchlichen Gesetzen der Angelsachsen (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1934).

³²⁷ The *Old English Penitential* is edited by Josef Raith, *Die altenglische Version des Halitgar’schen Bussbuches (sog. Poenitentie Pseudo-Egberti)*, repr. edn, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen, 13 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964; first publ. 1933). I have adopted Frantzen’s titles for these Old English penitentials since there is little standardisation among editions and critics. See Frantzen, ‘Between the Lines’, p. 268.

³²⁸ Frantzen, ‘Tradition of Penitentials’, p. 44.

³²⁹ Frantzen, ‘Between the Lines’, p. 270

Old English Penitential (its canons are the sole source for the 'Handbook's),³³⁰ 'only with the "Handbook" are we on new and decidedly English ground'.³³¹ The penances contained in the 'Handbook' are radically few and are directed specifically for priests' (rather than priests' and bishops') use.³³² The 'Handbook' consists of six parts:

an *ordo confessionis* in Latin, a "form of confession" in Old English, and, also in the vernacular, a warning to the priest to judge penitents fairly, a tariff manual, further instruction to the priest and instructions for shortening the penances for men of means.³³³

The *ordo* in Latin and its translation into Old English 'seem to have their origin in texts for public, devotional confession. [...] In such ceremonies penitents did not confess their sins individually but recited confessional prayers as a group before the bishop'.³³⁴ In its promotion of public devotional penance 'in the form of congregational prayers for forgiveness of sins',³³⁵ the 'Handbook' was particularly suited to Wulfstan's purpose. Frantzen notes that 'these two penitential systems [private and public devotional] were complementary rather than mutually exclusive [...] Wulfstan [...] vigorously insisted on both forms of reconciliation'³³⁶ (as in *VIIa Atr*). Most importantly, although all three vernacular penitentials were more practical than previous handbooks, the 'Handbook' was the most practical, complete and adequate guide to private confession to be written in Anglo-Saxon England,³³⁷ and its development was 'part of the pastoral reform of the tenth and eleventh centuries'.³³⁸

Despite Frantzen's extensive work, one issue remains contentious in the study of penitentials: to what extent the handbooks reflected and affected 'reality', remains a vexed

³³⁰ For a detailed study of the sources for the 'Handbook', see Fowler, 'Handbook', pp. 12-14.

³³¹ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 139.

³³² Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 140.

³³³ Frantzen, 'Tradition of Penitentials', p. 45.

³³⁴ Frantzen, 'Tradition of Penitentials', pp. 46-47.

³³⁵ Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, p. 25.

³³⁶ *Literature of Penance*, p. 6. On Wulfstan's interest in public penance, see Jones, 'Liturgical Interests', p. 350; Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 141-42, pp. 161-62.

³³⁷ Frantzen, 'Tradition of Penitentials', p. 47.

³³⁸ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 196.

question in penitential scholarship. Lees and Overing may be right that ultimately ‘it may not be possible to gauge the religious and cultural effect of the penitentials beyond an assessment of the intent, direction of containment, and historically detectable trajectory of individual directives’,³³⁹ or to gauge the degree to which sins listed in the penitentials were actually committed and confessed to priests. In his work on sexual canons in the penitentials, Payer assumes that:

the penitentials were actually used in the pastoral ministry and that they reflect what people were doing sexually [...]. If they were used, then it is reasonable to believe that their contents reflect what was in fact being done. This is a modest claim, suggesting no more than that the sexual content of these manuals is not the result either of prurient imagination or of legalistic distinction-spinning.³⁴⁰

Payer’s assumption, however, is not shared by all critics of the penitentials. In her study of the *Penitential of Theodore*, Hollis states that ‘no doubt it would be unsound to deduce that any single activity mentioned in *Theodore’s Penitential* was actually practiced in 7th century England’.³⁴¹ Hollis’s more cautious approach to the ‘reality’ reflected in the penitentials is judicious, given our limited knowledge on how penitentials were used ‘or whether they reflect standards actually enforced or only outline ideal standards that were never met’.³⁴² Adopting such a cautious approach – that the penitentials may have neither reflected nor affected ‘reality’ – however, should not render the penitentials unprofitable texts for study. In a study on pastoral letters, Hill states that:

I do not know how often Wulfsgie met drunken priests, how often he came upon priests cavorting in church instead of keeping vigil, or how many times Wulfstan found mouse-droppings on the altars of his diocese. But statements about such lax or inappropriate behaviour need not always derive from direct observation, since they point to a written tradition of ecclesiastical reform with which Wulfsgie and Wulfstan wished to ally themselves. That such details are deployed in the letters is generally indicative of a secular church below par, but their use has a rhetorical importance also in defining [and...] establish[ing] standards.³⁴³

³³⁹ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 165 and see also p. 164. See also Anthony Davies, ‘The Sexual Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons’, in *This Noble Craft: Proceedings of the Xth Research Symposium of the Dutch and Belgian University Teachers of Old And Middle English and Historical Linguistics*, Costerus NS, 80 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), pp. 83-105 (p. 84).

³⁴⁰ Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 12.

³⁴¹ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 23.

³⁴² Frantzen, ‘Between the Lines’, p. 270.

³⁴³ Hill, ‘Monastic Reform and the Secular Church’, p. 111.

Hill's observation suggests a foundation from which fruitful investigation into the penitentials can be made, without regard to their relation to 'reality': like pastoral letters, penance, and the penitentials, should be appreciated as defining and establishing standards, conduct, and values. Or, they contribute to a prescriptive, rather than (or as well as) a proscriptive, rhetoric.

Understanding penance as didactic – prescribing standards of behaviour – allows the handbooks to be understood as 'a site for penitential and doctrinal instruction',³⁴⁴ that is, as teaching documents.³⁴⁵ As Smith notes, 'texts', even penitential handbooks, 'are more than simply words on pages and are not merely passive reflections of their contexts. They are objects which, through a purposive process of representation and codification, construct what they inscribe'.³⁴⁶ By encoding standards of behaviour, then, penitentials are witnesses to ideals and ideologies, to the ultimate vision of society held by the church and its practitioners.³⁴⁷ Penance and penitentials, however, fulfilled two, complementary roles: firstly, they instructed and preserved morality, and, secondly, penance 'atoned for sin, and atonement, not the punishment of wrongdoing, was the purpose of penance'.³⁴⁸ Penitentials, then, should be examined in the context of cure rather than punishment since the essence of penance is positive and didactic, not negative and retributive.³⁴⁹

The aim of private penance was curative: sin was envisioned as a moral sickness that required treatment to restore the sinner to spiritual health. Penitentials, then, represented a kind of spiritual pharmacopoeia that supplied confessors with a list of the sins they might encounter, together with a menu of expiatory acts appropriate for each type of sin.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁴ Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, p. 26. See also Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 9-10

³⁴⁵ Frantzen, 'Tradition of Penitentials', p. 25.

³⁴⁶ Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, p. 1.

³⁴⁷ Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, p. 20.

³⁴⁸ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 202.

³⁴⁹ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 3-4.

³⁵⁰ James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, The Medieval World (London and New York: Longman, 1995), p. 25. See also Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 3-4.

Penitentials, as curative and instructional, tell a story not only of sins committed and atoned for, but also of a church committed to pastoral care and the spiritual healing of its members by means of penance and penitential teaching.

Frantzen observes that:

the penitentials are rhetorical documents, not transparent records of behavior and social standards. [... However,] their close alignment with secular law on most issues, and the frequency of calls for confession and penance in other sources, together support the argument that they were, in some form, connected to social practice.³⁵¹

In an Anglo-Saxon context, however, this statement is problematic. The thematic connection between the penitentials and the secular law as an indication of the ‘social practice’ of the former is precarious, primarily because, as Wormald has argued, the ‘social practice’ of written legislation is itself questionable. The issue is thus raised as to whether *laws* reflected or affected reality.

Wormald’s argument regarding the purpose of written legislation, that what gave legislation its ‘legal force’ was not its ‘written form but the *verbum regis*, the oral pronouncements of the king, and that what we have are more or less *ad hoc* minutes of what was decreed, preserved not in royal archives but in the libraries of clerical *missi*’,³⁵² are valid.

We are faced with a paradox in that we have a considerable quantity of legislation, much of it implying its relevance to the preservation of law and order; yet the texts themselves have features, which, taken together, do argue against their applicability, and there is remarkably little evidence of their application. [...] To suggest that, like normal judicial procedure, the formal process of making law by the king or the legal specialist was oral, and that, in the *administration* of justice (my emphasis), its commitment to writing was marginal, albeit simultaneous, helps to explain the imprecision of many legal texts, the profusion of error and contradiction, both scribal and official, and the remarkable lack of attention to publication and preservation; it also, obviously, explains why only a proportion of the laws demand their own application in court.³⁵³

³⁵¹ Frantzen, ‘Between the Lines’, p. 270.

³⁵² Wormald, ‘Uses of Literacy’, p. 100.

³⁵³ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, pp. 22–23. See also Simon Keynes, ‘Royal Government’, pp. 226–57 (esp. pp. 234–43).

In other words, law codes, like penitentials, have only a dubious connection with ‘reality’ for Wormald. Keynes identifies the difficulty with written legislation as finding ‘a connection between the world of the Anglo-Saxon law-codes, and the real world of Anglo-Saxon crime and punishment’.³⁵⁴ Given the present state of scholarship, it is judicious to conclude only that the law codes’ actual effect on, and relation to, ‘reality’ is irrecoverable,³⁵⁵ a conclusion that does not invalidate the usefulness of the law codes to the social historian. In C, for example, the close relationship between the laws and the other texts in the manuscript indicates that the laws ‘form an integral part of its [the manuscript’s] instructional aim’.³⁵⁶ In this context, it is important to recall that the laws in C are interspersed between various other texts, rather than written in a specific legal section: ‘the particular arrangement of the laws here is unique to extant collections. It signifies an understanding of the laws as models for conduct equivalent to Christian precepts’.³⁵⁷ That is, like the penitentials, the law codes in C are instructional, transmitting standards of behaviour and morality, alongside (and with) C’s other material. The written laws themselves are not legislation in the modern sense, or in the sense that Wormald gives (‘written decrees by secular authority with ostensibly general application’³⁵⁸), but they are a guide to proper and acceptable conduct in late Anglo-Saxon England. Written legislation, then, should be recognised as imparting the ideologies of the king’s decrees, even if the written document itself had no official force as law. As Wormald himself eloquently puts it: ‘it remains appropriate to emphasize ideological aspiration ahead of practical application; to speak of an “image” or “vision” of rule written by law [which manifests...] a persisting divorce between aspiration and application’.³⁵⁹ Thus, whilst written law was ‘marginal’ in terms of case law,³⁶⁰ which shows it to have been rarely referred to and implemented, it created an ideal for someone ‘in power’ to

³⁵⁴ Keynes, ‘Royal Government’, p. 243.

³⁵⁵ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 38.

³⁵⁶ Richards, ‘Manuscript Contexts for Laws’, p. 179.

³⁵⁷ Richards, ‘Manuscript Contexts for Laws’, p. 180.

³⁵⁸ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 3.

³⁵⁹ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. xii.

³⁶⁰ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. xiv.

impart to those over whom he had power: ‘written law could represent an aspiration on the part of kings and their advisers, even when there was no obvious demand for it in normal legal procedure; the inspiration could be ideological rather than practical in origin’.³⁶¹ Keynes is right to note that ‘it was the function of the tenth-century law-codes to assist in the process of bringing knowledge of the king’s decrees into localities, not to provide a permanent frame of reference’.³⁶² In other words, whatever the actual relation of the penitentials and written law codes to Anglo-Saxon social and legal ‘reality’, the significance of these documents is that they record a set of moral and behavioural standards, which the immediate audience of C (the ‘statesman cleric’) would have been able to communicate to those he spiritually taught, as a preacher and confessor.

Penitential handbooks and law codes were mutually supporting. On the one hand, ‘penitential discipline rendered valuable aid to the secular laws [...]. Penitential provisions continually insisted that penitents obey the sentences of the secular authorities, under pain of additional penance for refusal to do justice’.³⁶³ On the other, the law codes themselves required the performance of penance. Beyond *VIIa Atr*, discussed above, which required national penance,³⁶⁴ a number of clauses in both the non-Wulfstan and Wulfstan law codes extant in C *legally* require offenders to repent, and support Meyer’s observation that ‘the intermingling of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Anglo-Saxon England, [i]s shown by many laws that require and reinforce spiritual penalties for civil crimes, connot[ing] the mutual dependence of the vernacular laws and the penitential canons’.³⁶⁵

For example, *I Eadmund* states:

[3] Gif hwa Cristenes mannes blód ageote, ne cume he na on ðæs cyninges neawiste, ær he on dædbote ga, swa him biscop tæce] his scrift him wisige

³⁶¹ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 25.

³⁶² Keynes, ‘Royal Government’, p. 243.

³⁶³ Oakley, ‘Cooperation of Penance and Law’, p. 522.

³⁶⁴ See discussion above, pp. 82–85.

³⁶⁵ Marc A. Meyer, ‘Early Anglo-Saxon Penitentials and the Position of Women’, *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 47–61 (p. 52).

[3] If anyone spills the blood of a Christian man, let him not come into the presence of the king until he goes to penance, as the bishop shall prescribe for him and his confessor shall instruct him.³⁶⁶

In *I Em*, 3, the penance³⁶⁷ required is intended to complement other civil penalties imposed for the crime. Although not a Wulfstanian code, *I Em* reflects the currency of both public devotional and private penance in that the offender is required to confess both to his bishop and to his confessor, and it thus reflects Wulfstan's concern for both forms of penance to be undertaken.³⁶⁸ Of particular interest is the relationship between penance and law embodied in *I Em*. Oakley states that penance was both punitive and medicinal in purpose: 'from the requirement [...] by secular laws, of penance for crimes [...], it is evident that the punitive phase of penance was stressed by the secular authorities in the pre-Norman period'.³⁶⁹ However, his contention that the legal requirement for penance indicates its punitive aspect is not borne out in *I Em*. Penance in this law is not deployed as punishment, but as cure: the one who has spilled Christian blood is excluded from court (the secular counterpart to excommunication); such exclusion is punitive.³⁷⁰ Penance, however, affects the offender's re-entry, or re-*inclusion*, into court: it is his 'cure'. Whilst Meyer is right to note that 'the ultimate purpose of penance [...] is] not reconciliation of the self with the world, but reconciliation of the human soul with God',³⁷¹ *I Em* suggests that the former is an intrinsic part of the latter. In *I Em*, the offender is reconciled with society by means of the act of penitential atonement. Penance here is rehabilitative, rather than retributive. *I Em* inscribes both reparative requirements (exclusion from court, but elsewhere monetary payment), as well as rehabilitative requirements (penance) for offenders; retributive and restitutive penalties are imposed *in*

³⁶⁶ All modern English translations of *I Em* are my own.

³⁶⁷ See *DOE*, s. v 'dædbot', meaning 'repentance', 'penance', 'atonement'.

³⁶⁸ See above, p. 107, n. 335.

³⁶⁹ Oakley, *Penitential Discipline and Law*, p. 43.

³⁷⁰ It is possible that this clause has the meaning 'let him not be brought to the king for him to pronounce judgement'. However, the following condition, 'ær he on dædbote ga' (in which *ær* means 'sooner than', 'before', 'until', see *DOE*, s. v 'ær'), is problematic for such an interpretation. Thus, I have chosen a more literal translation and interpretation of the clause.

³⁷¹ Meyer, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Penitentials', p. 50.

conjunction with penitential rehabilitation (which is sometimes also restitutive),³⁷² suggesting that the latter was not, in essence, punitive. In other words, Oakley oversimplifies when he observes that:

the pressure exerted against malefactors by the secular government needed reinforcement and supplementing. This aid was rendered by the Church, through religious sanctions and safeguards to strengthen legal procedure, provisions which back secular enforcement and supplementary penalties for delinquents. Ecclesiastical discipline was the natural means used for the coöperation, and the chief instrument for such discipline was penance.³⁷³

Rather, penance was not a *disciplinary* reinforcement of secular penalties, but a complement *to* secular penalties. Penance provided for the rehabilitation of offenders into Christian society and for the instruction of offenders in proper Christian conduct.

It is clear that ‘under Wulfstan, penitential discipline penetrated more deeply into secular legislation than before’.³⁷⁴ In some of his law codes, penance is prescribed as a general legal obligation, rather than as a cure for a specific crime, in a similar manner to *VIIa Atr.*³⁷⁵

For example, *V Atr* states:

[22] ȝ æghwīlc Cristen man do, swa him ȝearf is: gime his Cristendomes georne ȝ gewunige gelomlice to Criste ȝ unforwandodlice his synna gecyðe ȝ geornlice betwe swa swa him man tæce

22. And every Christian man is to do what is needful for him; heed zealously his Christian duties, and form the habit of frequent confession, and freely confess his sins and willingly atone for them as he is directed.³⁷⁶

The interconnection between homily and law code is particularly striking here: Wulfstan’s oft repeated homiletic formula ‘do swa him ȝearf is’,³⁷⁷ is used in *V Atr* to exhort not only ‘Christian duties’, but also to require frequent, and voluntary, confession and zealous repentance. Moreover, the nexus between penance and law code is obvious: the authority

³⁷² Cf. Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, ‘Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 27 (1998), pp. 209–32.

³⁷³ Oakley, ‘Cooperation of Penance and Law’, p. 516.

³⁷⁴ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 146.

³⁷⁵ See for example, chapter 1 and 2.

³⁷⁶ A similar sentiment is expressed in *VI Atr*, 27; 27,1.

³⁷⁷ See discussion above, pp. 77–78.

of penance is considerably increased by the requirement for its administration in *V Atr.*³⁷⁸

In this law code, penance as a sacrament is given legislative patronage and weight.

Since the law required every Christian man to attend penance, as well as requiring offenders to submit to rehabilitative penance as part of their sentence, the ‘Handbook’ extant in C had immediate practical application. It was a necessary tool to implement the standards encoded in the laws in C. The correspondences between the law codes and the ‘Handbook’ in C, however, are more extensive and specific than the legal obligation to perform penance. The codes and the ‘Handbook’ have a number of proscriptions in common, and, furthermore, most offences covered by the ‘Handbook’ are similarly addressed in the law codes in C:³⁷⁹ ‘the intermingling of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction during the pre-Norman period was shown in the *subjects* for legislation’.³⁸⁰ The proscriptions against witchcraft or sorcery, and against human trafficking, in the laws and the ‘Handbook’ demonstrate such correspondences.

In terms of witchcraft, *I Em* states:

[6] Ða ðe mansweriað ȝ liblac wyrcað, beon hi a fram ælcum Godes dæle aworpene, buton hi to rithre dædbote gecirran þe geornor

[6] The ones who perjure themselves and perform witchcraft, let them forever be cast out from every part of God’s [church], unless they turn to proper penance the more zealously.

In *I Em*, 6 the performance of witchcraft is proscribed. Not dissimilarly to *I Em*, 3, the perjurer or the witch is excommunicated from the church as punishment for their crime, and is rehabilitated into the Christian fellowship by penance. Correspondingly, *II Cn* has:

[4a] [...] ȝ gif wiccan oððe wigleras . morðwirhtan oððe hór cwenan . ahwar on lande wurðan agitene . fise hi man georne ut of þisan earde . oððe on earde forfare hi mid ealle buton hi geswican . ȝ þe deoppor gebetan .

³⁷⁸ Oakley, *Penitential Discipline and Law*, p. 15.

³⁷⁹ The exceptions are, generally, sexual deviancies, which are discussed below, p. 137.

³⁸⁰ Oakley, *Penitential Discipline and Law*, p. 139; my emphasis.

[4a] and if wizards or sorcerers, secret murderers or prostitutes are encountered anywhere in the land, that they be zealously driven out of this land, or completely destroyed in the land, unless they cease, and the more deeply make amends.

In *II Cn*, wizardry and sorcery are again proscribed, and repentance is again constructed as the rehabilitative counterpart to retributive penalties (execution or expulsion). In *II Cn*, penance facilitates the readmission of the offender into society, and both *I Em* and *II Cn* suggest that penance was more than a ‘supplementary aid[...] to the suppression of disorder and crime’.³⁸¹ At least in the law codes in C, penance is rather constructed as a complementary curative aid to punitive legislation.

Since both *I Em*, 6 and *II Cn*, 4a require sorcerers to perform penance, it is not surprising that the ‘Handbook’ includes a clause which articulates the proper penance for the performance of witchcraft or wizardry.

Gyf hwa oðerne mid wiccecræfte fordo, fæste vii gear, iii on hlafe and on wætere and þa feower gear iii dagas on wucan on hlafe and on wætere, and reowsige æfre.

If anyone destroys another with witchcraft, let [them] fast seven years, three on bread and on water, and then four years, three days of the week on bread and on water and repent forever.

The clause in the ‘Handbook’ is more specific than those found in the laws, since it is concerned with the performance of witchcraft which kills another person, although the legal proscription against ‘wiccan oððe wigleras . morðwirhtan’ (‘wizards or sorcerers, secret murderers’; *II Cn*, 4a) suggests a link in the law between the performance of witchcraft and murder. Most importantly, the two law codes require that witches and wizards be excommunicated, executed or expelled, *unless* penance is performed and penitential atonement made; the inclusion in the ‘Handbook’ of a clause on witchcraft is thus the practical tool for the confessor to provide the offender with absolution.

³⁸¹ Oakley, *Penitential Discipline and Law*, p. 148.

Pelteret notes that Wulfstan was preoccupied ‘with the sale of persons out of the country’,³⁸² and this issue occurs in a number of Wulfstan’s law codes. Regarding human trafficking, *VAtr* states:

[2] ȝ ures hlafordes gerædnes ȝ his witena is, þæt man Cristene men ȝ unforworhte of earde ne sylle, ne huru on hæðene þeode, ac beorge georne, þæt man þa sawla ne forfare, þe Crist mid his agenum life gebohte

2. And it is the decree of our lord and his councillors that no Christian and innocent men are to be sold out of the country, and especially not among the heathen people, but care is earnestly to be taken that those souls be not destroyed which God bought with his own life.³⁸³

This example is proscriptive, rather than penalising: it does not articulate the penalties for human trafficking, but rather proscribes the action. Penance is not explicitly required for any transgression of the proscription. Nevertheless, the clause makes clear that its contravention is a crime since it violates the ‘decree’ of the king.³⁸⁴ Interestingly, *VAtr*, 2, is an example of proscriptive *and* prescriptive regulation: the clause explicitly proscribes human trafficking, but it also explicitly prescribes the converse behaviour – care is to be taken for the protection of all Christian souls. The ‘Handbook’ is not so circumspect regarding the necessary atonement for the sin.³⁸⁵

Gyf hwa Cristene man on hæðendum sille, se ne bið wurðe ænigere reste mid Cristenum folce buton he hy bicge eft ham ongean þæt he ut sealde; and gif he þæt don ne mæge, gedæle þæt wurð eal Godes þances and oðerne alyse mid oðrum wurðe, and þæne þonne gefreoge; and þartoeacan betan þreo gear fullice swa swa scrift tæce; and gif he feoh næbbe þæt he man mid alesan mæge, bete þe deoppor, þæt is vii gear fulle, and bereowsige æfre.

If anyone sells a Christian man into heathendom, that one is not deserving of any rest among Christian people, unless he buys back home again the one which he sold abroad, and if he cannot do that, let him distribute that ransom wholly for God’s grace and let him redeem another with another ransom, and then let him manumit that one, and in addition to that let him make amends for three years completely just as confessor

³⁸² Pelteret, *Slavery in England*, p. 91.

³⁸³ A similar sentiment is expressed in *II Cn*, 3.

³⁸⁴ Wulfstan’s concern with selling people is repeatedly expressed in his homilies, most notably *Sermo Lupi* in which he decries firstly, the selling of poor men to foreigners; secondly, the selling of Christian men out of England; thirdly, the selling of kin abroad to foreigners.

³⁸⁵ Pelteret comments that the ‘Handbook’ deals with the issue ‘sternly’ (*Slavery in England*, p. 91).

prescribes; and if he does not have the wealth so that he may redeem another, let him repent more deeply, that is seven years in full, and let him be remorseful forever.

The 'Handbook' is, like the law codes, concerned to proscribe human trafficking. The penitential clause also initially reads like a legal clause since it articulates a punishment that is unconnected to the penance itself: that is, expulsion from Christian society. The 'Handbook' here echoes *II Cn*, 4a on wizardry, in its use of the formula that 'if x crime' (or sin) is committed, then expulsion from Christian society is imposed as penalty, *unless* (*buton*) penitential atonement is undertaken. That is, legal and penitential clauses resemble each other in their provision of punishment which will be imposed *unless* appropriate penance is performed. In this clause in the 'Handbook', however, such atonement is not purely rehabilitative, although the reintegration of the offender into Christian society is one result of the penance. It is also restitutive in that it requires the offender to make reparation to the victim, and Christian society, for the crime. It is only in the explicit provision of the penance (three full years if restitution is made; seven if it is not) that this clause appears to be a penitential tariff; otherwise it employs a legalistic tone. The significance is not simply that the 'Handbook' reads like legislation, but rather that the incorporation of legislative rhetoric into penance indicates the connection between law and penance: this clause is still penitential, but it complements *V Atr*, 2 by articulating the restitution due to society, and the rehabilitation necessary for the offender's return to society. Nevertheless, this penance still affects a cure of the soul, and it is thus not *supplementary* to civil penalty, but *complementary* to it. Both are necessary.³⁸⁶

One of the tonal correspondences between the 'Handbook's' provisions, and those found in the laws, emerges from the consistent use of the subjunctive in both. It is difficult to assess the strength with which one should interpret the use of the subjunctive in the laws and penitentials, although it seems clear that the subjunctive, rather than the indicative, is

³⁸⁶ There are many such examples of close thematic correspondences between the law codes in C and the 'Handbook'. In particular, the clauses regarding murder and manslaughter are closely paralleled, as are more specific crimes (or sins), such as responsibility and penalty for the death of an un-baptised child (the 'Handbook' is paralleled in *Northu*, 10; 10,1 regarding this crime).

implied in these texts (even though the forms are often ambiguous). Mitchell and Robinson state that ‘when the *subjunctive* occurs, some mental attitude towards the content of the [...] clause is usually being implied; one of the following ideas may be present – condition, desire, obligation, supposition, perplexity, doubt, uncertainty or unreality’.³⁸⁷ Given the prescriptive, legislative context of the subjunctive in the often conditional clauses of these texts³⁸⁸ it seems most plausible to interpret them as ‘obligative’ subjunctives (translated as ‘let him....’, ‘he shall....’), rather than optative subjunctives (translated as ‘may he...’).³⁸⁹ The obligative subjunctive is deontic: it constructs a sense of duty or obligation, or a requirement. In other words, the subjunctive in these texts implies the obligation of the offender to submit to whatever punitive, restitutive or rehabilitative sentence is decreed. Importantly, the obligative use of the subjunctive in both the ‘Handbook’ and law codes suggests their use as moral regulation. In terms of moral regulation theory, the implication of obligation – ‘ought’, ‘ought not’, ‘should’, ‘should not’ – makes a ‘moral claim’.³⁹⁰ As a moral claim, ‘ought’ or ‘should’ is normative in that it passes a value judgement on particular conduct or morals; it constructs what *should* or *ought to* happen so that an obligation is imposed for the realisation of that behaviour.³⁹¹ In terms of the Old English ‘Handbook’ and law codes, the moral claim made on offenders concerns their *duty* to atone (both civilly and penitentially) for their crimes and sins: restitution and rehabilitation are moral obligations for the offender or penitent.

³⁸⁷ Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 5th edn, 11th repr. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999; first publ. 1964), §156, p. 71. See also Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax: Concord, the Parts of Speech, and the Sentence*, 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), §877, p. 370.

³⁸⁸ The answer to ‘the question ‘When must the subjunctive be represented in translation?’ can only be something indefinite like ‘When the situation demands it’” (Mitchell and Robinson, *Guide to Old English*, §156, p. 72). This situation seems to ‘demand it’.

³⁸⁹ Optative subjunctive: expressing a wish, desire. Obligative subjunctive: indicating obligation (*should* or *ought*). See Mitchell and Robinson, *Guide to Old English*, §195–98, pp. 108–09.

³⁹⁰ Todd May, *The Moral Theory of Poststructuralism* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 36. See also, W. D. Falk, *Ought, Reasons, and Morality: The Collected Papers of W. D. Falk* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 21–66.

³⁹¹ See Robert Arrington, *Rationalism, Realism, and Relativism: Perspectives in Contemporary Moral Epistemology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 282–88.

Texts such as the penitentials and the law codes were not only concerned to make a moral claim for the restitution of crimes committed. They were equally concerned with the proscription of certain behaviour (for example, perjury), and the implicit (and sometimes explicit) prescription of the converse behaviour (honesty).³⁹² One area of activity with which the 'Handbook' and law codes were especially concerned was sexual conduct, in particular, marital sexual conduct, since regulations pertaining to sexual activity were most often intertwined with 'issues of controlling marriage and reproduction'.³⁹³ As Payer notes, 'the very institution of marriage raised important questions about adultery, divorce, remarriage, and prohibited degrees of consanguinity'.³⁹⁴ The attempt to regulate sexual morality in the penitentials has occasioned frequent comment. For example, Brundage notes that 'the treatment of marital sex in the penitentials was far more explicit than it had been in the earlier (or, for that matter, was to be in much of the later) moralistic literature'.³⁹⁵ Payer observes that 'the Church's pastoral care was attempting to shape the marital lives of believers, if not in everything, at least in many areas. This is true in the area of sexual behaviour'.³⁹⁶ The penitentials, however, were not 'the sole creators or transmitters of regulations governing legitimate sexual'³⁹⁷ contact and behaviour. The laws were similarly concerned with such issues.

In the penitentials, the sins of the flesh provide an epistemology of sex closely connected with social formations such as class and gender, but chastity, and Christian behavior in general, is a practice regulating desire [...]. Anglo-Saxon laws also make regular provision for the regulation of sexual transgression, including adultery and rape. [...] The regulation of sexual behavior, in other words, is one expression of the often conflicting social practices centered on the family in both secular and spiritual domains

³⁹² See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 2-5, p. 9.

³⁹³ Andrea Rossi-Reder, 'Embodying Christ, Embodying Nation: Ælfric's Accounts of Saints Agatha and Lucy', in *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillingham Calder*, ed. by Carol Pasternack and Lisa M. C. Weston, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 277 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), pp. 183-202 (p. 184).

³⁹⁴ Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 4.

³⁹⁵ James A. Brundage, 'Let Me Count the Ways: Canonists and Theologians Contemplate Coital Positions', *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984), 81-93 (p. 82).

³⁹⁶ Pierre J. Payer, 'Early Medieval Regulations Concerning Marital Sexual Relations', *Journal of Medieval History*, 6 (1980), 353-76 (p. 355).

³⁹⁷ Payer, 'Early Medieval Regulations', p. 356.

[...]. Penitentials and laws provide us with a language of sexual pleasure characterized by prohibition that implies practice.³⁹⁸

That is, together, the law codes and penitentials sought to regulate sexual behaviour with particular concern for the impact of sexuality on marriage and the family.

It is not surprising to witness in Wulfstan's laws, as well as in the 'Handbook' associated with him, a concern for sexual morality in connection with marital affairs. The Benedictine Reform brought 'with it a [...] new emphasis on celibacy'³⁹⁹ and sexual morality, and 'the laity's sexual activity was as important as the clergy's sexual abstinence'.⁴⁰⁰

Restrictions on sexual behaviour determined to a large extent the moral climate of the latter half of the Anglo-Saxon period. But with the impetus of the monastic revival, the growth of ecclesiastical influence in administrative government, and the insistence [*sic*] that priests should use penitentials for confessions and guidance, sexual behaviour became even more closely scrutinized. Ecclesiastical and civil legislation, penitential injunctions, pastoral letters, and homiletic precepts attempted to regulate the Anglo-Saxons' sexual conduct.⁴⁰¹

Wulfstan's reform interest in sexuality is reflected in *VIII Atr*, in which he defined church peace in England 'to include marital affairs'.⁴⁰² It is in this context of the regulation of sexual morality, and the delimitation of acceptable sexual congress, that the law codes and 'Handbook' extant in C find immediate and significant correspondences.

³⁹⁸ Clare A. Lees, 'Engendering Religious Desire: Sex, Knowledge, and Christian Identity in Anglo-Saxon England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 27 (1997), 17-45 (p. 21); see also Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 3.

³⁹⁹ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 125; see also Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 138.

⁴⁰⁰ Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 98.

⁴⁰¹ Davies, 'Sexual Conversion', p. 85. In his monograph on the joint influence of penance and law, Oakley argued for such joint influence in terms of feud, money, and perjury; he does not mention sexual conduct (see Oakley, *Penitential Discipline and Law*, pp. 167-93).

⁴⁰² Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 168. *VIII Atr* proceeds: '[4] And gif be cwicum mannum ciricgrið abrocen beo, betan man georne be þam þe seo dæd sy, sy hit þurh feothlac, si hit þurh reaflac, si** hit þurh unriht hæmed, si þurh þæt þæt hit sy' ('4. And if the sanctuary [of the church] is violated without anyone being slain, compensation is eagerly to be paid in proportion to the deed, whether it arises from fighting, or from robbery, or from unlawful sexual intercourse, or whatever it arises from'). *VIII Atr* is preserved in full only in C; chapters 1-5,2 are extant in MS Nero A. i, however, in that codex the reference to 'unriht hæmed' is lacking (*EHD I*, p. 448, p. 449, n. 3).

One of the most prominent concerns of the law codes and ‘Handbook’ is to proscribe clerical marriage, and sexual contact.⁴⁰³ Thus, *I Em* states:

[1] Ðæt is æres[t] þæt hi budon, þæt þa halgan hadas, þe Godes folc læron sculon lifes bisne, ðæt hi heora clænnesse healdan be heora hade, swa werhades swa wifhades, swa hwaðer swa hit sy. 7 gif hi swa ne don, þonne syn hi þæs wyrðe þe on ðam canone cweð, and þæt hi þolian worldæhta 7 gehalgodre legerstowe, buton hi gebetan

[1] That is their first prescription, that those in holy orders, who ought to instruct God’s people by [their] life’s example, that they preserve their chastity according to their rank, the same for male religious as for female religious, irrespective of which it is. And if they do not do so, then they shall incur that which is declared in the canon, and they shall forfeit their worldly possessions and a burial place in consecrated ground, unless they repent.

Although not written by Wulfstan, *I Em*, 1 was entirely appropriate for his aims. In the first place, it prescribes the social role of those in holy orders as instructing God’s people, a role with which Wulfstan extensively engaged, as has been noted. Indeed, the use of *sculan* makes a moral claim of, or puts an obligation on, the clergy to do so.⁴⁰⁴ Moreover, the moral claim is specified as instructing God’s people by the example of chastity: that is, the clergy’s duty is to abstain from sexual intercourse, and, implicitly, from marriage, as a model for proper behaviour. Similarly to the other law codes examined, a penalty for non-observance was to be incurred unless the offender undertook penitential atonement and rehabilitation.

Many of the other law codes similarly prescribe clerical abstinence. Thus, regarding priests, *V Atr* has:

[9] Fulgeorne hi wican þæt hi nagan mid rihte þurh hæmedþingc wifes gemanan.
[9,1] 7 se þe þæs geswican wille 7 clænnesse healdan, habbe he Godes mildse, 7 þar to eacan to worldwurðscipe, þæt he sy þegenweres 7 þegenrihtes wurðe, ge on life ge on legere.
[9,2] 7 se þe þæt nelle: wanige his wurðscipe ge for God ge for worlde.

⁴⁰³ On the continued existence of clerical marriage see discussion below, Chapter 4, pp. 394–96.

⁴⁰⁴ See BT s. v, ‘sculan’, II; Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*, §1019, pp. 425–26.

9. They know full well that they may not rightly have sexual intercourse with a woman.
 9.1. And whoever will abstain from this and preserve chastity, may he have God's mercy and in addition as a secular dignity, that he shall be entitled to a thegn's wergild and a thegn's rights, in life as well as in the grave.
 9.2 And he who will not do what belongs to his order, may his dignity be diminished both in religious and secular concerns.

The reprimanding tone of this admonition ('Fulgeorne hi wican' ['they know very well']) locates *V Atr*, 9, as much in a homiletic context as a legal one. It makes a value judgement on clerical sexual intercourse – it may not *rightly* (*rihte*) occur. The implication, of course, is that *right* behaviour is abstinent, and that it is *wrong* to engage in sexual intercourse. In contrast to *I Em*, 1, *V Atr* here prescribes the *rewards* (both spiritual and temporal) for observance of the prescription, as well as the penalty for its transgression. The provision of compensation for sexual abstinence (God's mercy and a thegn's wergild) is 'the carrot' which Wulfstan held out to priests, and illustrates 'the sheer practicality of Wulfstan's work, its recognition of problems and its tackling of basic questions of instruction [which] mark it out as active pastoral concern and not merely scholarly speculation'.⁴⁰⁵ *V Atr*, 9 not only attempts to make explicit the spiritual and material *benefits* of conformity to this legislation, it simultaneously attempts to limit the behaviour of priests.

In a similar way, *I Cn* further states that:

[6,1] And ealle godes þeowas we biddað ⁊ lærað . ⁊ huruþinga sacerdas . þæt hi gode hiran ⁊ clænnesse lufian . ⁊ beorgan him silfum wið godes irre . ⁊ wið ðone weallendan bryne þe wealleð on helle .

[6,2] Fulgeorne hi witan þæt hi nagan mid rihte þurh hæmedþingc . wifes gemánan . ⁊ se ðe þæs gewican wille . ⁊ clænnesse healdan . hæbbe he godes miltse . ⁊ to worlðwurðscipe sy he þegenlaga wyrðe .

[6.1] And we bid and instruct all the servants of God, and especially priests, that they obey God and love celibacy, and protect themselves against the raging fire that blazes in hell.

[6.2] They know full well that they may not rightly marry [or: have sexual intercourse with a woman], and may he who will refrain from that and maintain celibacy enjoy the mercy of God, and as a secular honour be entitled to the rights of a thegn.

⁴⁰⁵ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 196.

I Cn, 6,1 is homiletic in tone, articulating the ultimate penalty for non-observance of clerical chastity as hell. The rhetorical linking of obedience to God and love for chastity implies that disregard for chastity equates with disobedience to God. *I Cn*, 6,2 directly echoes *V Atr*, 9 in its admonitory opening and provision of reward. The punishment articulated in *V Atr*, 9 is here lacking, although given the threat of hell in 6,1, penalty is not altogether absent from *II Cn*, 6. Interestingly, both *I Atr*, 9 and *I Cn*, 6 have the proscription: ‘nagan mid rihte þurh hæmedþingc wifes gemanan’. Whitelock translates this clause as ‘may not rightly have sexual intercourse with a woman’; Kennedy, on the other hand, interprets this clause to mean, ‘may not rightly marry’. Both translations are, in essence, correct, since *hæmedþing* and *gemana* both have dual sexual and marital connotations.⁴⁰⁶ The significance of Wulfstan’s vocabulary in both law codes is that he implicitly proscribes *both* marriage and sexual intercourse to the clergy, and in so doing associates marriage with sexual intercourse. Proscriptions against sexual relations in a clerical context also have ramifications for marital relations.

In the ‘Handbook’, clerical marriage and sexual intercourse is dealt with in multiple clauses, the first of which simply states:

Gyf mæssepreost oððe munuc hæmedþingc drihð oððe æwe brycð, fæste x gear, and reowsige æfre, diacon vii, cleric vi, læwede man v, swa be manslihte.

If a mass-priest or a monk takes part in sexual intercourse, or breaks a lawful marriage, fast 10 years and repent forever; deacon 7; cleric 6; layman 5, just as for manslaughter.

In the ‘Handbook’, as in the laws, sexual intercourse is rhetorically connected with marriage, both in terms of vocabulary (the ambiguous *hæmedþing* is utilised here again), and in terms of the clause’s content: taking part in sexual intercourse is thematically linked to the violation of a lawful marriage. Despite its brevity, this short clause adequately covers the illicit clerical sexual relations to which *I Em*, 1, *V Atr*, 9, and *I Cn*, 6

⁴⁰⁶ See BT, s. vv, ‘hæmedþing’, ‘gemana’. See also discussion below, Chapter 2, pp. 220–21, p. 227.

refer, and what is clear from these laws and the ‘Handbook’ is that they are intended to limit the sexual and marital actions of the clergy.⁴⁰⁷

The *Priests’ Law* in C states that: ‘[35] Gif preost cwenan forlæte ⁊ oðre nime, anathema sit!’ (‘If a priest leaves a woman and takes another, let him be anathema!’). This chapter is problematic, since it is unclear whether the offence is the priest’s abandonment of his *wife* (*cwene*),⁴⁰⁸ or the abandonment of a *mistress* or *concubine* (*cwene*)⁴⁰⁹ but the continuation of the sexual sin with another woman. Wormald seems unquestioningly to take it as the former: ‘the Priests’ Law contains an implicit endorsement of clerical marriage in one case’,⁴¹⁰ but the brevity of the chapter in the *Priests’ Law* makes it difficult to absolutely ascertain the chapter’s meaning. In the context of the ‘Handbook’, the legal chapter could be read as the priest leaving his wife (so as to be properly celibate), and then returning to the sin of sexual congress by taking up with another woman; the ‘Handbook’ proscribes a similar sin (or crime).

Gyf mæssepreost oððe munuc oððe diacon riht wif hæfde ær he gehadod wære, and hi forlete and to hade fencge, and siððan þurh hæmedþingc hi eft underfenge, fæste heora ælc swa be manslihte, and reowsian swiðe.

If a mass-priest or a monk or a deacon had a lawful wife before he was ordained and he relinquished her and entered into religious office, and afterwards because of sexual intercourse took her up again, let each of them fast, as for manslaughter, and repent exceedingly.

The chapter in the *Priests’ Law* is brief, but perhaps refers to a similar situation as described in the ‘Handbook’. It seems unwise to argue against Wulfstan’s authorship of the *Priests’ Law* on the basis that this chapter implies an acceptance of clerical marriage (an acceptance which Wulfstan did not share);⁴¹¹ certainly it is not the only example of

⁴⁰⁷ See Smith, *Ordering Women’s Lives*, pp. 64–68.

⁴⁰⁸ See DOE, s. v, ‘cwene’, 2.

⁴⁰⁹ See DOE, s. v, 2a.

⁴¹⁰ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 251. He uses this as part of his case to disprove Wulfstan’s authorship of the *Priests’ Law*. DOE cites *Northu*, 35 as an example under def. 2: ‘wife’.

⁴¹¹ Wormald, *Legal Culture*, p. 251.

the ‘Handbook’s provisions explicating legal statements found in C (as was illustrated above by the example of human trafficking).

Wulfstan and the reform church were also concerned with the chastity of female religious, and thus a number of provisions address the crime of fornication with vowesses. *I Em* states:

[4] Se þe wið nunnan hæme, gehalgodre legerstowe ne sy he wyrðe – buton he gebete – þe ma þe manslaga; þæt ilce we cwædon be æwbrice.

[4] The one who has coitus with a vowess, he shall not be given burial in consecrated ground – unless he repents – any more than a murderer; we have decreed the same concerning adultery.

The *Priests’ Law* similarly proscribes fornication with a vowess.

[63] Gif hwa wið nunnan forlicge, sy ægðer his weres scildig, ge he ge heo.

[63,1]] gif hi on ðam géendigan buton geswicennesse, þolian clænnas legeres] Godes mildse.

63. If anyone lies with a vowess, both are to be liable to pay their wergild, both he and she.

63.1. And if they die in that [sin] without desisting from it, they are to forfeit Christian burial and God’s mercy.

On fornication with cloistered women, the ‘Handbook’ complements with two clauses.

Gyf mæssepreost oððe munuc oððe diacon oððe læwede oððe cleric wið minicene hæme, fæste ælc swa his hade to gebirige swa be manslihte, and æfre he sceal flæsc forgan, and seo minicene x gear swa swa mæssepreost and reowsian æfre.

Gyf hwa wolde hæman wið minicene and heo nolde, fæste i gear for ðam unrihtan willan on hlafe and on wætere

If a mass-priest, or a monk, or a deacon or a layman or a cleric has intercourse with a cloistered woman, let him fast each as befits his religious office, just as for manslaughter; and forever he shall abstain from flesh and the nun 10 years, just as the mass-priest and repent forever.

If anyone wished to have intercourse with a cloistered woman, and she was unwilling, let him fast 1 year because of the sinful desire on bread and on water.

I Em, 4 again uses penance (as prescribed in the ‘Handbook’) to reconcile the offender with Christian society. It equates the severity of fornication with a vowess with adultery and murder. The *Priests’ Law* indicates the importance of this crime by assigning both a

secular (the payment of wergild) and a religious (exclusion from Christian burial) penalty. The first clause in the 'Handbook' describes a relatively severe penance, thus echoing the severity indicated in *I Em*, and, like the *Priests' Law*, ascribes penance for both parties involved in the fornication. The second clause, however, introduces a fundamental difference between the laws and the 'Handbook': whereas the laws are concerned with crimes actually committed, the 'Handbook', in its penitential concern for the internal wellbeing of the offender, is as concerned with intent and knowledge, as with action. The 'Handbook's second clause describes desire unfulfilled – the man desires the cloistered woman who refuses him, and his desire thus goes unsatiated – but it is that desire, rather than its fulfilment, which is the preoccupation of the 'Handbook'. In other words, despite the close correspondences – tonal, thematic and rhetorical – between the law codes and the penitentials, differences between them exist, both in purpose (punitive or curative), and concern (exterior or interior). This is not to say that the 'Handbook' was not concerned with action, but that, unlike the law codes, the psychological interiority of sin (or crime) is recognised and addressed.⁴¹²

The laws and 'Handbook' then turn to matters of lay adultery and fornication.⁴¹³ *V Atr* states:

[10] And æghwile Cristen man unriht hæmed georne forbuge] godcunde laga rihtlice healde

10. And also every Christian man is zealously to avoid illegal intercourse, and duly keep the laws of the Church. (*V Atr*)

I Cn similarly has:

⁴¹² This concern manifests itself in different ways, although the most common is the direction to the confessor, either in the tariff itself or in the supporting penitential material, to differentiate between intention without action, action under duress, involuntary action, action with intention, etc. It is also made manifest in the direction to the confessor to use his discretion to administer penance compassionately and mercifully; thus the 'Handbook's clause on abortion explicitly requires the confessor to prescribe penance to the woman *mildbeortlice* ('compassionately', 'mercifully').

⁴¹³ Adultery should be taken to be a marital transgression by one or both parties, whereas fornication is 'used in the restricted sense of heterosexual intercourse between two unmarried people' (Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 36).

[6,3] And æghwīlc crīsten man eac . for his drihtenes ege . unrihtthæmed georne forbuge . ȝ godcunde laga rihtlice healde .

[6,3] And let every Christian man also, for fear of his Lord, zealously abstain from illicit union and properly observe divine laws.

Further, it later states that no man '[7,2] ænige forligeru ahwar ne begange' ('[7,2] shall commit adultery anywhere').⁴¹⁴ *V Atr*, 10 and *I Cn*, 6,3 are identical except that, with a more homiletic colouring, the latter text provides the motivation for conformity as fear of God. No punishment is given, nor is penance prescribed. The legal statements on fornication and adultery are concise and comprehensive (*unrihtthæmed* covers unlawful fornication, adultery, marriage or cohabitation). They are not, however, practical. What constituted unlawful marriage, or how one was to deal with fornicators and adulterers, are questions unanswered by the laws. The 'Handbook', however, as the laws' counterpart and complement, addresses these questions at great length.

Se þe hafað æwe and eac cīfese, ne do him nan preost nane gerihta mid Crīstenum mannum, buton he to bote gecyrre, beo hym on anre gehealdan, beo hit æwe beo hit cyfes.

The one who has a lawful wife and also a concubine, let no priest perform for him any of the rights among Christian people, unless he submits to penance; let him confine himself to one, be it married wife [or] be it concubine.

Gyf ceorl wið oðres rihtæwe hāmð, oððe wif wið oðres wifes rihtgemæccan, fæste vii gear, þa iii on hlafē and on wætere and þa iiii swa his scrift him tæce, and reowsige his misdæda æfre.

If a husbandman has intercourse with another's lawful wife, or a wife with another wife's lawful husband, let him fast 7 years, then 3 on bread and on water, and then 4 as his confessor shall prescribe for him, and do penance for his sins forever.

Gyf hwa mid his ofercræfte wif oððe mæden neadinga nymð to unrihtthæmede hire unwilles, beo he amansumod.

If anyone by his fraud forcibly obtains a woman or a maiden for unlawful sexual relations, with her unwilling, let him be excommunicated.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ See also the *Canons*, 21 (Fowler, *Canons of Edgar*, p. 6).

⁴¹⁵ This clause and the one which follows it are the exceptions to Payer's generalisation that 'the subject of sexual intercourse between two unmarried lay persons is virtually ignored by the penitentials' (*Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 37): the marital state of both parties is not at issue here.

Gyf hwa mid his lotwæncum oðres mannes folgere fram him apæce for hæmedþinge, and hire unwilles wið hi hæme, gif he bið gehadod man, ðolige his hades, gif he beo læwede, beo he amansumad fram eallum Cristenum þingum.

If anyone by his cunnings seduces another man's follower from him for sexual intercourse and with her unwilling has intercourse with her, if he is an ordained man, let him relinquish his religious office, if he be layman, let him be excommunicated from all Christian things.

Gyf hwa wolde hæman wið oðres rihtæwe and heo nolde, fæste iii legnten on hlafe and on wætere, an on sumera, oðer on hærfesta, þridde on wyntra.

If anyone wished to have intercourse with another's lawful wife, and she was unwilling, let him fast 3 lengths [of time] on bread and on water: one in summer, another in harvest-time [autumn], the third in winter.

Gyf hwa wille wið wifman unrihtlice hæman, fæste xl daga on hlafe and on wætere.

If anyone desires to have intercourse with a woman wrongfully, let him fast 40 days on bread and on water.

These penitential tariffs effectively both define *unrihtþæmed* and make provision for the offenders' atonement. According to the 'Handbook', *unrihtþæmed* includes as diverse conduct as having both a wife and a concubine, adultery with another man's wife, adultery with another woman's husband, deception or seduction for the purpose of sexual assault, unfulfilled desire for adultery, and desire for unlawful sexual intercourse.⁴¹⁶ The last clause, like the laws cited above, is a general statement: it encompasses any unlawful sexual or marital behaviour. Unlike the laws, however, it concerns desire (interiority) rather than action (exteriority). The 'Handbook's' provisions thus complement the laws; they provide clarification and definition, and they balance the laws' concern with action with a concern for intention.

Davies generalises that: 'adultery was a marital offence that both the secular and ecclesiastical laws punished heavily, the secular codes more for the civil disruption disgrace

⁴¹⁶ On the development of adultery concerns within penitentials see Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, pp. 20-21; Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, pp. 49-52, pp. 55-56.

and dispute parentage would bring than for the concomitant moral disapproval'.⁴¹⁷ This generalisation is not borne out in the provisions in the 'Handbook' and laws in C. Firstly, the secular codes do not punish adultery at all, and in the context of C it appears as though such 'punishment' was left to the confessor in his administration of penance. Secondly, there is no allusion in the laws to the social disharmony – disruption, disgrace and dispute – which might arise from adultery. Nor, however, is any there evident tone of 'moral disapproval' in the 'Handbook'. Certainly the 'Handbook' constructs adultery and fornication as 'wrong': the fact that adultery and fornication are listed in the penitential tariff manual designate them as such, as does the persistent use of *unriht*. However, for the most part, the tone of the 'Handbook's tariff manual is particularly methodical and relatively impassive. The sin is described, sometimes with the qualifier that it was wrong or evil, and the penance prescribed. The punishment for young boys participating in bestiality or homosexual acts, for example, is extraordinary in the 'Handbook', not for its content, but for its description of the boys as young and foolish (*geonge, andgitlease*). Such moral judgements are minimal. It is important to recall that the moral regulation inherent in both laws and penitentials does not arise solely, or even primarily, from their proscriptions of actions defined as sinful or unlawful. As instructive, didactic texts, their morally regulatory power comes from their implicit *prescription* of behaviour and conduct. These texts are not merely concerned to limit the behaviour of their constituents *from* including, for example, adultery; they are additionally, and perhaps more, concerned to limit behaviour *to* what they designate right or lawful behaviour (monogamy). Their *proscriptions* are designed to *prescribe* other, appropriate behaviour, albeit most often implicitly.

In support of this contention are the laws' and the 'Handbook's provisions for monogamy. Of the six clauses cited above in the 'Handbook' on *unrihtbæmed*, three explicitly concern themselves with marriage, and, as Scammell notes, amongst 'the strongest evidence for

⁴¹⁷ Davies, 'Sexual Conversion', p. 92.

marriage is the penalties for adultery'.⁴¹⁸ The proscription of adultery in the 'Handbook' and laws signals their concern to prescribe monogamous marriages, that is, marriages *without* adultery. This prescription is made explicit in *I Cn*, which stipulates that:

[7,3] Ne na má wifa hæbbe þonne án . ac beo be þare anre . þa hwile þe heo libbe . se þe wille godes laga giman mid rihte . 7 wið hellebryne beorgan his sawle .

[7.3] no man shall have more wives than one, but he who desires properly to observe the laws of God, and protect his soul against the fire of hell, shall remain with the one, as long as she lives.

I Cn proscribes bigamy (a form of adultery in accepted Christian thinking), but it also explicitly prescribes monogamy as the antithesis of bigamy. One concern of this law is to limit behaviour from bigamy, but the more critical imperative is to limit behaviour to monogamy. Thus the *Priests' Law* similarly has:

[61] And we forbeodað on Godes forbode, þæt nan man na ma wifa næbbe buton I; 7 seo beo mid rihte beweddod 7 forgifen

[...]

[64] Gif hwa his rihtæwe lifgende forlæte 7 on oðran wife on unriht gewifige, næbbe he Godes myldse, buton he hit gebete.

[65] Ac healde gehwa mid rihte his æwe þa hwile þe heo libbe; buton þæt gewurðe, þæt hi buta geceosan be biscopes geþeahhte, þæt hi getwæman 7 þanon forð willan clānnesse healdan.

61. And by virtue of God's prohibition we forbid that any man should have more wives than one; and she it to be legally betrothed and wedded

[...]

64. If anyone abandons a living legal wife, and wrongly takes to wife another woman, may he not have God's mercy, unless he atones for it.

65. But each is to keep rightly his legal wife as long as she lives; unless it comes about that they both choose to separate with the bishop's advice and wish thenceforth to preserve chastity.

Chapter 61 firstly proscribes bigamy, and then prescribes lawful (and implicitly monogamous) marriage. Chapter 64 is familiar in its proscription of adultery and its requirement for rehabilitative penance. Chapter 65, however, is purely prescriptive: it explicitly prescribes lawful monogamy, as well as prescribing the limits to marital

⁴¹⁸ Jean Scammell, 'Freedom and Marriage in Medieval England', *The Economic History Review*, SS 27 (1974), 523-37 (p. 532).

separation. The concern in Chapter 65 is not to enunciate the circumstances in which separation is wrong, since Chapter 64 has already proscribed separation absolutely; rather, its concern is to articulate the one occasion on which separation is possible. It limits behaviour to a particular circumstance. On the topic of adultery and monogamy the ‘Handbook’ states:

Se þe his æwe forlæt and nymð oðer wif, he bið æwbrica, ne sille man nan ðara gerihta þe Cristenum mannum gebireð, ne for deaðe ne for life, ne hine man ne lecege mid Cristenum mannum, and be wife ealswa, and þa magas þe æt þam dihte wæron, þolian þone ylcan dom buton hi ær gecirran willan and georne gebetan.

The one who relinquishes his lawful wife and takes a second woman, he is an adulterer; let one not give [to him] anything of the rights which pertain to Christian people, neither in death nor in life, nor let one bury him among Christian people, and for the woman likewise, and then the kinsmen who were part of the conduct, to suffer the same judgement unless they wish to change and earnestly repent.

The ‘Handbook’ makes explicit the connection between bigamy (in its most general definition as ‘marriage with a second wife or husband during the lifetime of the first’),⁴¹⁹ and adultery. For the compiler of the ‘Handbook’, the two are inseparable. In this clause, bigamy itself is neither explicitly proscribed, nor is monogamy prescribed. Rather, a statement is made that the bigamist is an adulterer. In terms of the church, this statement carries with it a heavy moral judgement for the bigamist. The only prescription in this clause, is how one (or people; *man*) must penalise the bigamist unless (*buton*) he repents. It is interesting that the clause’s moral claim (implied by the use of the obligative subjunctive) is not made on the offenders, but on the confessor. The confessor has a moral duty to penalise, or alter, the behaviour of the offenders and their kin. In this sentiment, the ‘Handbook’ echoes *Polity*, in its exhortation to priests ‘godcunde heorde gewarian [...] mid wislicre lare’ (‘to defend the spiritual flock [...] with wise teaching’; *be sacerdotum*, §109),⁴²⁰ and its reprimand to those priests ‘ðe nellað oððe ne cunnon oððon ne

⁴¹⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) (henceforth *OED*), s. v, ‘bigamy’, 1.

⁴²⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, all references to *Polity* are taken from Karl Jost’s edition, *Die ‘Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical’: Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, ed. by Karl Jost, Swiss Studies in English, 47 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1959).

durron folc wið synna gewarnian and synna gestyran [...] ne mid dædbotum wel ne lacniað' ('who will not, or cannot, or dare not to caution the people against sins and correct sins [...] or cure them well with penances'; *be sacerdam*, §123-24). In other words, moral regulation, like governance, is reticulated: in the 'Handbook', as in *Polity*, the priest, a moral regulator in his own right, is regulated in moral terms.

I Cn includes a proscription against close marriages, and the chapter both morally undermines such marriages, and implicitly prescribes the particular degrees of separation:

[7] ȝ we lærað ȝ we biddað . ȝ on godes naman beodað . þæt ænig cristen man binnon six manna sibfæce on his agenum cynne æfre ne wifige . ne on his mæges lafe . þe swa neahsib wære

[7,1] Ne on ðæs wifes nydmagan þe he silf ær hæfde . ([7,1]) ne on his gefæderan . ne on gehalgodre nunnan .

[7,1] Ne on álætan ænig cristen man ne wifige æfre .

[7] And we teach and we command and in the name of God enjoin that no Christian man ever take a wife from his own kindred within six degrees of relationship, nor the widow of his kinsman, who was as closely related to him.

[7,1] Nor a close kinsman of his former wife, nor his godmother, nor a professed vowess.

[7,1] Nor shall any Christian man ever marry a deserted [or: divorced] woman.

The introduction to *I Cn*, 7 is significant: law is not just about commanding (*biddan*, *beodan*) the cessation of or abidance by particular conduct; its purpose is also to instruct (*læran*)⁴²¹ people in the conduct which they should avoid or perform. In this case, the behaviour proscribed is marital incest:⁴²² marriage within six degrees of consanguinity, marriage to affines, marriage to spiritual affines, marriage to vowesses, and marriage to divorcees. Interestingly, the *Priests' Law* approaches close marriage differently, proscribing

[61,1] þæt nan man ne wifige on neahsibban men þonne wiðutan þam IIII cneowe; ne nan man on his godsibbe ne wifige.

[61,2] ȝ gyf hit hwa gedo, nabbe he Godes mildse, buton he geswice ȝ bete, swa biscop getæce.

[62] Gif he þonne on ðam unrihte gééndige, þolige he clænnes legeres ȝ Godes mildse.

⁴²¹ BT has 'to teach, instruct, educate, to give religious teaching, to preach, to teach a particular tenet or dogma, to enjoin a rule, to exhort, admonish, advise, persuade, suggest' (see s. v, 'læran').

⁴²² Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 30. See also, Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, pp. 46-47.

61.1. that any man should marry a nearly related person, [any nearer] than outside the fourth degree. And no man is to marry anyone spiritually related to him.

61.2. And if anyone does so, may he not have God's mercy, unless he desists and atones as the bishop directs.

62. If, however, he dies in that sin, he is to forfeit Christian burial and God's mercy.

The *Priests' Law* only proscribes within *four* degrees of consanguinity, although it is still concerned to forbid marriage to spiritual affines. It is characteristic in its requirement for penitential atonement (*betan*), and its provision of penalty should atonement not be performed. The 'Handbook' is particularly concerned with marriage to affines, presumably because this type of marriage (with its advantages in maintaining and retaining patrimonies) was particularly problematic to the church.⁴²³

Gyf hwilc wif twegen gebroðra nymð hire to gemæccan oðerne æfter oðrum, todo man hi and beon hi on dædbote georne þa hwile þe hi libban swa heora scrift him tæce, and æt heora forðsiðe do se sacerd heom þa gerihta swa man Cristenum mannum deð, gif hi þæt gehatað þæt hi lengc betan woldon gif hi lengc libban moston.

Gyf hwa on swilcum manfullum sinscipe þurhwunað oð his lifes ende buton ælcere geswicenesse, ne cunne we him nænne ræd geþencan, buton hit is æt Godes dome gelang, ne he to clænan ne mot.

If any woman takes two brothers as husbands for herself, one after the other, one shall separate them, and be they in repentance earnestly whilst they live as their confessor shall prescribe for them; and at their deaths the priest shall then do for them the last rights as one does for Christ's people, if they direct that they would have repented longer if they had lived longer.

If anyone abides persistently in such evil cohabitation up to his life's end without any repentance, we can not devise any counsel, except that it is dependent on God's judgement; nor can he go to consecrated [places].

The second clause here is one of the few examples in the 'Handbook' in which explicit moral judgement is passed: marriage between affines is designated *manfull sinscipe* ('evil cohabitation' or 'wicked marriage'). It is striking that this is the only sin for which the compiler of the 'Handbook' cannot devise appropriate counsel, perhaps indicating the severity of the sin, and the importance of its eradication to the church.

Payer concludes that:

⁴²³ Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 56-59. See also discussion above, Introduction, pp. 17-18.

the early penitentials provide a comprehensive treatment of the heterosexual life of the married. It is unlikely that a confessor familiar with these works would encounter instances of sexual behaviour not covered by them. [...] Because they were intended to be practical handbooks, they must also have served an important instructional function, educating confessors, and through them, the faithful. In terms of a sexual ethic of the married state this function must not be under-estimated.⁴²⁴

Whilst the laws and 'Handbook' extant in C do not, even together, provide a comprehensive treatment of the heterosexual life of the married, they do indicate a number of points of concern for church and 'state' in terms of sexual behaviour, especially as it pertained to the married. Moreover, the concern with sexual behaviour evidences the complementary nature of laws and penance, in theme and in purpose. In terms of purpose, the law codes in C generally function to describe social expectation: they articulate, often briefly, the proscriptions and prescriptions which construct socially acceptable behaviour in late Anglo-Saxon England. They need not have been practically applicable legislation to have been ideologically charged with the encoding of social norms. The purpose of encoding social norms and expectations is also a primary purpose of the penitentials, and it is possible to witness in C this purposive accord between the law codes and the penitentials. Another purpose of the law code, however, although not always realised, was to determine the necessary restitution for the crime. Certainly not all of the legal clauses described penalties; it is clear, though, that as legislation developed, so, too, did their restitutive purpose and thus the penalties listed in them.⁴²⁵ The penitentials, on the other hand, are less concerned about restitution (although provisions for restitution or atonement to society are certainly not lacking) than with the offender's rehabilitation into, or the reconciliation with, Christian society. The law codes, and sometimes the penitentials themselves, threatened excommunication, expulsion, or even execution for crimes; penance made the re-communication of offenders into the church and society possible. Penance, and with them penitentials, were the spiritual cure of crime and sin. In this sense, then, laws and penance are complementary: laws are concerned with action, exteriority, restitution; penitentials are concerned with action as well as intention

⁴²⁴ Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 34.

⁴²⁵ See Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-BUILDER', pp. 16-20.

(interiority), rehabilitation. Penitentials as cure, then, act on behalf of the individual but also on behalf of the society into which such individuals are reintroduced. Rehabilitation and reconciliation required the instruction of the individual in appropriate Christian behaviour: confession was a means by which proper moral conduct could be prescribed.

C provides a convincing study into the ways in which both law codes and penitentials worked together to regulate morality, not only in their complementary purpose, but in their complementary theme. Very often, individual legal clauses are echoed in the 'Handbook', especially when such laws required a penitential reconciliation with society. The 'Handbook', then, is the practical guide by which laws could be imparted to the nation, and the nation's behaviour might be corrected. The law codes and penitentials of C manifest cooperative governance, but illustrate that a goal of cooperative governance was moral regulation.

The 'Handbook' was not a 'compendium of cases for the priest's reference but a compact guide, devoted chiefly to murder, fornication and superstitions'.⁴²⁶ It is perhaps for this reason that a number of sexual proscriptions, which we would expect to see in the 'Handbook', (especially on periods of abstinence, a prominent issue in the Anglo-Latin penitentials), are absent.⁴²⁷ Nevertheless, it should be noted that fifty-five per cent of the 'Handbook's tariffs are of a sexual or marital nature. Twenty-two of its clauses regard sexual offences, whilst only eleven pertain to killing, and the remaining seven to other non-related sins.⁴²⁸ 'the number of canons dealing with sex as a percentage of the total is disproportionately large in comparison to those dealing with other types of offences'.⁴²⁹ This fact alone indicates that the church was especially concerned with marital, or more

⁴²⁶ Frantzen, 'Tradition of Penitentials', p. 48.

⁴²⁷ On periods of abstinence as a primary concern in penitentials see Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, pp. 23-27, pp. 61-62, pp. 126-28; Payer, 'Early Medieval Regulations', pp. 362-71; Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, pp. 47-48

⁴²⁸ Cf. Frantzen, who observes that sex-related canons 'range from 13 to 33 percent' in the vernacular penitentials ('Between the Lines', pp. 268-69).

⁴²⁹ Payer, 'Confession and Sex', p. 5.

specifically extra-marital, sexual conduct;⁴³⁰ the prominence of this concern in laws suggests that marriage and sexual behaviour were a point of unease for secular and religious leaders. The laws (at least those extant in C) do not engage with all issues of marital and sexual behaviour, however; the remit of the laws appears confined to the definition of legal marriage, extra-marital adultery, or fornication. Other aspects of marital and sexual behaviour are found in the 'Handbook' but not in the laws: proper forms of coitus, masturbation, bestiality, and homosexuality, for instance, are moral sins over which the church had sole purchase and with which the 'Handbook' engages, rather than moral crimes – these are not dealt with in the laws.⁴³¹

In considering the laws extant in C alongside the tariff manual of the 'Handbook' it is evident that there is unity in these texts. Of course, not all of the Anglo-Saxon law codes are present in C, neither are all of Wulfstan's law codes: *IX* and *X Atr* are not present and *VI Atr* and *I, II Cn* are only partial. Yet those laws represented in C have, for the most part, confessional support in the 'Handbook': any priest or 'statesman cleric' using C would have had both the legal obligations and the confessional remedies for any offender which he might have encountered. It is indicative that the fuller version of *I, II Cn*, which was based upon the intermediate version found in C,⁴³² following the 'Handbook', concerns itself more copiously with sexual (and marital) crimes,⁴³³ suggesting that Wulfstan went on to integrate penance with law further in the realm of sexual crime. Wormald argues that

Wulfstan's conjunction of homily and law was not a bastard progeny of a union of moral and jural genres better kept well apart. It was a wholly logical response to the position of Carolingian and sub-Carolingian bishops as God's good servants and the king's too.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ On the church's interest in marriage see discussion below, Chapter 3, pp. 249–53.

⁴³¹ On which see Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, pp. 29–30, pp. 46–47, pp. 44–46, pp. 40–43 (respectively); Payer, 'Early Medieval Regulations', pp. 357–62; Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, pp. 48–49, pp. 60–61. On homosexuality in particular, see Frantzen, 'Between the Lines', pp. 271–80.

⁴³² See discussion above, pp. 79–80.

⁴³³ See, in particular *II Cn*, 50–56, 74.

⁴³⁴ Wormald, 'Eleventh-Century State-Builder', p. 21.

A similar point should be made for Wulfstan's inclusion of penitential sentiment in his laws: given the tendency for cooperative governance in the late Anglo-Saxon period, it is not surprising to observe that 'Anglo-Saxon penitential and legal strategies were [...] mutually reinforcing'.⁴³⁵ The points of connection between them suggest that the penitentials and law codes were acting in concert to establish a single Christian ideology by which people should live, or, at least, to which they should aspire. Read together, and acknowledging such points of contact, these texts embody king and church as one inseparable and assimilated entity regulating the morality of their collective people.

1.2.4 *Apollonius of Tyre: Textual and Marital Accord*

The romance of *Apollonius of Tyre* was, 'throughout the Middle Ages, one of the most frequently copied and translated romances of all those which are thought to have originated in the Hellenistic world of the second- and third-centuries A.D.'. ⁴³⁶ The earliest extant version of the legend, entitled *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (henceforth, *HA*), was written in Latin prose; this Latin version 'strongly suggests that the work was originally composed in Greek', with some later, Latin, innovations, resulting in 'a mixture of Greek and Latin elements'. ⁴³⁷ The Old English translation found in C is the oldest extant vernacular translation of *HA*, ⁴³⁸ and is 'the first heterosexual love narrative in English'. ⁴³⁹ Goolden, following Zupitza, posits the twelfth century, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 318 as 'the nearest source manuscript' for the Old English

⁴³⁵ Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, p. 43.

⁴³⁶ T. E. Pickford, 'Apollonius of Tyre as Greek Myth and Christian Mystery', *Neophilologus*, 1975 (59), 599-609 (p. 599). See also Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations, Including the Text of the 'Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri' with an English Translation* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), p. 3.

⁴³⁷ Goolden, *Old English Apollonius*, pp. ix-x.

⁴³⁸ Goolden, *Old English Apollonius*, p. xiii. See also Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 3, p. 26, p. 184; *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri: Prolegomena, Text Edition of the Two Principal Latin Recensions, Bibliography, Indices and Appendices*, ed. by G. A. A. Kortekaas, *Mediaevalia Groningana*, III (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1984), p. 6.

⁴³⁹ Lees, 'Engendering Religious Desire', p. 18.

translation,⁴⁴⁰ but it should be noted that the translation of *Apollonius* in C ‘is a copy of another manuscript now lost’.⁴⁴¹ Regarding the relationship between the Old English *Apollonius* and its Latin source, Goolden states that:

the translator clearly did not aim at reproducing exactly every detail of his source, but no more did he purposefully depart from it [...]. Deviations between the Old English translation and its source are [...] entirely the casual results of a not too meticulous process of translation.⁴⁴²

Anita Riedinger, however, has more recently argued that the Old English translator was more aware of his text than Goolden supposed, manipulating the female character, Arcestrate, to fit the idealised pattern of Anglo-Saxon womanhood.⁴⁴³

Wormald claims that the Old English *Apollonius* is the most ‘startling’ inclusion in C (Section B, subsection ii, pp. 131–45).⁴⁴⁴

There is no denying the appeal of this saga of true love, conjugal and parental, surmounting incestuous tyranny, envious greed and perverse fortune through ingenuity and positively Pasternakian coincidence. [...] But what was it doing in a Wulfstanian primer of Christian standards? If broadly edifying in so far as virtue is rewarded and vice finally punished, it is not even obviously Christian. As literature, it may not tend to corrupt, but nor does it do much to instruct.⁴⁴⁵

Wormald’s conclusion is that the *Apollonius* story ‘evidently *was* regarded as exemplary, and not just by laymen like Eberhard of Friuli’,⁴⁴⁶ a marquis whose library collection of over fifty books – most of which were liturgical, devotional, theological or moralistic –

⁴⁴⁰ Goolden, *Old English Apollonius*, p. xvii. See also J. Zupitza, ‘Welcher Text liegt der altenglischen Bearbeitung der Erzählung von *Apollonius von Tyrus* zu Grunde?’, *Romanische Forschungen*, 3 (1886), 269–79.

⁴⁴¹ Goolden, *Old English Apollonius*, p. xxxiv. See also Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 184, n. 1: ‘At least one other Old English text is known to have existed, whether or not it was the same version [as in C]. The catalogue of the Benedictine Abbey at Burton-on-Trent [Staffordshire], written about 1175, records no. 75 “Apollonium anglie”. It may be significant that this version belonged to an *abbey’s* library, when the version of the *Regularis Concordia* found in C is adapted for a female audience. Kortekaas also cites a relationship between Worcester and *Apollonius* (*Historia Apollonii*, p. 265, n. 736). See also, R. M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*, 2nd rev. edn (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 74–75.

⁴⁴² Goolden, *Old English Apollonius*, p. xx. Cf. Anita Riedinger, ‘The Englishing of Arcestrate: Women in *Apollonius of Tyre*’, in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 292–306.

⁴⁴³ Riedinger, ‘Englishing of Arcestrate’.

⁴⁴⁴ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208.

⁴⁴⁵ Wormald, *Making of Law*, pp. 208–09.

⁴⁴⁶ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 209.

included the *Apollonius* romance.⁴⁴⁷ Wormald further evidences the apparent exemplariness of *Apollonius* by reference to its inclusion in the libraries of Frankish abbeys, in particular, Cluny.⁴⁴⁸ Archibald, asking whether the *HA* was ever regarded as an *exemplum*, follows Raith in arguing that, in relation to the Old English version, ‘no monk would have dared to translate *HA* had it not been for its exemplary aspects, and the same presumably goes for copying it’.⁴⁴⁹ Yet, her analysis of the *HA* suggests that it does not fit the pattern of ‘exemplary romance’ or ‘homiletic romance’, and she concludes that there is not a ‘specific ethical or didactic concern’ in the text.⁴⁵⁰ Further, Wormald does not adduce a reason for *why* *Apollonius* was considered appropriate reading, even within the ‘august portals’ of Cluny, beyond that ‘early medieval monks and nuns would insist on being unsuitably entertained. *Apollonius* was less shocking than some well-known examples’.⁴⁵¹ However, the inclusion of *Apollonius of Tyre* within C may be further explicated when it is read with specific reference to its manuscript context.

Brown has argued that in *Apollonius*, ‘writing becomes symbolically and functionally correlated to both temporal and spiritual power’,⁴⁵² and the inclusion of *Apollonius* in C may perhaps be explicable because of its promotion of the text as a locus of wisdom and cultural ideal. In a written manuscript concerned with dictating the values and methods of Christian governance, Brown’s observations that *Apollonius* on the one hand thematically and linguistically connects the ‘spoken word with the misuse of power, the undermining of social order, and the impotence of verbal promises’, and on the other, embodies ‘wisdom and nobility through literacy’,⁴⁵³ has certain contextual appeal and validity. It may

⁴⁴⁷ Wormald, *Making of Law*, pp. 53–54.

⁴⁴⁸ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 209.

⁴⁴⁹ Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 86.

⁴⁵⁰ Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, pp. 87–89 (at p. 89).

⁴⁵¹ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 209. Goolden similarly argues that ‘*Apollonius* shows that the Anglo-Saxons did not always wish to be reminded of the world around them or the one to come. There was then, too, a demand for escape entertainment, a taste for the imaginative world of fantasy, excitement, and sensationalism’ (*Old English Apollonius*, p. xxv).

⁴⁵² Brown, ‘Writing Power’, p. 50.

⁴⁵³ Brown, ‘Writing Power’, p. 51.

be overstated to claim that *Apollonius* was included *because* of this position, but Brown's analysis of the text and its stance on governance at the very least aligns *Apollonius* with the interests and opinions of the C compiler. The same point should be made for the morality inscribed in the tale: the concerns evident in the law codes and 'Handbook', as well as elsewhere, may be echoed in *Apollonius*, and the reasons for its inclusion in this 'Wulfstanian primer'⁴⁵⁴ may relate to its affiliation with the broader interests of C. Archibald questions, 'what should the reader of *HA* learn to imitate, or to avoid?'.⁴⁵⁵ She concludes:

HA seems to be a chameleon, lacking a generic colour of its own. It can be read as a proto-romance, though it lacks the emphasis on love, war and courtly manners which are characteristic of most medieval romances. It can be read as 'history' in the sense of an educational story set in the past, though 'authentic history' is not really a valid category for consideration; but the abrupt beginning and lack of historical context [...] argue against a strictly historical reading. Finally, the lack of any explicit religious or moral theme makes it hard to read it as an *exemplum*.⁴⁵⁶

It is possible that, since *Apollonius* lacks independent 'colour',⁴⁵⁷ the manuscript context might indicate its appeal to the particular scribe or compiler. The marital morality found in *Apollonius* indicates a way in which it would have been acceptable to the compiler of C, and an examination of its marital morality suggests that *Apollonius* was congruent with the manuscript as a whole; as Lees suggests, 'we can speculate therefore that its theme of lawful marriage appealed both to the translator and the compiler'.⁴⁵⁸

In C, *Apollonius* begins with rubric, which reads '*her onginneð seo gerecednes be antioche þam ungesæligan cingce 7 be apolonige þam {.....}*' ('here begins the history concerning Antiochus, the evil king, and concerning Apollonius, the [Tyrenian]'; 131 [*Inscription*]).⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 208.

⁴⁵⁵ Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 89.

⁴⁵⁶ Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 91.

⁴⁵⁷ Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 91.

⁴⁵⁸ Lees, 'Engendering Religious Desire', p. 38.

⁴⁵⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of *Apollonius of Tyre* are transcribed directly from MS C; all further quotations from *Apollonius* will be given by reference to the manuscript page; the conventional Latin chapter numbers are given in square brackets. I have also consulted the following printed

The reason for Antiochus's description as *ungesælig* ('evil') is then immediately explicated in the opening sequence which vehemently condemns father-daughter incest: Antiochus has an unnamed daughter of marriageable age (131 [I]), and he 'gefeol his agen mod on hyre lufe mid *unrihtre* gewilnunge . to ðam swiðe þæt he forgeat . þa fæderlican arfæstnesse .] gewilnode his agenre dohtor . him to gemæccan' ('in his own mind fell in love with her with *unlawful* desire, so that he forgot the paternal virtue, and desired his own daughter as a wife for himself; 131 [I], my emphasis). Archibald, in her analysis of all of the extant versions of *HA*, argues that the Old English rubric title indicates that 'the initial incest episode [was] the most significant feature of *HA*'⁴⁶⁰ to the Old English translator, scribe or compiler. This argument is borne out in the context of C: whilst genitorial incest is not specifically included in those law codes included in C, Wulfstan's (and C's) concern with incest is evident in the definition in the laws, homilies and 'Handbook' of the proper degrees of separation from consanguines, affines, and spiritual affines for marriage.⁴⁶¹ Antiochus's desire to marry his daughter clearly violates the morality found elsewhere in C – it 'threatens rightful marriage'⁴⁶² – and this point is emphasised by the inclusion of *unriht* in the lines cited above, which encompasses both the illegality of the act, as well as its immorality: 'Antiochus transgresses the fundamental law of incest, articulated in Anglo-Saxon England from the Conversion onwards'.⁴⁶³

This opening sequence of *Apollonius* is structurally not dissimilar to the 'Handbook' (and other penitential literature) in that it is careful to articulate Antiochus's intention and his action: these are separately enunciated. Frantzen notes that, in the penitentials, 'the most important factor in determining guilt was the penitent's awareness of his actions; one who had sinned knowingly ("*sciens*," "*volens*") was always more heavily assessed than one who

editions: Goolden, *Old English Apollonius; The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Story of Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. and trans. by Benjamin Thorpe (London: Arch, 1834).

⁴⁶⁰ Archibald, *Themes and Variations*, p. 93.

⁴⁶¹ See discussion above, pp. 133–34. Wulfstan also later incorporates proscriptions against marital incest into *II Cn*, 51; 51,1.

⁴⁶² Lees, 'Engendering Religious Desire', p. 37.

⁴⁶³ Lees, 'Engendering Religious Desire', p. 38.

was unaware that he had done wrong'.⁴⁶⁴ In the 'Handbook' a distinction is also made between action fulfilled and intention unfulfilled. The lines quoted above emphasise Antiochus's intention – his desire for his daughter was in his mind. The text then explicitly states: 'ȝ þa gewilnunge naht lange ne ylde' ('and that desire was not delayed for long'; 131 [I]), since Antiochus then proceeds to rape his daughter, a *manfulla scyld* ('evil crime'; 131 [I]). But Antiochus also possesses awareness that his actions are wrong, or evil. The text tells us that, after he rapes his daughter, 'þæt gefremede man . gewilnode to bedigianne' ('he wished to hide that [crime] he had committed; 131 [I]), indicating Antiochus's knowledge that his crime was iniquitous. Moreover, the riddle he devises to keep potential suitors from marrying his daughter, the solution to which is his incestuous relationship, implies his knowledge that he sins: '*scyld* ic þolige moddrenum flæsce ic bruce' ('I suffer *sin*, I partake of the flesh of mothers'; 132 [IV], my emphasis). Such emphasis on intention, knowledge and action recalls the 'Handbook's similar preoccupation: in the manslaughter sequence of the tariff manual (Part IV) of the 'Handbook', differentiation is made between intention without action, action under duress, involuntary action, and action with intention (just as many of the sexual articles differentiate between willing and unwilling action, unfulfilled desire and completed action). Antiochus's action with intention condemns him triply – he is guilty on all accounts – and the language of *Apollonius* makes clear that Antiochus's behaviour is evil, sinful, and criminal. Antiochus's daughter describes herself as 'mid manfulre scilde besmiten' ('defiled with evil crime'; 131 [II]), stating that 'arleasnes þa scilde on me gefremode' ('wickedness has perpetrated this sin on me'; 132 [II]), and the narrator repeatedly designates Antiochus (and his behaviour) as wicked, evil and cruel (*arleas*, *manfull*, *wælbreow*). In the last stages of the tale, as Apollonius retells his life's story, he characterises the incest as *fulest borh* ('foulest defilement'; 143 [XLVIII]). This initial incest section, then, reflects a concern present in other texts in C with the definition of

⁴⁶⁴ Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 8.

rightful marriage and appropriate sexual relations, and echoes their proscription against consanguineous marriages by denouncing and reviling Antiochus as sinful and evil.⁴⁶⁵

The next incident in the story which encodes Wulfstanian marital morality occurs after Apollonius meets Arcestrate, and after she has fallen in love with him. This incident is ‘readily interpreted in purely Christian terms’.⁴⁶⁶ Arcestrate’s suitors ask her father, King Arcestrates, for a decision regarding their suit, to which the King replies:

Nabbe ge na godne timan aredodne. Min dohtor is <nu> swiðe bisy ymbe hyre leornunga. Ac þe læs þe ic eow <a> leng slæce . awritað eowre – naman on gewrite .] hire morgengife. þonne asænde ic þa gewrita minre dohtor þæt heo sylf geceose hwilcne eowerne heo wille.

‘You have not chosen an appropriate time. My daughter is now very busy at her studies. But, lest I should any longer delay you any longer, write your names in a letter, and her morning-gift. Then I will dispatch the letters to my daughter so that she herself can choose which of you she wants.’ (141 [XIX])

The parallels here between *Apollonius* and *Be wifmannes beweddunge* are clear:⁴⁶⁷ the suitors must announce their morning-gift to the prospective bride, and her consent to her marriage is required. Indeed, in *Apollonius*, her consent is ultimately paramount, since her father marries her to Apollonius, *not* to one of her initial suitors, on her request. Whilst C has little to say about the consent of women in first marriages, it has already been noted that Wulfstan was particularly preoccupied with the rights of widows to choose their husbands. *V Atr* requires that the woman ‘ceose [...] þæt heo sylf wille’ (‘is to choose [...] what she herself will’; 21,1),⁴⁶⁸ and this sentiment parallels closely that in *Apollonius*, ‘þæt heo sylf geceose hwilce eowerne heo wille’ (‘that she herself can choose which of you she wants’). Arcestrate’s consent to her marriage is explicit: she reiterates in a letter to her father that he has allowed her to choose her husband (141 [XX]); in that letter she chooses Apollonius (141 [XX]), and she then verbally articulates her choice to her father

⁴⁶⁵ For a specifically Christian interpretation of this incest sequence, see Pickford, ‘Greek Myth and Christian Mystery’, pp. 600-01.

⁴⁶⁶ Pickford, ‘Greek Myth and Christian Mystery’, p. 599.

⁴⁶⁷ See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 40-43.

⁴⁶⁸ See also *II Cn*, 74 (not found in C).

(142 [XXII]). The section in which Apollonius presumably might have explicitly consented to the marriage is missing, but his consent is implicit: the King asks Apollonius to identify the man whom Arcestrate wishes to marry; Apollonius knows that it is himself, and by choosing to identify himself as that man to the King, Apollonius implicitly agrees to the marriage. *Apollonius*, then, reinforces the ideal of consent in marriage in that this marriage is dependent on Arcestrate's consent; that the marriage of Apollonius to Arcestrate is ultimately successful endorses consensual marriage.

A substantial portion of the tale, 'consisting of more than half the story', is missing from C here,⁴⁶⁹ during which Arcestrate and Apollonius marry; at sea, she gives birth to a daughter, appears to die in the labour, and is put to sea in a chest. In Ephesus, the chest, and a living Arcestrate, are found; she becomes a priestess in the temple of Diana. Apollonius and his daughter, Thasia, embark on their own adventures until, when the Old English text resumes, they both come to Arcestrate's temple in Ephesus. At this point, the final example of marital morality found the Old English *Apollonius*, is addressed: that of celibacy and remarriage. Arcestrate has, throughout her separation from Apollonius, remained chaste, and as she dresses to meet the unnamed king who has arrived at the temple, the narrator comments that she was most beloved to Diana 'for ðare micclan lufe . þare clænnesse' ('on account of her great love for chastity'; 143 [XLVIII]). On their meeting, Apollonius greets Arcestrate as a priestess, not recognising her as his wife. He laments his life to her and reveals that, for more than fourteen years, he has remained a widower and not remarried (143 [XLVIII]). Arcestrate, 'soðlice his wif' ('truly his wife'; 143 [XLIX]) recognises Apollonius first and embraces him; Apollonius, not recognising his wife, 'sceaf hi fram him' ('pushed her away from him'; 143 [XLIX]). The reunion of Apollonius and Arcestrate emphasises that both have remained chaste and unmarried, despite their prolonged separation, and, in Apollonius's case, his belief that his

⁴⁶⁹ Goolden, *Old English Apollonius*, p. 59, n. 34 (30).

wife was dead. Indeed, Apollonius's dedication to his marriage is evident until the very last moment, when he rejects the embraces of someone whom he considers 'another' woman.

Riedinger argues that Arcestrate is an 'ideal woman', because of her four virtues of kindness, obedience, chastity and love of learning.⁴⁷⁰ Certainly, her chastity, as well as Apollonius's, would have appealed to the C-compiler. In the law codes discussed above, the prescriptions for monogamy make clear that men should have only *one* wife; Apollonius's choice not to remarry manifests these laws (*I Cn*, 7,3; *Northu*, 61). Equally, Arcestrate's choice to go into 'orders' (albeit, pagan) and observe her chastity, manifests the clerical behaviour prescribed by the laws and 'Handbook': abstinence. Perhaps most obvious is the parallel between *Apollonius* and *Polity* in this matter. In the latter text in C, the section concerning laymen (*be læwedum mannun*) initially reiterates that each man should have only one wife:

Ðæt bið rihtlic lif, þæt cniht þurhwunige on hys cnihtade, oððæt he on rihtre mædenæwe gewifige, and habbe þa siððan and nænige oðre, þa hwile seo libbe

It is a proper life, that a young man should abide in his youthful state [i.e. a virgin], until he lawfully takes a maiden in marriage, and thereafter he shall have her and no other, whilst she lives. (§88)

More immediately relevant to *Apollonius*, however, is the following clause: 'gif hire þonne forðsið getimige, þonne is rihtast, þæt he þanonforð wuduwa þurhwunige' ('if her death then happens, then it is most proper, that he should after that remain a widower; §89).⁴⁷¹ That is, *Polity* makes a moral judgement on remarriage, even after the death of a spouse, as less proper, or less moral. Morality is characterised by a refusal to remarry. Apollonius's morality is embodied in his decision to remain a widower, a course of action which *Polity* explicitly recommends, and which the laws and 'Handbook' implicitly recommend in their proscriptions against a man taking more than one wife.

⁴⁷⁰ Riedinger, 'Englishing of Arcestrate', p. 296.

⁴⁷¹ In the version found in MS Junius 121, it moreover states that: 'be þam man mæg witan, þæt hi eallunga riht nis, þæt wer wifige oðþon wif ceorlige oftor þonne æne' ('according to that, one may know that it is not altogether proper that a man take a wife, or a woman take a husband, more often than once'; §194).

Arcestrate's chastity is equally as important in the context of C. It is not unusual for women to be termed *mæden* ('maiden', 'virgin'), but Arcestrate is entitled *mæden* in over twenty-five percent of the instances in which she is given a title (as opposed to being referred to as *heo* or *hir*).⁴⁷² Moreover, she is called *scamfæst fæmne* ('modest virgin'; 141 [XX]) and, as noted, is described as a lover of chastity *clænnes* ('moral purity', 'chastity'). Arcestrate, then, participates in no extra-marital fornication, she is not an adulterer, and, as one in orders, she keeps her chastity as befits her status. Riedinger argues that the Old English translator generally weakens the characterisation of Arcestrate and marginalises her, and her interests. She notes, however, that 'perhaps this [chastity] is a characteristic that the Old English translator, too, can applaud, for his emendations [to his Latin source] finally enhance, rather than diminish, her portrait'.⁴⁷³ That is, it is Arcestrate's chastity which recommends her to the Old English translator; that chastity locates her within the regulatory context of C. When coupled with Apollonius's monogamous commitment, the marriage is an embodiment of many of the aspects which the texts in C prescribe for married couples.

Apollonius encodes a rich morality. Budny observes of it that 'this text presents a moral tale, set in Asia Minor, of princely love, exile and virtue rewarded [...] Perhaps the presence of the version here [is] designed to match the story of Josephy', extant in the partial Old English translation of *Genesis* in C, 'another moral tale of princely justice and good government. Both tales accord with Wulfstan's notion of the just and goodly life'.⁴⁷⁴ That is, for Budny, Apollonius's governance illustrates a moral code which accords well with its manuscript context. The same may be said for the marital morality found in *Apollonius*. Lees notes that 'what the *Apollonius* offers Anglo-Saxon culture is a rare

⁴⁷² Riedinger, 'Englising of Arcestrate', pp. 295-96.

⁴⁷³ Riedinger, 'Englising of Arcestrate', p. 300.

⁴⁷⁴ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 476.

moment of explicit sexual representation *and* regulation in the secular literature’,⁴⁷⁵ and in this representation and regulation, *Apollonius* echoes the law codes and penitentials found in its manuscript. It moreover, however, presents a representation and regulation of marriage (and, indeed, these two facets – sexuality and marriage – are difficult to differentiate). *Apollonius* regulates behaviour through the representation of incest as unlawful and immoral sexual congress: it proscribes. But *Apollonius* also regulates through prescription: it applauds consensual marriage; its hero practices monogamy, and its heroine, however marginal, is celebrated for her chastity. These aspects of morality, however, are unobtrusive and muted, unless *Apollonius* is read with an understanding of its manuscript context; it is through an examination of *Apollonius* with an awareness of the C compiler’s concerns and interests that its morality can be ascertained, and its purpose in this codex, established.

1.3 Conclusion

I began this chapter by reiterating, and explicating, the reform phenomenon that ‘churchmen disposed of considerable secular and moral power, and monarchy and religion practically fused’.⁴⁷⁶ In terms of moral regulation, this relationship between church and state is of the greatest importance, since it is only through a recognition of the various cooperative strategies of governance and power in the late Anglo-Saxon period, that the regulation of the morality of the English can be adequately addressed. In the context of cooperative governance, the unity of MS C becomes apparent. In its connection with Wulfstan, the figure who best embodies such a concerted approach to governance and regulation, C manifests principles of authority, order and instruction. Wormald states that ‘it is possible and may be advisable to view his [Wulfstan’s] work from a unitary perspective. His manuscripts imply that his laws, homilies and *Institutes* had a common

⁴⁷⁵ Lees, ‘Engendering Religious Desire’, p. 38.

⁴⁷⁶ Lawson, ‘Homiletic Element’, p. 146.

aim. They brought together complementary means of realizing it'.⁴⁷⁷ C is not always considered one of 'his' manuscripts, and yet it should be included in the corpus of Wulfstan manuscripts.

The 'Handbook', although not written by him, should be similarly incorporated into the list of tools by which Wulfstan architected and implemented his ideal vision of English society. Its close connection with the laws written by him – their thematic, tonal, and rhetorical correspondences – indicates that the 'Handbook' belongs to Wulfstan's development of a practical, pastoral ministry. Whilst my concern was to articulate the complementarity between the law codes and the penitentials as vehicles for regulating morality, and to draw attention to the many and blatant correspondences between them, I do not want to suggest that they are the same genre of text: they are distinct and their complementarity develops from their differences, as well as their similarities. Yet, these legal and penitential texts, with their frequent references to each other, should, ideally not be read in isolation: law was intrinsically implied in practices of penance, and penance was a necessary correlative for legal punishment. Regulation in C is, like the processes of governance it promotes, a complex of mutually reinforcing and supporting proscriptions, prescriptions, moral claims and moral judgements.

⁴⁷⁷ Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 464.

Chapter 2

Ræd hwæt ic mæne: Moral Advice in the Exeter Book Riddles

2.1 *The Exeter Book Riddles in Their Manuscript Context*

In the Introduction and Chapter 1, I was primarily concerned to ascertain the character and form of moral regulation in Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth and eleventh centuries: I established that moral regulation was a collusion of church and secular authorities, so that the construction, dissemination, normalisation and control of morality were part of a concerted project by secular and religious leaders to systematise social values. I thus argued that the penitentials and the law-codes of the late Anglo-Saxon period *together* explicitly proscribed immoral behaviour and thereby implicitly constructed, defined and prescribed moral behaviour. In some manuscripts, such as Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Manuscript 201, it is possible to recognise this concerted, rigorous and collective project to regulate the morality of late Anglo-Saxon society, and to witness the conflation of ostensibly ecclesiastical with ostensibly secular aims. I also argued in Chapter 1 that such texts as the penitentials and the law-codes were especially concerned with the sexual morality of those they endeavoured to regulate, and, indeed, that those texts were particularly interested in regulating the sexual morality of the married.

Whilst the *Exeter Book's*¹ production in the mid to late tenth-century situates it within this picture of a sustained and collusive project of moral regulation,² such an observation

¹ Exeter Cathedral Library, Exeter Dean and Chapter, MS 3501.

does not necessarily require the codex's participation in, or contribution to, that regulatory project. However, as Michael Drout convincingly demonstrates, some of the poems in the *Exeter Book* 'demonstrate affinities in vocabulary, style, and intellectual preoccupations with the tenth-century Benedictine Reform'.³ In his analysis of the *Exeter Book* wisdom poetry,⁴ Drout concludes that 'we see in the wisdom poems the utilization of wisdom forms for Benedictine monastic purposes', for instance in *Precepts* which

re-casts an important non-monastic relationship, that between a father and his son, in monastic terms [... so that] its effect is to suggest that when a father imparts wisdom to his son, it should be done in a certain way and the wisdom should be a certain wisdom, that of the culture of the reformed monastery in the tenth century.⁵

Mercedes Salvador, in an equally convincing argument (specifically concerning the *Exeter Book* Riddles), concludes that:

in an age in which Æthelwold and others sought to rescue English monasteries from their ongoing intellectual and cultural decline, the Old English Riddles might have been included, together with other texts, in the Exeter codex with the intention to use them in monastic schools as typically brainstorming exercises or as an effective accompaniment to Latin *enigmata*.⁶

It is finally worth noting that, whilst the original provenance of the *Exeter Book* is contentious, with both Exeter and Glastonbury as possibilities,⁷ Exeter itself was a

² Zimmerman, G., *The Four Old English Poetic Manuscripts: Texts, Contexts, and Historical Background*, Anglistische Forschungen, 230 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1995), p. 1.

³ Michael D. C. Drout, *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century* (forthcoming, December 2005), esp. Chapter 8, 'The Exeter Book Wisdom Poems and the Benedictine Reform'. I am extremely grateful to Associate Professor Drout for providing me with a copy of his manuscript before its publication. See also Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, esp. Chapter 3, 'The Exeter Book: The Socialization of the Individual', pp. 91-182; Robert Deshman, 'The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia and the English Monastic Reform', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, Studies in Medieval Culture, 20 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 261-82 (pp. 277-78).

⁴ Drout includes *The Gifts of Men*, *Precepts*, *The Fortunes of Men* and *Maxims I* in his analysis (*How Tradition Works*).

⁵ *How Tradition Works*, Chapter 8.

⁶ 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context in the Exeter Riddles: the Evidence of an Ur-Collection (K.-D. nos. 1-40)' (submitted to *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2005). I am extremely grateful to Dr Salvador for providing me with a copy of her substantial article before its publication.

⁷ For Exeter see: Patrick W. Conner in his *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), pp. 95-164, and its review by Richard and Fiona Gameson, *Notes and Queries*, 42 (1995), 228-30; *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, ed. by Bernard J. Muir, rev. edn, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), p. 3. For Glastonbury see: Richard

reformed community by AD 968, and it was from Glastonbury that the reformed monks, led by Sidemann, came to Exeter at that time.⁸ In other words, the *Exeter Book* was most likely compiled at a reformed house, whether Glastonbury or Exeter.⁹

Although not all of its poems are specifically religious in subject and theme, most of the poems in the *Exeter Book* are moralising in tone. Those texts which are immediately classifiable as having a religious subject or theme are the *Christ* poems, *Guthlac A* and *B*, *Azarias*, *The Phoenix*, *Juliana*, *The Wanderer*, *Gifts of Men*, *The Seafarer*, *Vainglory*, *Fortunes of Men*, *The Order of the World*, *The Panther*, *The Whale*, *The Partridge*, *Soul and Body II*, *Judgement Day I*, *Resignation*, *Descent into Hell*, *Alms-Giving*, *Pharaoh*, *Lord's Prayer I* and *Homiletic Fragment II*. Those texts which, although not necessarily overtly religious, are classifiable as moral texts are *Precepts*, *Maxims I* and *The Riming Poem*. The outstanding texts in the codex are *Widsith*, the riddles, and the remaining elegies (*Deor*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Wife's Lament*, *The Husband's Message*, *The Ruin*). I have argued elsewhere that the nostalgic evocation that is integral to the elegies is didactic and moralising in the sense that 'the normative associations of nostalgia imply that the Old English elegies served as standardised and regulatory scripts for socially acceptable [...] behaviour in distinct [...] situations'.¹⁰ If this argument is accepted, then only *Widsith* and the riddles cannot immediately be classified as containing Christian or moral over- or undertones. The claim that most of the *Exeter Book* poems are moralising in tone is not radical, since it does not say that such poems are solely or heavily moralistic, nor does it imply that the *Exeter Book* poems are a homogenous collection: the diversity and

Gameson 'The Origin of the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 25 (1996), 135-85. Glastonbury is Gameson's 'educated guess' (pp. 177-79).

⁸ Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', p. 138. Gameson also notes that 'it is a fallacy to assume that monastic reform in the tenth century inevitably brought impressive libraries and scriptoria in its wake' (pp. 138-39).

⁹ Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, pp. 27-31; Drout, *How Tradition Works*, Chapter 8.

¹⁰ 'Nostalgic Evocation and Social Privilege in the Old English Elegies', *Studia Neophilologica*, 76 (2004), 3-11 (p. 8).

heterogeneity of these poems is acknowledged.¹¹ Rather, my contention is simply that most of the *Exeter Book's* poems contain accounts of morality, or religious sentiment coupled with moral sentiment.¹²

In Chapter 1, I argued that the alliance and inseparability of church and secular power necessitated the translation of the moral principles of the church into social morals, and social morals were in turn strengthened by ecclesiastical sanction and religious colouring. Further, as Clare A. Lees notes:

the aesthetic upon which so much literary history is predicated 'tends to neglect wide areas of poetic activity by its distinction between *literary* and *didactic* styles or between the *religious* and the *moral* lyric – distinctions which no medieval author would have thought of.' Similar comments hold true for the Anglo-Saxon period.¹³

The implication of this argument is that it is erroneous to separate the morality evident in the *Exeter Book's* poems into 'social' or 'religious' morality, as well as to distinguish between their 'religious' and 'moral' content:¹⁴ the codex is predominantly concerned with the morality of its audience and that morality should be understood as the fusion of social and Christian morality, necessarily dependent upon the religious context of late tenth-century England. The *Exeter Book's* morality is Christian, but with a social utility in the Christianised context of Anglo-Saxon society.¹⁵ This assertion is supported by Bernard Muir's argument that, despite some eclecticism in the *Exeter Book's* contents, 'thematic unity' and 'systematic organization' order the codex. Muir argues that there is codicological 'evidence that either the anthologist or the scribe participated actively in the manipulation and transmission of the texts as we have them' and that this appreciation of

¹¹ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 91.

¹² *How Tradition Works*, Chapter 8.

¹³ Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing and Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures, 19 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 23. Lees quotes Siegfried Wenzel from *Verses in Sermons: 'Fasciculus Morum' and Its Middle English Poems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1978), p. 132.

¹⁴ Cf. Hugh Magennis, who remarks that the *Exeter Book* Riddles have no Christian moral content; rather, they contain social morality, "No Sex Please, We're Anglo-Saxons"? Attitudes to Sexuality in Old English Poetry and Prose', *Leeds Studies in English*, NS 26 (1995), 1-27 (pp. 17-18).

¹⁵ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, pp. 98-99.

the scribe/anthologist¹⁶ as meticulous and purposeful supports the contention that the *Exeter Book* is thematically unified by moral directives.¹⁷

On a general level, most of the poems of the *Exeter Book* are edifying, concerning conduct, morals, and ethics. Some of the poems are anagogical and tropological – that is, concerned with death, Judgement, heaven and hell, usually in connection with such moral discourse. The *Exeter Book's* ‘intention was evidently to teach’ and to regulate.¹⁸ Thus, in most cases, the *Exeter Book* poems are not explicitly doctrinal but rather are concerned with creating a model for moral and virtuous living, often in the context of the preparation for Judgement Day and the afterlife.¹⁹ That is, most of these poems are didactic; they argue for moral ways of living in the temporal world, in some cases by the

¹⁶ For the purposes of convenience, I have assumed throughout this discussion that the scribe/anthologist was an individual male. Palaeographical evidence suggests that there was only one scribe, although the possibility that there were multiple anthologists or that the scribe/anthologist/s were female must be noted. Michelle P. Brown has cogently argued that female scribes were more prevalent in Anglo-Saxon England than has previously been acknowledged, in ‘Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of the Ninth-Century Prayerbooks’, in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Papers in Honour of Jane Roberts*, ed. by C. Kay and L. Sylvester (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 45-67, and ‘Preaching with the Pen: The Contribution of Insular Scribes to the Transmission of Sacred Text, from the 6th to 9th Centuries’, The University of London Annual Palaeography Lecture, Thursday 22 January 2004 (text available at: <<http://www.sas.ac.uk/ies/centre/Palaeography/past/Lecture%202003-04.htm>> [accessed 18 May 2005]).

¹⁷ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, pp. 21-24; see also Roy M. Liuzza, ‘The Old English *Christ* and *Guthlac*: Texts, Manuscripts and Critics’, *Review of English Studies*, 41 (1990), 1-11 (pp. 6-11). Whilst Zimmerman does not often use the term ‘moral’, her analysis of the *Exeter Book* does point to its moral and didactic thematic unity. For instance, of the ostensibly different *Widsith* and *Vainglory*, she comments that ‘both speakers pronounce moral judgements, but with different legitimizations’, secular experience and religious truths (*Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 163). Nevertheless, Zimmerman’s ultimate conclusion is that ‘the Exeter Book collection discusses man’s life on earth in its various aspects and proposes rules and models of identification for the individual. [...] The Exeter Book poems focus on the individual within the “institutions” which are founded on the religiously sanctioned political and social system. The Exeter Book discusses the problems which man is likely to encounter when he confronts the social or religious frames of reference [and thus...] provides the individual in Christian society with a guideline for his Christian and his social life. Both are influenced by the monastic concern for a Christian way of life’ (pp. 179-82).

¹⁸ Judith Garde, *Old English Poetry in Medieval Christian Perspective: A Doctrinal Approach* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), p. 3.

¹⁹ Unless otherwise defined, the use of the general term *audience* throughout this chapter implies the individual, or group of, reader/s, listener/s, or responder/s exposed to the poems in the codex, either through the public performance, recitation or private reading of them.

overt meditation upon sin and its consequences at Doomsday.²⁰ Most of the poems of the *Exeter Book* convey an accessible, psychologised account²¹ of each person's experience of morality, as well as of the trials of, and solutions for, living in the temporal world whilst embracing such morality.²²

One of the predominant moral themes which these poems address is the inevitable temptation of sin and the devil in terms of the ordeal that each moral Christian faces when confronted with such temptation, and the concurrent affirmation that God will reward the righteous with salvation. Thus, whilst not all of its poems contribute to its mood and purpose, 'the prevailing mood' of the *Exeter Book* 'is penitential'.²³ The poems are intended for an audience that is unified by the difficulties and consolations shared by all of Christianity's members and this underlying principle of collective accessibility centres the *Exeter Book's* purposes of instruction and salvation: these aims are universal in their address. As Judith Garde anticipates, the *Exeter Book* 'reveals a practical, accessible theology of redemption that often includes urgent eschatological admonition',²⁴ and thus many of its poems are concerned with 'different models for Christian living'; 'reflection, penance and renewal', including the ultimate accountability for past deeds on Judgement Day, and 'the continuing threat of evil in the world, which Christians must gird themselves against'.²⁵ Within the structure of a discussion of the individual's moral obligations, often in the context of Judgement Day, the poems construct and convey the normative conventions and attitudes that embody the fundamental moral values of the

²⁰ For a general discussion of the Christian didactic or wisdom component of most of the *Exeter Book* poems, see Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), pp. 253-79.

²¹ For example see Antonina Harbus's discussion of *Juliana*, *Guthlac A* and *B*, and the Old English elegies of the *Exeter Book* in her *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry*, Costerus, NS 143 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), esp. pp. 91-98, 102-12, 123-25, and 127-60. On Old English poetry more generally, Harbus argues that 'this literary culture seem to privilege the universality of mental experience: subjective psychological reality is widely apprehensible by other individuals. [...] The common focus on the inner person as a thinking subject in turn indicates the primacy of psychology in poetic creation' (p. 11).

²² Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, esp. p. 101.

²³ *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, trans. by S. A. J. Bradley, Everyman's Library (London: J. M. Dent, 1982), p. 202.

²⁴ Garde, *Old English Poetry*, p. 2.

²⁵ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, pp. 21-24.

Christian faith. In other words, the *Exeter Book* poems embody an accessible account of the call in *S. Benedicti Regula*:

Diem iudicii timere.
 Gehennam expavescere.
 Vitam aeternam omni concupiscentia spiritali desiderare.
 Mortem cotidie ante oculos suspectam habere.
 Actus vitae suae omni hora custodire.

To fear the Day of Judgement. To dread hell. To desire eternal life with all spiritual longing. To keep death daily before one's eyes. To keep constant guard over the actions of one's life. (IV: Jan 20/May 21/Sept 20)²⁶

That is, the *Exeter Book* has a common utility which is coupled with humanity and sensitivity for those it aims to teach.²⁷

A brief survey of some of the poems of the *Exeter Book* illustrates their morality, utility and humanity. *Christ A, B* and *C*, although focused on Christ, are treatises on humanity and human history.²⁸ Repeated reference to human frailty and the misery associated with sin is used in sharp contrast to the true, steadfast and blissful natures of God and Christ.

For example, in *Christ A* the narrator exclaims:

Forþon we, nergend, þe
 biddað geornlice breostgehygdum
 þæt þu hrædlice helpe gefremme
 wergum wreccan, þæt se wites bona
 in helle grund hean gedreose,
 ond þin hondgeweorc, hæleþa scyppend,
 mote arisan ond on ryht cuman
 to þam upcundan æþelan rice,
 þonan us ær þurh synlust se swearta gæst
 forteah ond fortylde, þæt we, tires wone,
 a butan ende sculon ermþu dreogan,
 butan þu usic þon ofostlicor, ece dryhten,
 æt þam leodsceaþan, lifgende god,

²⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *S. Benedicti Regula* are taken from Justin McCann's edition, *The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English* (London: Burns Oates, 1952); all translations are also McCann's. All further references to *S. Benedicti Regula* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

²⁷ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, pp. 98-101.

²⁸ Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, pp. 102-8.

helm alwihta, hreddan wille.

Therefore, Saviour, we earnestly pray to you in our breasts' thoughts that you soon give help to us, exhausted exiles, so that the torturing slayer might fall into the hell abyss, despised, and your handiwork, Creator of men, might arise and rightly come to the heavenly, glorious kingdom, from where formerly, through a lust for sin, the dark spirit led us astray and seduced us, so that we, lacking in honour, must endure miseries forever without end, unless you, eternal Lord, living God, Protector of all things, wish to free us from the enemy of the people the more quickly. (261b-74b)²⁹

The narrator's prolonged and repetitious contrast between the misery of sinful humankind on the one hand, and the glory of God on the other, is moderated by his use of first-person pronouns – *us*, *we*, *usic* – which implies a personal experience of humanity shared by the narrator and his audience, and which prompts the audience's conscience to earnest remorse since the narrator, and thus 'we', are abjectly penitent. Through such shared remorse the narrator invokes God's saving grace as the help and the freedom of the exhausted exiles. The image of humanity's worldly suffering is tempered by the promise of possible improvement: the narrator explicitly says 'forþon ic [...] læran wille' ('therefore I want to teach'; 815) and he charges each individual to live in praise of God, to perform holy and virtuous deeds, and to struggle against the devil and sin in anticipation of salvation on Judgement Day.

Guthlac, the aristocratic Anglo-Saxon saint-hero of *Guthlac A* and *B*, is a particularly accessible and universal figure since he is first a soldier of the world, specifically the Anglo-Saxon world, and then a *miles Christi*, a soldier of Christ. The poet appeals to a secular audience by utilising a vocabulary reminiscent of *Beowulf* and usually associated with secular heroes, whilst Guthlac's ideals of asceticism and seclusion and his spiritual miracles appeal to both ecclesiastical and secular standards.³⁰ Guthlac, in his struggles with

²⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English poetic quotations are taken from *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by G. P. Krapp and E. van K. Dobbie, 6 vols (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1931-1953); all further references to Old English poems throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

³⁰ This division is over-simplified since many monks and clerics would have participated in secular life prior to their inclusion in religious orders. The secular overtones of the *Guthlac* poems would have condoned both these monks' previous lives as well as their current religious ones. As Henry Mayr-Harting asserts, 'it

temptation, sin, and the devil, is an archetypal Everyman labouring against the temptations of the temporal and fleshly world and expending the relentless effort necessary to live the morality of Christ. Further, he is an accessible hagiographic model for moral behaviour primarily because it is his resolute faith and morality that accords him his personal righteousness and for which he is rewarded with eternal salvation, rather than the more unattainable models of miracle-working and martyrdom that dominate other *vitae* and *passiones*.³¹ Thus, in his death scene, the audience is told that Guthlac confirmed his pure faith and convinced his mind as to the glory of God and eternal life, and thus he endured his death with courage (1110-36). Particularly illustrative of the humanity and accessibility of *Guthlac* is the use of the adjective *soðfæst* ('righteous in belief') in *Guthlac A*. The three occasions when the narrator employs this common word, which denotes righteousness or steadfastness in belief, are occasions which do not specifically refer to Guthlac, as might be expected, but rather to the righteous souls who will accompany him in everlasting life. In line 22 an angel proclaims that such souls will be granted eternal life; in the narratorial intervention of line 567 the narrator says that devils tempt such souls in an effort to divert them from virtue to sin; after Guthlac's soul has been brought to heaven, the narrator says:

Swa soðfæstra sawla motun
in ecne gearð up gestigan
rodera rice.

Thus the souls of the *righteous* will be able to ascend into an eternal dwelling in the kingdom of the skies. (790a-92a; my emphasis)

This substantive use of *soðfæst* implies that for the audience to be in the company of the saintly Guthlac – for them to attain salvation – only righteousness and steadfastness in belief is required of them. "The emphasis throughout the poem is always on the

was hardly to be expected that the deeds of ancient heroes or for that matter more recent [...] ones could leave cold the monks [...], aristocrats as many of them were and strong-blooded ones at that' (*The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn [University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991], p. 223).

³¹ For a discussion on the relationship between moral regulation and hagiography, see below, Chapter 3, pp. 261-68.

individual's cultivation of his mental and emotional strength', grounded in 'the certainty of salvation':³² such attainability furthers the scribe's/anthologist's eschatological 'concern for the contemporary human condition [which] is observable throughout the collection'.³³

The Phoenix reiterates this idea of being *soðfæst* (used five times), and again promises redemption to righteous human souls, thus promoting Christian morality:

Swa þæt ece lif eadigra gehwylc
 æfter sarwræce sylf geceoseð
 þurh deorcne deað, þæt he dryhtnes mot
 æfter geardagum geofona neotan
 on sindreamum, ond siþþan a
 wunian in wuldre weorca to leane.

So, each of the blessed chooses for himself that eternal life after sore tribulation, by means of dark death, so that after his lifetime, he may enjoy God's grace in everlasting joys and forever after dwell in honour as reward for his works. (381a-86b)

The Phoenix thus draws 'upon the texts and rituals of the Church, [and] it affirms for the reader the hope of salvation and the possibility of a mystical union with God'.³⁴ *Precepts* and *Maxims I* encode gnomic and proverbial wisdom of morality and virtue in a way that implicitly instructs an audience to adhere to their wisdom:

Dol biþ se þe his dryhten nat, to þæs oft cymeð deað unþinged.
 Snotre men sawlum beorgað, healdað hyra soð mid ryhte.

Foolish is the one who knows not his Lord; to such, death often comes unexpectedly.
 Wise men defend their souls; guard their righteousness with right. (35a-36b)³⁵

Paul Cavill says of the *Maxims* that they are 'broadly ethical', and express a 'socially-sanctioned view of life and its perplexities',³⁶ and Michael Drout notes of *Precepts* that:

the desires and disciplinary practices of the monastery shape the advice given from the father to the son [... *Precepts* is] a piece of cunning propaganda, in which the monastery

³² Low Soon Ai, 'Mental Cultivation in "Guthlac B"', *Neophilologus*, 81 (1997), 625-36 (p. 633).

³³ Garde, *Old English Poetry*, p. 7.

³⁴ Yun Lee Too, 'The Appeal to the Senses in the Old English "Phoenix"', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 91 (1990), 229-42 (p. 239). See also John Bugge, 'The Virgin Phoenix', *Medieval Studies*, 38 (1976), 332-50.

³⁵ A sentiment paralleled in *The Seafarer*, 'dol biþ se þe him his dryhten ne ondrædeþ; cymeð him se deað unþinged' ('foolish who is the one who fears not his Lord; to him, death comes unexpectedly'; 106).

³⁶ Paul Cavill, *Maxims in Old English Poetry* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), p. 18 and p. 106.

subtly encodes its disciplinary practices and passes them off as advice appropriate for non-monastic situations.³⁷

Drouot also notes, however, that ‘*Precepts* is a genuine attempt to depict a “universal” human activity’.³⁸ *The Seafarer*, *The Wanderer* and *Resignation* are poems which pray for humility and endurance during life: they are penitential contemplations on ‘the concept of the spirit’s longing to travel to its home. On a theological level, this is a journey which occurs in death, but for which preparation can be made in this life’.³⁹ The accessibility of these poems comes, in part, from their effective use of secular metaphors and models (particularly the metaphor of sea travel and exile for life’s journey), which embody the experience of the “generalised” man’,⁴⁰ and which ‘bring into relief [...] human events’.⁴¹ Of *Resignation*, Bradley states:

whether addressed to monks or to Christian layfolk, the poem is hardly a work of individualistic self-articulation as an end in itself, but rather a spiritual exercise for others to practise. The dramatic I-persona is doubtless chosen for the intensity of the realization it helps the audience to achieve.⁴²

Indeed, this statement is correct for many of the *Exeter Book* poems.

Although the majority of the contents of the *Exeter Book* is moralistic, Krapp and Dobbie, and many scholars after them, protest that it is ‘surprising to find a book of this character listed among the service books and other edifying works in Latin and English with which Leofric enriched his cathedral library’.⁴³ For most scholars, it is the inclusion in the manuscript of one genre of text in particular which prompts such surprise, since this

³⁷ *How Tradition Works*, Chapter 8.

³⁸ *How Tradition Works*, Chapter 8.

³⁹ Anne L. Klinck, “Resignation”: Exile’s Lament or Penitent’s Prayer?, *Neophilologus*, 71 (1987), 423–30 (p. 428).

⁴⁰ Tom A. Shippey, “The Wanderer” and “The Seafarer” as Wisdom Poetry’, in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, ed. by Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. (Amsterdam: Vrije University Press, 1994), pp. 145–58 (p. 148).

⁴¹ Martin Green, ‘Man, Time and Apocalypse in “The Wanderer”, “The Seafarer”, and “Beowulf”’, in *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings*, ed. by Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon (New York and London: Garland, 1994), pp. 281–302 (p. 296).

⁴² Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 387.

⁴³ *The Exeter Book*, ed. by G. P. Krapp and E. van K. Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1936) p. x.

genre defies the discrete and unqualified classification of moral discourse to which most of the *Exeter Book* poems conform. The Old English riddles of the *Exeter Book* have troubled scholars primarily due to their 'aggressive' secularity,⁴⁴ and, indeed, their lack of moral sentiment. For the most part, although there are notable exceptions among them,⁴⁵ these poetic riddles have been seen to belong to the lay, the worldly, the everyday, the popular and the folkloric, and, in some cases, the bawdy and the humorous.⁴⁶ As D. K. Smith comments of some of the riddles, 'it is still unclear what these humorous, sexual poems were doing within a religious culture that forbade both sex and humor',⁴⁷ and further that:

it is difficult to understand how poems that seem clearly to have contravened these [monastic] rules were, first of all, selected for the expensive and time-consuming labor of copying, and later allowed to remain on the page instead of being scraped away and written over [... However,] their very existence suggests they must have served some purpose in the reformed monastic culture that performed them. And just as clearly, they must have functioned in a way that allowed their audience to perceive their value.⁴⁸

In other words, scholars have wondered at the inclusion of supposedly secular, amoral texts in an otherwise strongly moralistic manuscript. One purpose of this chapter, then, is

⁴⁴ Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 202.

⁴⁵ For example, *Exeter Book Riddles* 40 (Creation), 43 (Soul and Body), 48, (Chalice), and 66 (Creation), among others, have Christian subjects. Paull Baum lists these as 'Chiefly Christian' in *Anglo-Saxon Riddles of the Exeter Book*, trans. by Paull Baum (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1963), pp. 12-20. (All *Exeter Book Riddles* are numbered according to the Krapp and Dobbie system.)

⁴⁶ See, for example, Seth Lerer, 'The Riddle and the Book: The Exeter Book Riddle 42 in Its Contexts', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 25 (1989), 3-18. Lerer describes the riddles as containing 'folk motifs', being grounded in 'Germanic inheritance', and voicing 'the commonplace and the obscene' (p. 3). Kevin Crossley-Holland similarly describes some riddles as 'folk-riddles (distinguished by their use of popular material, their shortness and simplicity)' in *The Exeter Book Riddles*, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), p. xiv.

⁴⁷ D. K. Smith, 'Humour in Hiding: Laughter Between the Sheets in the Exeter Book Riddles', in *Humour in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. by Jonathon Wilcox (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 79-98 (p. 79). Similar sentiments are expressed in Edith Whitehurst Williams, 'What's So New About the Sexual Revolution?: Some Comments on Anglo-Saxon Attitudes toward Sexuality in Women Based on Four Exeter Book Riddles', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 137-45 (p. 138) (first publ. in *The Texas Quarterly*, 18 [1975], 46-55), and also expressed in Ann Harleman Stewart, 'Double Entendre in the Old English Riddles', *Lore and Language*, 3 (1983), 39-52 (p. 39).

⁴⁸ Smith, 'Humour in Hiding', p. 81.

to consider this contradiction and propose a role for the *Exeter Book* riddles (henceforth *EBR*) in the *Exeter Book*.

To understand the role of the *EBR* in the codex, it is necessary to acknowledge the general purpose, theme and tone of the *Exeter Book*, for this may indicate the common objective to which those riddles contribute.

The model of textual unity [...] suggest[s] that an additional interpretative richness may be achieved by reading Old English poetry as the medieval reader would have read it, in series in its manuscript. [...] To read any of these poems in isolation is to confine oneself to an excerpt from a longer and more complex work.⁴⁹

It is thus not unreasonable to expect in at least some of the riddles some or all of the broad thematic and structural propensities evident in most of the codex's other poems: exhortation to Christian living, moral guidance for everyday living, and the popularisation of Christian doctrine, morality, and virtues through accessible, practical and occasionally secular models and metaphors. As Tupper argues, 'all these riddles [...] have at least one common characteristic, their human interest' and such 'human interest' accords with the general perspective of the *Exeter Book*.⁵⁰ Understood with an awareness of these broad tendencies, the inclusion of the riddles in the codex becomes less problematical and awkward. It is possible that the *Exeter Book* anthologist's objective of accessibility is partially fulfilled by the inclusion of the riddles' pedagogic and didactic challenge to each individual's ability to reflect on and perceive Christian truth. Some of these ostensibly amoral riddles may thus have a role to play in the moral purpose of the *Exeter Book*.

2.2 *The Regulation of Morality in The Exeter Book Riddles*

The riddles of the *Exeter Book* appear in three groups in the second half of the manuscript and examine subjects as varied as inanimate objects, nature and natural

⁴⁹ Liuzza, 'Texts, Manuscripts and Critics', pp. 10-11; Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, pp. 175-76.

⁵⁰ *The Riddles of the Exeter Book*, ed. by Frederick Tupper (Boston: Ginn, 1910), p. lxxxviii.

phenomena, and specifically Christian topics. As Tupper states, ‘nothing human is deemed too high or low for treatment [...nor] does the poet hesitate to treat the cosmic aspects of nature’.⁵¹ Scholarly opinion is divided concerning where individual riddles begin and end, and where the riddle groups begin and end, since the punctuation and decoration of the manuscript does not always make such boundaries clear.⁵² This ambiguity has resulted in varying numbering systems for the riddles and indeed, varying opinions on how many riddles there actually are in *The Exeter Book*.⁵³ According to Krapp’s and Dobbie’s system, the first group of riddles, *EBR 1-59*, is framed initially by *Deor* and *Wulf and Eadwacer* and ultimately by *The Wife’s Lament*, all of which are classified as elegies. Between *The Wife’s Lament* and group two of the riddles is a collection of moralising, explicitly Christian, poems: *Judgement Day I*, *Resignation* (sometimes considered an elegy), *The Descent into Hell*, *Almsgiving*, *Pharaoh*, *The Lord’s Prayer I* and *Homiletic Fragment II*. Clare A. Lees classifies these poems, ‘with good reason[,] as homiletic’.⁵⁴ The second group of the riddles consists of a second version of *EBR 30* (commonly numbered as *EBR 30b*) and *EBR 60*. These are followed by two more elegies, *The Husband’s Message* and *The Ruin*, after which the third group, *EBR 61-94*, appears. The manuscript ends with these riddles.

The *EBR* are more properly described as enigmas than as riddles. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a riddle is ‘a question or statement intentionally worded in a dark or puzzling manner, and propounded in order that it may be guessed or answered’.

⁵¹ *Riddles of the Exeter Book*, p. lxxxvi; Zimmerman, *Four Poetic Manuscripts*, p. 175.

⁵² For example, is *Wulf and Eadwacer* a riddle? Is *EBR 60* (solution: reed pipe/pen or rune staff) part of *The Husband’s Message*?

⁵³ Williamson, Krapp and Dobbie, Tupper, Muir all have different numbering systems. Williamson argues for a total of 91 riddles; Krapp and Dobbie, and Tupper for 94, and Muir for 95. See Craig Williamson, *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977); Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*; Tupper, *Riddles of the Exeter Book*; Muir, *Exeter Anthology*; cf. *Two Literary Riddles in the Exeter Book, Riddle 1 and the Easter Riddle: A Critical Edition and Translation*, ed. and trans. by James E. Anderson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986).

⁵⁴ *Tradition and Belief*, p. 22. In her footnote, Lees says ‘examples of “homiletic” poetry from the Exeter Book include *Precepts*, *The Order of the World*, *Soul and Body II*, *Judgement Day I*, *The Descent into Hell*, *Alms-Giving*, *The Lord’s Prayer I*, and *Homiletic Fragment II*’ (p. 160, n. 9).

By contrast, an enigma is ‘a short composition in prose or verse, in which something is described by intentionally obscure metaphors, in order to afford an exercise for the ingenuity of the reader or hearer in guessing what is meant [...] a parable’.⁵⁵ There are important differences between these two definitions: according to them, the purpose of a riddle is to solve it; the purpose of an enigma is to exercise the intellectual capacity of the audience, and this purpose is achieved by the *attempt* to solve the enigma. Although this difference in definition appears semantic, it is not; the primary function of the enigma is to engage the intellectual faculties of its audience, so that the solving of it, whilst still important, is secondary to the *process* of the solving.

Whilst such a definitive distinction between a riddle and an enigma is over-simplified, according to such definitions the *EBR* bear closer relation to the purpose and form of the enigma than to that of the riddle.⁵⁶ Thus, the opening line to the *EBR 1* (solution: storm) is ‘hwylc is hæleþa þæs horsc ond þæs hygecræftig | þæt þæt mæge asecgan’ (‘who among men is wise and prudent in mind enough that he may explain that’; 1a-2a). That is, the very first line which introduces the *EBR* carries a challenge to the mind to understand and explain the riddle. Similarly, although many of the *EBR* end in formulaic calls to be solved – ‘saga hwæt ic hatte’ (‘say what I am called’) and ‘frige hwæt ic hatte’ (‘inquire what I am called’) – these formulas issue an implicit challenge to the intellect: saying the correct solution is the verbal manifestation of the intellectual test over which the solver has triumphed.⁵⁷ Some other *EBR* end in far more revealing and explicit intellectual challenges, for example, *EBR 31* (solution: bagpipe) ends ‘micel is to hycgenne | wisum woðboran, hwæt sio wiht sie’ (‘It is important for wise speakers to meditate on what the creature is’; 23a-24b). In this enigma, the emphasis is clearly on *hycgan* – the *act*

⁵⁵ *OED*, s. vv, ‘riddle’, ‘enigma’.

⁵⁶ Tupper calls the *EBR* ‘literary enigmas’ (*Riddles of the Exeter Book*, p. xvii).

⁵⁷ For example, *EBR 3* (Storm), *8* (Nightingale), *10* (Barnacle Goose), *12* (Ox), *23* (Bow), *62* (Poker), *66* (Creation), *73* (Spear), *80* (Horn), *83* (Ore) and *86* (One-eyed garlic seller) all employ the ‘saga hwæt ic hatte’ formula and *EBR 14* (Horn), *16* (Anchor), *26* (Bible) and *27* (Mead) employ the ‘frige hwæt ic hatte’ formula.

of considering, meditating upon, or studying – and this process is so important that only the wise speakers (24a) may undertake or achieve it. Or alternatively, as Donald Fry expresses it, ‘the formula *wisum woðbora* underlines the concerns of the poem. Wisdom [...] produces the *woð-bora*, bearer of song, bearer of speech’, but that wisdom is gained only through the intellectual process of deconstructing and thereby ‘understanding this poem’.⁵⁸ Similarly, the extended ending of *EBR 42* (solution: cock and hen) accentuates the process of solving by demanding:

Hwylc þæs hordgates
cægan cræfte þa clamme onleac
þe þa rædellā wið rynemenn
hygefæste heold heortan bewrigene
orþoncbendum?

Who, by the skill of the key, has unlocked the fetters of the treasure-chamber, that,
firm in mind, withholds the riddle against the ones skilled in mysteries, its heart veiled
with cunning bands? (11b-15a)⁵⁹

The solver of *EBR 42* must use intellect, skill, cunning, knowledge, power (*cræft*; 12a) to unlock this riddle; the solution is revealed only to those ones skilled in mysteries (*rynemenn*; 13b) who have the intellectual ingenuity and acumen to unravel the cunning bands (*orþoncbende*; 15a), or deliberate obfuscation, with which the riddler has bound his riddle.⁶⁰ That is, ‘the sentence generates a challenge to the reader, a challenge that [...] sustains a measure of the preceptorial injunctions that make the reading of such poetry an

⁵⁸ Donald K. Fry, ‘Exeter Book Riddle 31: Feather-Pen’, in *De Gustibus: Essays for Alain Renoir*, ed. by John Miles Foley, J. Chris Womack and Whitney A. Womack (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 234–49 (pp. 248–49).

⁵⁹ This passage is difficult to translate. Other interpretations are: ‘Who can with key’s craft unlock the door to the hoard which holds the riddle hard in thought against rune-guessers, its heart covered by cunning bonds’ (John Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles* [Firthgarth: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995; repr. 2003], p. 73); ‘Who the hoard’s door with a key’s power can unlock that guards the riddle against rune-guessers, holds its heart close, hides it loyally with cunning bonds’ (Michael Alexander, *Old English Riddles from the Exeter Book* [London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1980], p. 37); ‘Whoever has unlocked with the power of the key the clasps of the chest which held the riddle cunningly hidden from the learned in runes’ (Baum, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, p. 54).

⁶⁰ Like the term *anthologist*, the terms *riddle* and *riddler*, rather than *enigma* and *enigmatist*, are used here for convenience and to prevent confusion. The term *riddler* encompasses the possibilities of composition, transmission, and recitation and is used to indicate the person who spoke or read the riddle (or in the case of private reading, the person who composed or scribed the riddle), that is, the poser as opposed to the audience or solver of the riddle.

education in the arts of understanding'.⁶¹ The solution to the riddle, then, is significant because it evidences the intellectual achievement of the one clever or skilled enough to comprehend correctly the 'obscure metaphors' that form the riddle:⁶² the solution is the goal, but the process of arriving at the solution is the purpose. As Adam Davis proposes, riddles should be accorded 'status as activity rather than text',⁶³ or, more correctly, status as activity *and* text.

One other fact compellingly supports the contention that the *EBR* elevate the intellectual process of solving above the actual solution. The issue of source material and structure for the *EBR* has long occupied scholars, in particular, quantifying and qualifying what relation the Old English riddles have, either directly or indirectly, to the Anglo-Latin riddles composed in the Anglo-Saxon period. The existence of an Anglo-Latin riddling tradition is recognised in the works of Aldhelm, Tatwine, Eusebius, Boniface, and Alcuin, all of whom, following the example of the late Classical Latin riddler, Symphosius, composed verse Latin riddles in collections.⁶⁴ Robert DiNapoli concludes that 'hardly any reason exists for doubting the opinion of most scholars that the compiler of the Exeter collection had as his model the Latin riddle-cycles of Aldhelm and Symphosius',⁶⁵ and Salvador similarly asserts that 'in my view, there is no doubt that the Exeter Riddles were influenced by the preceding Latin tradition'.⁶⁶ However, the Old English riddles depart thematically and structurally from these Anglo-Latin precursors, and the Latin and vernacular riddles have 'minimal common ground'.⁶⁷ Williamson's summary of the

⁶¹ Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p. 117.

⁶² See *OED*, s. v, 'enigma'.

⁶³ Adam Davis, 'Agon and Gnomon: Forms and Functions of the Anglo-Saxon Riddles', in *De Gustibus*, ed. by Foley *et al.*, pp. 110-50 (p. 134).

⁶⁴ See Tupper, *Riddles of the Exeter Book*, pp. xxviii-liii.

⁶⁵ Robert DiNapoli, 'In the Kingdom of the Blind, the One-Eyed Man is a Seller of Garlic: Depth-Perception and the Poet's Perspective in the Exeter Book Riddles', *English Studies*, 2000 (81), 422-55 (p. 422).

⁶⁶ Salvador, 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context'.

⁶⁷ DiNapoli, 'In the Kingdom of the Blind', p. 422.

association between the Anglo-Latin and Old English riddles, and his conclusions regarding this relationship, are worth quoting in full:

Of the one hundred solutions of Symphosius, some sixteen or seventeen are also solutions of the Old English *Riddles*. Three Old English *Riddles* (45, 81, 82 [47, 85, 86, Krapp and Dobbie numbering]) show the direct influence of Symphosius. [...] Of Aldhelm's one hundred riddle subjects, some fourteen or fifteen are also subjects of the Old English *Riddles*. Two Old English *Riddles* (33, 38 [35, 40, Krapp and Dobbie numbering]) are translated from Aldhelm. The later Latin riddles of Tatwine and Eusebius show little in common with the Old English *Riddles* except for an occasional shared motif. Given the lack of any documented tradition of social riddling in early England, and given the presence of a Latin literary tradition of riddling, it seems wise to conclude with Ker that the Old English *Riddles* derived from a Latin literary tradition but that they assumed distinct Old English qualities.⁶⁸

In other words, although the evidence to posit a definite relationship between the Anglo-Latin and vernacular riddles is slight (only five Old English riddles are directly relatable to Anglo-Latin riddles and Williamson's ultimate conclusion is that 'most of these Latin riddles are [...] a far cry from the Old English'),⁶⁹ it is likely that the *EBR* were innovations on their antecedents, the Latin and Anglo-Latin riddles.

Interestingly, one of the 'distinct Old English qualities' of the *EBR* concerns their solutions.⁷⁰ The *EBR* are not written accompanied by their solutions, nor are their solutions listed anywhere in the codex; on the other hand, 'all of the Latin riddles have

⁶⁸ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 24.

⁶⁹ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 23. See also DiNapoli who concludes that 'the relationship between the Old English riddles and their Latin predecessors grows far more tenuous and uncertain. [...] Although many Old English riddles share solutions with Latin riddles, they usually treat their subjects quite differently. Only a few Old English riddles translate closely a Latin riddle [...] but the rarity of such texts places the Anglo-Saxon riddler's awareness of Latin riddle traditions in a very odd light' ('In the Kingdom of the Blind', pp. 422-23). Cf. Salvador who argues that 'as a whole, the sequence from no. 1 to 40 seems to have been designed as an originally independent collection, made of 40 items (like Tatwine's), to which the other riddles were eventually appended. The thematic plan of this collection thus seems to follow a two-fold pattern: on one hand, the "Opera Dei" motifs which include the cosmological and zoological themes; on other, the "Opera Hominis" themes which are represented by the long instrumental section. This structure thus echoes Aldhelm's scheme aiming at illustrating the whole of God's Creation. Also, as in the Aldhelmian model, the Anglo-Saxon cosmological motifs function as a framework enclosing the different themes of the Exeter ur-collection' ('Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context').

⁷⁰ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 24.

titles that give their solutions'.⁷¹ This striking divergence from the Latin tradition results in the solutions to the *EBR* being deliberately opaque and obscure precisely because the definitive solution is withheld. The *EBR* are thus open-ended, with unrestricted potential for interpretation. The absence of solutions supports the contention that providing a solution to the *EBR* was not their fundamental, or at least not their only, purpose: whereas the Anglo-Latin riddles were true riddles in that the provision of a definitive, absolute and correct solution to them gives primacy to the *solution* itself, the *EBR* are demonstrably enigmatic in their lack of emphasis on solutions and in their implied and corresponding emphasis on the intellectual game that the *process* of solving them embodied.⁷²

Understanding the *EBR* as enigmas reveals a possible purpose for them: to function, like other enigmas, as parables.⁷³ A parable is an allegory or fable that develops and expresses a moral. The *EBR* as enigmas might thus be parables in the sense that they are apologues: they are allegories in which the speaker or the actor is, for the most part, a personified animal or inanimate object which teaches or conveys a moral. That moral is often sustained by specific allusion to an example or model of behaviour to be followed or avoided. As Crossley-Holland asserts, 'the word "riddle" derives from the Old English *rædan*, to advise, to counsel, to guide, to explain. And in a wide sense a riddle does

⁷¹ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 24. The observation that, unlike the Latin riddles, the Old English riddles are not accompanied by solutions, has been made frequently: seeo Tupper, *Riddles of the Exeter Book*, p. lxxix; DiNapoli, 'In the Kingdom of the Blind', p. 422.

⁷² Andy Orchard has recently argued that the Old English riddles are much more closely related to their Anglo-Latin predecessors than has previously been accepted. He also argues that the 'notion that Latin *enigmata* always circulate with their solutions, while Old English *riddles* never do is easily dismissed' ('Enigma Variations: The Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, 1 [Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2005], pp. 284-304 [p. 285]). Orchard's 'dismissal' is reasonably convincing, although I would suggest that what Orchard proves is that we must modify and nuance our assessment, rather than 'dismiss' it, so that *some* Latin *enigmata* circulate inconsistently with their solutions, which are occasionally later inclusions, while the Old English riddles do not. The important point for this thesis remains that the *EBR* are not accompanied anywhere by their solutions.

⁷³ See *OED*, s. v, 'enigma'.

teach'.⁷⁴ Indeed, reference to the manuscript context for the *EBR*, surrounded as they are by many morally didactic poems, would suggest that such a purpose would not be foreign to at least some of the riddles, or entirely unexpected.

Without solutions, and as parable-like enigmas, the *EBR* potentially illustrate Augustinian doctrine. In his *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine clearly enunciates a literary theory. He states:

Nunc tamen nemo ambigit, et per similitudines libentius quaeque cognosci, et cum aliqua difficultate quaesita multo gratius inveniri.

No one has any doubt that some things are understood more readily through figures of speech, and that when something is searched for with difficulty, it is, as a result, more delightfully discovered. (II: vi; 7-8)⁷⁵

He clarifies this theory in his *De sermone in monte*:

Quaecumque spiritualia magni aestimanda sunt; et quia in abdito latent, tanquam de profundo cruuntur, et allegoriarum integumentis quasi apertis conchis inveniuntur.

Whatever spiritual things are to be greatly admired; and because they lie in concealment and are sometimes brought up from the depths, these spiritual things, as if hidden in shells, are found in the covering of allegory. (II: xx; 68)⁷⁶

As Huppé summarises, to Augustine

the beauty of poetry rests in an absolutely functional relationship between external form and inner meaning. The external form should bristle with a challenge to find an inner meaning [...] The Christian poet will encourage the hearer, through intellectual exercise, to aspire to the understanding of divine truth.⁷⁷

Or, as the twelfth-century cleric, Alan of Lille, summarises this doctrine:

⁷⁴ Crossley-Holland, *Exeter Book Riddles*, p. x.

⁷⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *De Doctrina Christiana* are taken from J. P. Migne's edition, Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi, 'De Doctrina Christiana', in *PL*, vol. 34 (col. 0039); all translations are from Bernard F. Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1959). All further references to *De Doctrina Christiana* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

⁷⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of *De Sermone in Monte* are taken from Migne's edition, Augustini Hipponensis, 'De Sermone Domini in Monte', in *PL*, vol. 34 (col. 1300); all translations are from Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry*. All further references to *De Sermone in Monte* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

⁷⁷ Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry*, p. 16.

At, in superficiali litterae cortice falsum resonat lyra poetica, sed interius, auditoribus secretum intelligentiae altioris eloquitor, ut exteriore falsitatis abjecto putamine, dulciorem nucleum veritatis secreta intus lector inveniat.

Or, that in the shallow exterior of literature the poetic lyre sounds a false note, but within speaks to its hearers of the mystery of loftier understanding, so that, the waste of outer falsity cast aside, the reader finds, in secret within, the sweeter kernel of truth.⁷⁸

Thus, while Augustine counsels that the Christian intellect benefits from the mental exercise necessary to reveal the spiritual truth in the Bible, this understanding was applied to poetry and literature more generally, which correspondingly was considered beneficial if it challenged mental acuity to perceive the underlying spiritual truth in obscure and oblique texts: ‘the Augustinian poetics of medieval Christianity [...] viewed poetry as a vessel for rational truth. In this paradigm, poetry might make truth more attractive by beautifying it, or it might render truth more intriguing and satisfying by complexifying it’.⁷⁹ Thus Bernard Huppé has no hesitation in according the Anglo-Latin riddles this patristic support of form and purpose:

Aldhelm, Tatwin, Eusebius, to mention only the English names, were distinguished churchmen who wrote riddles in all seriousness [...] for them all created things – even the lowly mustard seed – had symbolic significance. They believed that to ponder words or facts in order to arrive at the reality behind the attribute was to exercise the noblest function of the mind. And their interest in riddles is to be explained by the importance they placed on the enigmatic.⁸⁰

Considering the manuscript context of the *EBR*, and their possible enigmatic function as didactic parables, it is possible to conclude that one of the reasons that they may have been composed and anthologised was to offer a comparable exercise, directing their audience to accept Christian truth through learning how to perceive such truth despite its being hidden by secular and popular riddle shells: ‘according to Christian philosophy, the

⁷⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations from *De Planctu Naturae* are taken from Migne’s edition, Alanus de Insulis, ‘De Planctu Naturae’, in *PL*, vol. 210 (col. 0451C); all translations are taken from Alain de Lille, *The Complaint of Nature*, trans. by Douglas Moffat, Yale Studies in English, 36 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1908). All further references to *De Planctu Naturae* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

⁷⁹ DiNapoli, ‘In the Kingdom of the Blind’, p. 423.

⁸⁰ Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry*, pp. 55–56.

act of solving a riddle, through the enlightenment of wisdom, would make man nearer to the divine Logos'.⁸¹

Mercedes Salvador has posited a similar argument for the *EBR*. Salvador argues that 'the return to hermeneutic style', a notable characteristic of the Benedictine Reform,⁸² 'motivated an extraordinary interest in some texts whose artful complexities offered reformers the outstanding advantages of a demanding intellectual training'.⁸³ In terms of the *EBR*, Salvador sees a relationship between such a return to the hermeneutic style and the riddle form:

The occurrence of a vernacular riddle collection, appearing in a manuscript dating from a period in which the Benedictine revival was definitely operating, might have to do with the reformists' promotion of particularly complex texts. No doubt, a riddle collection was the ideal field to cultivate hermeneutic diction, as those texts easily lent themselves to typically learned devices such as neologisms and wordplay.⁸⁴

The lack of solutions for the *EBR* implies that, even more than the Anglo-Latin riddlers, the *EBR* riddler, or the *Exeter Book* scribe or anthologist, may have perceived and exploited the link between the intellectual challenge of solving (the particular complexity of *EBR*), and the revelation of Christian truth and understanding. As Bradley argues, the presentation of an enigma 'challenges the mind by paradox and by signalled ambivalence to seek a correct solution veiled in ambiguous statement, and thus to seek the truth veiled in the metaphor and the spiritual and eternal veiled in the corporeal and temporal'.⁸⁵ Since true morality or 'wisdom is not generally envisaged [...] as a passive or merely mnemonic activity [; o]n the contrary, in the ideal situation, wisdom is intentional rather than accidental',⁸⁶ the riddles' requirement of active and intentional mental processing suggests their possible utility in the dissemination of morality. As Jane Page argues, 'if earlier [now

⁸¹ Rafał Boryśłowski, *The Old English Riddles and the Riddlic Elements of Old English*, Poetry Studies in English Medieval Language and Literature, 9 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 48.

⁸² See Mechthild Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 5.

⁸³ Salvador, 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context'.

⁸⁴ Salvador, 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context'.

⁸⁵ Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 331.

⁸⁶ Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 79.

lost] manuscripts did contain solutions, a later scribe saw that without those solutions, the riddles had greater potential for challenging an audience⁸⁷ and thus greater possibility for Christian enlightenment and satisfaction.

Since the *EBR* lack a single, definitive solution they exploit the potential for multiple possible meanings and multiple layers of interpretation. That is,

there is [not] one and one only formally correct solution for each riddle [...] Structurally, we may be able to generate a riddle in many ways [...] Riddles will often have many more solutions than sentences as their transformational possibilities are almost infinite.⁸⁸

In this way the process of solving is made substantially more difficult, since the possibility for more than one 'correct' answer exists, and it is necessary for the discriminating solver to search the riddle acutely to find the most likely answer: it is in this search that Christian truth may be revealed and made manifest. As Davis summarises:

The solution of the traditional riddle is less a logical than a social undertaking [...] this collection [the *EBR*] is concerned with the nature of knowledge and the knowable [...] Multiformity is not a byproduct of the inquiry, but the essence of it, the inculcation of an intellectual and spiritual habit, not a body of texts but a pattern of behaviour.⁸⁹

That is, the *EBR* are sophisticated poems, some of which teach not just *what* to think, but *how* to behave and *how* to think for the moral good of the soul and society. If 'one of the means by which particular viewpoints are encoded and made rhetorically effective is the poetic concentration on the mental arena',⁹⁰ then the Old English riddles' emphasis on the mental process of solving may facilitate the encoding and transmission of the moral precepts of Anglo-Saxon society.

⁸⁷ Jane Page, 'Protean Patterns of Wisdom in Old and Early Middle English Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, the University of London, Royal Holloway College, 2004), p. 235.

⁸⁸ Nigel F. Barley, 'Structural Aspects of the Anglo-Saxon Riddle', *Semiotica*, 10 (1974), 143-75 (pp. 151-52). For another theoretical discussion concerning the solutions, or lack thereof, to the *EBR*, see Wim Tigges, 'Signs and Solutions: A Semiotic Approach to the Exeter Book Riddles', in *This Noble Craft: Proceedings of the Xth Research Symposium of the Dutch and Belgian University Teachers of Old And Middle English and Historical Linguistics*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), pp. 59-82.

⁸⁹ Davis, 'Agon and Gnomon', pp. 144-47.

⁹⁰ Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, p. 11.

In Augustinian terms, the *EBR* potentially encode moral tenets and precepts in secular shells: they are rich with the possibility for concealing and revealing Christian truth. In this sense, the *EBR* are poems which are perfectly situated to regulate morality, positioned as they are within the context of the other *Exeter Book* poems which make Christian morality attainable whilst emphasising its exigent nature. The riddles are particularly suited to this purpose because of the very attainability of their ostensible subject-matter: they have the capability to exploit the literalness of the everyday subjects that they metaphorically describe to reveal deeper and morally significant meaning:

The effectiveness of the riddling genre for didactic purposes could have hardly passed unnoticed for 10th-century leading reformers, who most likely regarded the works written by Aldhelm and the other ecclesiastical authors as paradigmatic compositions. Besides, the eminently encyclopedic nature of riddle collections – usually treating a wide range of topics – was simply too valuable to be discarded in the culture-boosting context of the reform.⁹¹

By giving moral or immoral value to their subjects, by involving their audience in the mental process of solving, and by suggesting modes of behaviour, the riddles may be interpreted as morally regulatory.

The *EBR* as texts of moral regulation rely on subtlety: they do not explicitly define morals and decree behavioural proscriptions. Rather, the *EBR* rely on suggestion and implication, and an understanding of the morality that they impart is only achievable through the private intellectual experience of the one solving the riddle. The moral exhortation contained within the riddles is by definition obscured and concealed, and in the Augustinian sense, one of the riddle's possible purposes is for the solver to find its spiritual and moral truth and to comprehend it, a purpose that is reliant on the private process of intellection intrinsic to the enigma. In other words the solver must identify and consider the moral for him/herself through the solving process: 'mental reality is a reference point not only for this cognitive activity but also for emotional reactions and the

⁹¹ Salvador, 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context'.

spiritual life'.⁹² The riddles, in a similar way to homiletic literature, might thus 'situate both community and individual subject as Christian by means of didactic instruction in rational belief. Instruction is not merely intellectual but psychological, dependent on the faculties of memory, will, and understanding.'⁹³ The riddles, then, potentially provide 'an ideal vehicle for the enunciation of core truths and ideas of the society which produced them'.⁹⁴ In terms of moral regulation theory,

the reform of popular culture embraces systematic attempts by some social forces to change the attitudes, values, and practices of other sections of the population [...] Reformation exhibits a preoccupation with decency, diligence, gravity, modesty, orderliness, prudence, reason, self-control, sobriety and thrift: it is organised around a set of values well captured by Weber's notion of 'this worldly asceticism'.⁹⁵

The *EBR* can give moral value to certain behaviours and attempt to change perceived immoral behaviours; however, when they do, it is through subtle coercion rather than through explicit exhortation. As Lerer asserts, the 'instructional paradigms' of the riddles support his conclusion regarding the *Exeter Book* that 'instruction [is] a central theme of much of the Exeter Book's verse [and...] that the structures and methods of the poetry [therein] employ the techniques of education',⁹⁶ rather than direct proscription or reproach.

The riddles 'enabled them [Old English riddlers] to say some of the things they knew about themselves';⁹⁷ more importantly, however, the riddles enabled the riddles' audience to translate and re-construct those things, and any moral instruction latent in the riddle, into things s/he appeared to 'know' about him/herself as intrinsic and natural. In Foucauldian terms, the riddles' discourse 'does not simply translate reality into language;

⁹² Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, p. 12.

⁹³ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 112.

⁹⁴ Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, p. 65.

⁹⁵ Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*, Cambridge Studies in Law and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 13-14.

⁹⁶ Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, p. 102.

⁹⁷ Marie Nelson, 'Four Social Functions of the Exeter Book Riddles', *Neophilologus*, 75 (1991), 445-50 (p. 450).

rather discourse should be seen as a system which structures the way we perceive reality'.⁹⁸

In other words,

in the process of thinking about the world, we categorise and interpret experience and events according to the structures available to us and in the process of interpreting, we lend these structures a solidity and a normality which is often difficult to question.⁹⁹

Although Cavill sees 'no valid reason to associate maxims and gnomes immediately with riddles',¹⁰⁰ the 'compressed observations of nature and characteristic behavior that constitute gnomic utterance are but a twist and turn of presentation from the riddle genre'.¹⁰¹ Thus, the *EBR* as parables and enigmas, like gnomes,

assign names, apportion place and value, outline what is acceptable and customary; [they] prescribe and proscribe; [they] encompass popular belief and conventional understandings [...and] they structure reality as perceived by society, and in turn, construct the reality the society perceives.¹⁰²

The *EBR*, then, are possible 'mechanisms by which [moral] knowledge comes into being [...and] is produced' and disseminated by those in power to Anglo-Saxon society, broadly termed and understood.¹⁰³

2.3 Self-Control and Sobriety: Proscriptive Moral Regulation

Like the penitential texts and law-codes already discussed, the *EBR* often regulate morality by proscribing immoral behaviour, albeit by implication rather than by explicit prohibition. Two closely related *EBR* are illustrative of the potential use of the vernacular riddle as morally proscriptive regulation. Both *EBR 11* and *EBR 27* are hortatory, and the moral instruction contained within them is little concealed by the poetics and obfuscation intrinsic to the riddle form:

⁹⁸ Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault*, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 55.

⁹⁹ Mills, *Foucault*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁰ Cavill, *Maxims*, p. 80; he later includes *EBR 11* (Wine), 3 (Storm) and 73 (Spear) to illustrate the structure of gnomic formulas and common maxim themes, see p. 85, p. 95 and p. 145 respectively.

¹⁰¹ Greenfield and Calder, *New Critical History*, p. 269.

¹⁰² Cavill, *Maxims*, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Mills, *Foucault*, p. 68.

Exeter Book Riddle 11

Hrægl is min hasofag, hyrste beorhte,
 reade ond scire on reafe minum.
 Ic dysge dwelle ond dole hwette
 unrædsiþas, oþrum styre
 nyttre fore. Ic þæs nowiht wat
 þæt heo swa gemædde, mode bestolene,
 dæde gedwolene, deoraþ mine
 won wisan gehwam. Wa him þæs þeawes,
 siþþan heah bringað horda deorast,
 gif hi unrædes ær ne geswicaþ.

My dress is grey, my decoration shining, red-coloured and resplendent on my garment.
 I deceive the ignorant and incite the foolish to ill-advised conduct, steer others from
 more useful travel. I do not understand this at all, that, made so foolish, robbed of
 mind, led astray in deeds, they glorify my depraved ways to anyone. Woe to them
 because of that custom when they bring the dearest of treasures high, if they
 beforehand do not cease from their folly. (1a-10b)

In *EBR 11*, the solution to which is wine or mead, the repetition of words relating to foolishness (*dysig*, 3a; *dol*, 3b; *unrædsiþ*, 4a; *gemæddan*, 6a; *unræd*, 10a) clearly indicates the first-person narrator's disdain for those he deceives (*dwelle*; 3a). The juxtaposition of his self-description as resplendent and shining and his description of those who are led astray (*gedwolene*; 7a) by him as fools clearly emphasises this contempt and establishes a pejorative and derisive attitude towards the ones who are foolish enough to be robbed of mind (*mode bestolene*; 6b) by him. Other than by insult, the narrator emphasises the morality encoded in the riddle through the use of other language. 'Oþrum styre | nyttre fore' ('steer others from more useful travel'; 4b-5a) implies that even others, that is, non-foolish people, may be tempted by alcohol (perhaps an extension of the *Exeter Book* theme of constant temptation for *all* Christians). What is important is that alcohol steers or guides them away from their more useful journey, possibly a metaphor for the Christian life: the drunken person cannot fulfil their Christian obligations. Such a metaphorical understanding of *nyttor* elucidates the meaning of the final lines 8b-10b. The dearest of treasures (*horda deorast*; 9b) can be understood as the soul, which is brought forth at the Last Judgement and, for drunken fools, will be found wanting. Thus, Williamson says:

The jeweled cup (lines 1-2) is an earthly treasure often raised high in the drinking. The 'horda deorast' is a heavenly treasure raised high at the Last Judgement. Judgement shall fall heavily upon man if he worships the lesser treasure at the expense of the greater and heeds not the final raising.¹⁰⁴

EBR 11, then, implicitly condemns drinking alcohol excessively, and this condemnation values a moral proscription – do not drink to excess – which is implicitly supported by the language used in the riddle.

EBR 27 articulates a similar message:

Ic eom weorð werum, wide funden,
brungen of bearwum ond of burghleoþum,
of denum ond of dunum. Dæges mec wægun
feþre on lifte, feredon mid liste
under hrofes hleo. Hæleð mec siþþan
baþedan in bydene. Nu ic eom bindere
ond swingere, sona weorpe
esne to eorþan, hwilum ealdne ceorl.
Sona þæt onfindeð, se þe mec fehð ongean,
ond wið mægenþisan minre genæsteð,
þæt he hrycge sceal hrusan secan,
gif he unrædes ær ne geswiceð,
strengo bistolen, strong on spræce,
mægene binumen; nah his modes gewæld,
fota ne folma. Frige hwæt ic hatte,
ðe on eorþan swa esnas binde,
dole æfter dyntum be dæges leohte.

I am honoured by men, widely found, brought from woods and from fortress-heights, from dales and from downs. By day, wings carried me aloft, came with skill under the roof's protection. Afterwards, men bathed me in a vat. Now I am binder and scourger, at once cast a youth down to the ground, sometimes an old man. The one who receives me and contends with my force, soon discovers that he must seek the ground with his back if he does not cease from his folly before that, deprived of ability, strong in speech, vigour taken; he cannot control his mind, nor his feet, nor his hands. Ask what I am called, who thus binds youths on the ground, foolish by the light of day after my blows. (1a-17b)

¹⁰⁴ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 166. See also the translations of Baum, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, p. 20 and Alexander, *Old English Riddles*, p. 21; cf. Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, who does not recognise the religious metaphor in his translation (p. 25).

In *EBR 27* (solution: mead) the first lines to 6b describe the origin of the honey that is the essential ingredient of mead and its production. Thereafter, like *EBR 11*, *EBR 27* describes the detrimental effects of mead and gives a moral proscription. The structure of these riddles is very similar: as the wine of *EBR 11* entices foolish men and sometimes others, the mead in *EBR 27* fells youths, but also sometimes old men. Both riddles contain the formula ‘gif hi/he unrædes ær ne geswicap/geswiceð’ (‘if they/he beforehand do/does not cease from their/his folly’; 10 and 12 respectively): that is, both contain explicit warnings of the consequences if the folly of drinking is not ceased. Both articulate the physical penalty for drinking, here ‘strengo bistolen, strong on spræce, | mægene binumen’ (‘deprived of ability, strong of speech, vigour taken’; 13a-14a). Both give a moral value to the drunkard as foolish (*dol*). That is, in both riddles the condemnatory language used of those who partake of ‘I’ (*ic*), the speaker and subject of the riddle, establishes the riddler’s intention to proscribe drunkenness and drinking excessively and urge the inverse conduct: sobriety.

These riddles are an incitement to correct behaviour through implicit proscription, and echo the sentiments promoting moderation and condemning drunkenness found in other sources.¹⁰⁵ Mercedes Salvador argues that ‘the Benedictine context, in which the Exeter Riddles were most likely written, might [...] elucidate the moralistic overtones in the description of man’s voracious appetite in Riddle 77’ (solution: oyster), in which there is a ‘tone of disapproval’ towards greed:¹⁰⁶ *EBR 11* and *27*, then, perhaps perform a similar function when understood in such a context by giving moralistic overtones to, and

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 52-59; Hugh Magennis, *Anglo-Saxon Appetites: Food and Drink and Their Consumption in Old English and Related Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999).

¹⁰⁶ Mercedes Salvador, ‘The Oyster and the Crab: A Riddle Duo (nos. 77 and 78) in the Exeter Book’, *Modern Philology*, 101 (2004), 400-19 (pp. 405-6). Salvador further argues that Riddle 77 (solution: oyster) was included in the *EBR* collection because of its connection with ‘the food restrictions established by the Benedictine Reform’ whereby ‘the oyster was included in the diet allowed by the relatively strict monastic regulations’, and she points out that the oyster is ‘clearly associated with monastic food consumption in the reformist context in a passage from *The Seasons of Fasting*’, a work that ‘seems to be strongly affiliated with the reformist ideology of the late tenth century’ (pp. 403-5).

disapproving of, drunkenness. Thus, a striking comparison can be made in *Caput XL* ‘De Mensura Potus’ in *S. Benedicti Regula*, which recommends ‘ut non usque ad satietatem bibamus, sed parcius: quia *vinum apostatare facit etiam sapientes*’ (‘to drink temperately and not to satiety: for *wine maketh even the wise to fall away*’; my emphasis), echoing the riddles’ subjects’ warnings to others (*oþrum*) and even old men (*ealdne ceorl*) that they, too, are susceptible to the dangers of excess. Similar physical effects of drunkenness are described by Ælfric in his *Lives of Saints* as by *EBR 11* and *27*: ‘ðone he sylf nat hu he færð for his feond-licum drencum’ (‘when he himself knows not how he behaves on account of his fiendish drinks’; *ÆLS.16 [Memory of the Saints]*: pp. 336–63; 275).¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, sentiments against drunkenness are found in a wide variety of Anglo-Saxon sources: in the poetic *Judith*, for instance, the narrator ridicules Holofernes and his army for their excessive drunkenness, and Holofernes’s death at Judith’s hands is attributed to his state as ‘wine swa druncen’ (‘so drunk with wine’; 67b). In the *Exeter Book’s Precepts*, the father cautions his son to ‘druncen beorg þe ond dollic word’ (‘guard against drunkenness and foolish words’; 34). *EBR 11* and *27*, then, in almost gnomic style, reiterate the morality frequently found in extant Anglo-Saxon sources, and thus they

at least participate in the ordering of perception through their enunciation of social conventions. By establishing a set of norms or rules, gnomes and maxims [and here, riddles] certainly express prevalent conceptions as if they were essential and irrefutable information. In proclaiming widely-held beliefs, they aim to be uncontroversial, definitive and conservative.¹⁰⁸

In this way, the riddles may contribute to the moral climate, and support the moral expectations of, Anglo-Saxon society, especially in its Reform context. Parallel to the style of moral proscription found in the law-codes and penitentials, *EBR 11* and *27* are examples of the Old English riddles constructing drunkenness as inappropriate and

¹⁰⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of the *Lives of Saints* are taken from Walter W. Skeat’s edition, *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints’ Days formerly observed by the English Church*, EETS OS 76, 82, 94 and 114 (London: Oxford University Press, 1881–1900; repr. as 2 vols, 1966) (henceforth *ÆLS*); all further references to the *Lives of Saints* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text by short title, page range and line numbers.

¹⁰⁸ Harbus, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 62. Or, as Drout puts it, these ‘poems encode essential knowledge of social life. They illustrate and evaluate potential human behaviors and transmit information about cultural norms and expectations’ (*How Tradition Works*, Chapter 8).

socially immoral behaviour, and they echo ‘Anglo-Saxon [...] teaching with regard to alcohol [that] accepts the place of drinking in communal life but condemns excess’.¹⁰⁹

2.4 Exeter Book Riddles 4 and 9 as Augustinian Models for Moral Regulation

It is important to begin the following analysis of *EBR* 4 and 9 with a caveat: any lexicographical analysis of Old English must be predicated on the principle that words in Old English, as in all language, do not necessarily contain fixed meaning/s.¹¹⁰ For example, as Roberta Frank states:

it is a truth widely acknowledged, if often ignored, that the meaning of a word in Old English prose is a fallible guide to its meaning in poetry [...] The divergence between the meaning of a word in verse and its meaning in prose can sometimes be attributed to differing political or ideological perspectives.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Magennis, *Images of Community*, p. 53.

¹¹⁰ Research regarding the polysemy of language is prolific. For a concise definition and overview of polysemy, see Sebastian Löbner, *Understanding Semantics*, Understanding Language Series (London: Arnold, 2002). On the nexus of contextual factors and polysemy, see Alan Cruse, *Meaning and Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*, Oxford Textbooks in Linguistics, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) esp. Chapter 6, ‘Contextual Variability of Word Meaning’, pp. 101–22; Françoise Recanatì, *Literal Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 134–6. For the current scholarly approaches to the study of polysemy see John Taylor, ‘Models of Meaning in Comparison: The Two-Level Model (Manfred Bierwisch) and the Network Model (Ronald Langacker)’, in *Current Approaches to the Lexicon*, ed. by René Dirven and Johan Vanparys, Duisburg Papers on Research in Language and Culture, 24 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1995), pp. 3–26; Ronald W. Langacker, *Concept, Image and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*, Cognitive Linguistics Research, 1 (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991); Charles J. Fillmore and Beryl T. Atkins, ‘Toward a Frame-Based Lexicon: The Semantics of “Risk” and its Neighbors’, in *Frames, Fields and Contrasts*, ed. by Adrienne Lehrer and Eva F. Kittay (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1992), pp. 75–102. An accessible and illustrative case study is Deborah E. Klein and Gregory L. Murphy’s study of the polysemy of *paper* (‘The Representation of Polysemous Words’, *Journal of Memory and Language*, 45 [2001], 259–82; ‘Paper Has Been My Ruin: Conceptual Relations of Polysemous Senses’, *Journal of Memory and Language*, 47 [2002], 548–70).

¹¹¹ Roberta Frank, ‘Mere and Sund: Two Sea-Changes in *Beowulf*’, in *Modes of Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Stanley B. Greenfield*, ed. by Phyllis Rugg Brown *et al.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 153–72 (p. 153). See also her ‘Poetic Words in Late Old English Prose’, in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E. G. Stanley*, ed. by Malcolm Godden *et al.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 87–107.

This is undoubtedly true.¹¹² However, the *EBR* pose an atypical problem for this divide between prose and verse meaning: since the riddle is intended to obscure meaning through the rendering of the obvious unobvious, it cannot be taken for granted that the normal principles that are accepted as true of Old English poetry will be true of the Old English riddles precisely because the riddle form disallows such blatancy.¹¹³ The intrinsic ambivalence of riddles enables them to ‘mediate between [such] categories’ as prose and poetic diction, and indeed to transcend them.¹¹⁴

As Smith declares, ‘riddles are by definition puzzles in which words do not always mean what they say. Or rather, they are puzzles in which words mean “everything” that they say, in different ways and at different times’.¹¹⁵ Or, in other words, the inherent ambiguity of the riddle ‘operates, first and foremost, at the level of the word, and it is essential in understanding the riddle to assess its play with syntax and vocabulary’.¹¹⁶ This play is further accentuated by the inherently circular nature of riddle-solving. The correct meaning of ambiguous words (words with unsure meaning, multiple meanings, or different meanings in different registers) is usually only ascertained when the riddle as a whole is solved. That is, a solution is reliant on the interpretation of meaning of words, and yet the specific meaning can generally only be determined when the solution is found. In difficult riddles, then, it is imperative to consider all possible meanings in order to identify patterns or indications of the solution, which once found will confirm the meanings of indefinite words.¹¹⁷ Thus, ‘the riddle, exulting in ambiguity, uses the resources of language to the full [and consequently] in the riddles, we find syntactic,

¹¹² It is equally true however that ‘interpretations derived from the poetry are rarely assessed in relation to those from the prose [and *vice versa*], even when both genres are found in the same cultural milieu. This process makes it difficult to identify and access connections across genres’ (Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 24).

¹¹³ Barley, ‘Structural Aspects’, p. 144.

¹¹⁴ Ian Hamnett, ‘Ambiguity, Classification and Change: The Function of Riddles’, *Man*, 2 (1967), 379–92 (pp. 387–88).

¹¹⁵ Smith, ‘Humour in Hiding’, p. 88; my emphasis.

¹¹⁶ Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, p. 117.

¹¹⁷ Marie Nelson, ‘The Rhetoric of the Exeter Book Riddles’, *Speculum*, 49 (1974), 421–40 (p. 421).

phonetic, and semantic ambiguity’.¹¹⁸ The process of solving an *EBR* requires us to nuance our employment of ‘linguistic facts’¹¹⁹ and to acknowledge the semantic breadth, contexts and collocations of individual words in order to find latent clues to the riddles’ solutions.

2.4.1 *The Devil’s in the Detail: Exeter Book Riddle 4* ¹²⁰

EBR 4 is an extremely complex and enigmatic riddle. Although various solutions have been proposed (the most accepted solution is bell, but bucket, millstone, necromancy, flail, lock, hand-mill, pen and phallus have also been proposed),¹²¹ none has yet received consensus agreement: in most anthologies *EBR 4* remains as unsolved. Craig Williamson says of it that ‘this riddle is in many respects the most puzzling riddle in the *Exeter Book*’.¹²² I contend that this is not the case. Understood as a riddle grounded in the *Exeter Book*’s specific concerns with temptation, penance and salvation,¹²³ and through close lexicographical analysis of the semantic range of the language used in this riddle, many clues are revealed which guide the solver of *EBR 4* to the Augustinian spiritual and moral truth hidden in its depths – its solution.

EBR 4 reads:

Ic sceal þragbysig þegne minum,
 hringum hæfted, hyran georne,
 min bed brecan, breahrtme cyþan
 þæt me halswriþan hlaford sealde.
 Oft mec slæpwerigne secg oðþe meowle
 gretan eode; ic him gromheortum

¹¹⁸ Barley, ‘Structural Aspects’, p. 151.

¹¹⁹ Bruce Mitchell, ‘Linguistic Facts and the Interpretation of Old English Poetry’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 4 (1975), 11–28 (pp. 11–12).

¹²⁰ The following proposed reading of *EBR 4* will be published in my ‘The Devil’s in the Detail: A New Solution to “Exeter Book Riddle 4”’, *Neophilologus* (forthcoming).

¹²¹ Donald K. Fry, ‘Exeter Book Riddle Solutions’, *Old English Newsletter*, 15 (1981), 22–33 (p. 22).

¹²² Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, pp. 141–43.

¹²³ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, pp. 21–24.

winterceald oncweþe. Wearm lim
 gebundenne bæg hwilum bersteð;
 se þeah biþ on þonce þegne minum,
 medwisum men, me þæt sylfe,
 þær wiht wite, ond wordum min
 on sped mæge spel geseccan.

Long-busy, bound with rings, I must eagerly obey my servant, break my bed, noisily make known that a lord gave me a neck-ring. Often a man or woman went to greet me, the sleep-weary one; winter-cold I answer those hostile ones. Sometimes, a warm limb bursts the bound ring; this, however, is pleasing to my servant, the foolish one, and likewise to me, if I know anything, and can tell my tale in words triumphantly. (1a-12b)

þragbysig (1a) is a *hapax legomenon* compound that has the connotation of ‘long busy’ or ‘always occupied’.¹²⁴ Occasionally, however, *þrag* may have the extra sense of ‘evil’ or ‘bad time’.¹²⁵ The noun *bysig* (busy), too, may have negative connotations, for busyness was associated with hard labour and *bysig* can denote being ‘troubled’, ‘anxious’.¹²⁶ In other words, the riddler’s use of *þragbysig* in the first half-line of the riddle introduces a sense of the potential for negativity in this riddle.

¹²⁴ Many of the words examined here have been discussed at length by other scholars. For a comprehensive, although now out-of-date, bibliography, see *Old English Word Studies: A Preliminary Author and Word Index*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Allison Kingsmill and Ashley Crandell Amos (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). In my forthcoming article I have argued at length the various connotations of particular words with the support of multiple examples. The reader is directed to relevant examples in the footnotes and to my article, ‘The Devil’s in the Detail’, (forthcoming).

¹²⁵ See Joseph T. Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1882-1898), with supplement by T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary...Supplement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908-1921), and addenda by Alistair Campbell, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary...Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) (henceforth BT), s. v, ‘þrag’ II: ‘having reference to the condition of things at any time, *time* as in good, bad, hard etc. *times*’. For examples, see *Beowulf*, 2882b-83b; *Juliana*, 452b-53b. In their edition of *Beowulf*, Mitchell and Robinson gloss *þrag* in these lines (describing Beowulf’s thegns’ desertion of him at his time of need) as ‘time of distress’ (*Beowulf: An Edition with Shorter Relevant Texts*, ed. by Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson [Oxford: Blackwell, 1998], p. 298).

¹²⁶ As listed in *DOE*, s. v, ‘bysig’, 2. Cf. the related verb (*ge*)*bysgian*, which has the connotations of ‘to trouble’, ‘to afflict’ (*DOE*, s. v, ‘bysgian’, 2).

þegn (1b) is ambiguous since generally it denotes a ‘servant’ or ‘attendant’, but, according to Clark Hall, it may connote ‘master’,¹²⁷ and, according to Bosworth Toller, ‘a person of rank’, ‘a brave and noble man’.¹²⁸ Thus either the riddle-narrator eagerly serves its master (in which case *þegn* is an unusual word choice), or, incongruously, it serves its servant, or, even more incongruously, it serves a servant-master. A. N. Doane attempts to reconcile the incongruous situation that ‘the object must obey its own servant’ by asserting that:

the word *þegne* suggests that it [the riddle-narrator] is an article of use employed by a servant while working for his own master. Thus the article is seen as being commanded (i.e., used) by its own servant (i.e., the person who must serve the instrument by using it also has command of it).¹²⁹

Doane’s argument is a convincing one, yet it presupposes that the riddle-narrator of *EBR* 4 is an inanimate object, ‘an article of use’. However, it is the use of *þegn* that leads Doane to this assumption since ‘this conceit is fairly common in riddles when an implement of some kind is the object’.¹³⁰ Although this is true, it is equally true that the *EBR* often exploit such expectations.¹³¹ To avoid a circular argument – the riddle-narrator is an implement because the riddle uses *þegn*, which can be explained because the riddle-narrator is an implement – it is important to see if it is possible to understand the function of *þegn* in *EBR* 4 in another way.

¹²⁷ John R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th edn with supplement by H. D. Meritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960; repr. by University of Toronto Press, Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching 14, 2000) (henceforth Clark Hall)

¹²⁸ These possible connotations are reflected in the translations of Anne Harleman Stewart, John Porter, and Kevin Crossley-Holland, who all translate *þegn* as ‘master’ (Ann Harleman Stewart, ‘The Solution to the Old English Riddle 4’, *Studies in Philology*, 78 [1981], 52–61 [p. 53]; Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, p. 19; Crossley-Holland, *Exeter Book Riddles*, p. 8). See also H. R. Loyn, ‘Gesiths and Thegns in Anglo-Saxon England from the Seventh to the Tenth Century’, *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 529–49 (esp. pp. 540–49).

¹²⁹ A. N. Doane, ‘Three Old English Implement Riddles: Reconsiderations of Numbers 4, 49, and 73’, *Modern Philology*, 84 (1987), 243–57 (p. 246).

¹³⁰ Doane, ‘Implement Riddles’, p. 246. Doane overstates the commonness of the use of this implement conceit in the *EBR*. It is possible to detect the conceit (with varying degrees of certainty) in only five riddles: *EBR* 21 (Plough), 37 (Bellows), 49 (Unsolved), 87 (Bellows) and here in *EBR* 4.

¹³¹ In a recent conference paper (‘Out of Body Experiences in Anglo-Saxon England: Pondering the Soul’s Journey’, *Germania Latina VI*, The Netherlands, July 2004), Jennifer Neville argued that the implement conceit is introduced initially into *EBR* 43 (Soul and Body) as a deliberately misleading clue; the solution to which the conceit points is then disallowed by later clues. Her paper is forthcoming in the conference proceedings, *The World of Travellers: Exploration and Imagination*, *Germania Latina VI*, Mediaevalia Groningana (Louvain: Peeters).

Another way of reconciling the inherent incongruity of *þegn* in *EBR* 4, as someone who both serves and commands, is to understand the use of it as an example of social perversion as argued by Alvin Lee in *The Guest-Hall of Eden*. Lee argues that the ‘part of society which became the main social content’ of Old English poetry was the lord-thane relationship with its ideals of ‘mutual loyalty and protection’, and which could be given metaphorical significance and identification with heaven, ‘middle-earth’, or hell.¹³² In poetry, then, the lord-thane relationship could metaphorically represent ‘that utter perversion of all true loyalty and love that is the Anglo-Saxon hell [...] the parody of heaven’.¹³³ According to Lee, as the ‘demonic perversion of the heavenly society’, hell can be identified by misery and lamentation, a faithless lord and his disloyal retainers, and division: ‘where the King of heaven is adored and praised by his loyal troops, Satan as a faithless lord receives spirited abuse from his enraged followers’.¹³⁴ For example, when the fallen angels curse Satan in *Christ and Satan*, the narrator concludes with:

Swa firenfulle facnum wordum
heora *aldorðægn* on reordadon,
on cearum cwidum.

Thus with treacherous words, the sinful ones reproached their *aldorðægn* in sorrowful speech. (65a-67a; my emphasis)

What is particularly illustrative in this statement is that Satan is referred to as *aldorðægn* by the narrator. In Clark Hall, this signifies ‘chief attendant, retainer [...] chieftain’, that

¹³² Alvin A. Lee, *The Guest-Hall of Eden: Four Essays on the Design of Old English Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 12-13. See also Rosemary E. Woolf, ‘The Devil in Old English Poetry’, *Review of English Studies*, NS 4 (1953), 1-12.

¹³³ Lee, *Guest-Hall of Eden*, pp. 13-14. Woolf states ‘by an almost metaphorical treatment the terms used of persons and situations derived from heroic society could be applied to Satan, for his disobedience to God had an intrinsic likeness to the revolt of a *þegn* from his lord’ (‘Devil in Old English’, pp. 1-2). See also J. R. Hall, “Geongordom” and “Hyldo” in “Genesis B”: Serving the Lord for the Lord’s Favor’, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 11 (1975), 302-07. The concept of hell representing a perversion or inversion of heaven finds confirmation in the illustration of the ‘Fall of the Rebel Angels’ (London, British Library, MS Cotton Claudius B. IV, f. 2); there, Lucifer/Satan is drawn upside-down inside an inverted almond-shape (in the bottom register), which is the mirror image of the almond-shape within which God sits, right-side-up (in the top register). See *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900-1066*, ed. by Elżbieta Temple, *A Survey of Manuscript Illuminated in the British Isles* (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), Figure 265.

¹³⁴ Lee, *Guest-Hall of Eden*, p. 21.

is, both retainer and lord; in Bosworth Toller, it denotes a ‘principal thane or servant’.¹³⁵ In *Christ and Satan* its use emphasises the fact that Satan is still a *þegn*, in contrast to his self-perception that he is ‘halig god, | scypend seolfa’ (‘holy God, the Creator himself; 56b-57a). Further, although Satan is technically the fallen angels’ lord, they do not address him with the respect due to that position, and the narrator calls attention to this hierarchical degradation by labelling Satan chief servant (*aldorðægn*). Perhaps, then, the incongruity of *EBR 4*’s speaker serving his *þegn*, his lord and retainer, indicates Lee’s perverted hell.

Hringum hæfted (2a)¹³⁶ itself is not as ambiguous as *þragbysig* or *þegn*, but it is important to note that *bring* means ‘ring’ as used in the context of reward- and gift-giving with the sense of ‘treasure’, but it also connotes ‘fetter’ or ‘link of a chain’. *Hæftan*, as well as its usual poetic meaning ‘to bind’ or ‘fetter’, can also connote ‘to condemn’. Thus, the half-line may read variously ‘bound with rings’, ‘bound by treasure’ or ‘condemned with fetters’. Another ambiguity with *bringum hæfted* is to whom it refers: to *ic*, the riddle-narrator, or to the *þegn*, or, as the ambiguity allows, to both *ic* and the *þegn*. This ambiguity again raises the question of perversion: does this riddle describe the service of a retainer to his master, where the social ideal of reciprocity – binding obligation and service in return for treasure – is emphasised? Or does this riddle describe social perversion, with the riddle-narrator serving a condemned servant-master and being condemned by fetters for his service?

¹³⁵ *Aldorðægn* may also be used unproblematically to refer to a lesser lord who is a chief retainer of his overlord (for example, Æschere is Hrothgar’s *aldorþegn* in *Beowulf*; 1308a) (unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of *Beowulf* are taken from Mitchell and Robinson’s edition, *Beowulf*; all further references to *Beowulf* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text).

¹³⁶ *Hringan hæfted* in the manuscript. The –an ending is generally taken to be a late West Saxon form of the dative plural, and is often emended to –um. See Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 143.

Meaning ‘eagerly’, ‘earnestly’, ‘diligently’ or ‘zealously’, *georn* (2b) and its derivatives appear regularly in the extant Old English corpus.¹³⁷ Although *georne* does not have a religious meaning, it appears most frequently in prose, religious texts. In such religious texts it is employed to emphasise the zeal and eagerness with which the moral Christian must obey Christ’s law, or the earnestness with which every sinning Christian must repent, or the diligence required of every Christian to guard against sin and temptation. *Georne* has similar associations in the poetic corpus: it is found predominantly in religious poems and its usages in such poems parallel its usages in religious prose.¹³⁸ That *georne* most frequently appears in religious texts and contexts implies that its use in *EBR 4* could invoke such associations. *Georne* subtly implies that this riddle *may* be associated with penitential contemplation, diligence against sin, or zealous service to God.

Georne is used in the *Exeter Book* poem, *The Whale*, in a remarkable way. Rather than describing Christians’ earnest faith, it instead describes sinners’ eager and zealous service to the devil. Following the hellish perversion of social ideals outlined above, *The Whale’s* narrator informs his audience that the devil ‘rewards’ his eager (*georne*), sinning followers by imprisoning them in hell (74b-75b); the narrator then exhorts his audience to contemplate the state of their lives in this transitory world and recommends penitential contemplation to achieve salvation. Thus, although *georne* in *EBR 4* may refer to proper Christian diligence or zealous service, in light of its use in *The Whale*, it may simultaneously suggest the possibility of the riddle’s reference to the devil and sin.

¹³⁷ They occur approximately 2,300 times in the complete extant Old English corpus of prose and poetry, with fewer than 250 of those examples in poetry (Richard L. Venezky and Antonette diPaolo Healey, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, Publications of the Dictionary of Old English, 1 [Toronto: Dictionary of Old English, 1980] [henceforth *Microfiche Concordance*]; *A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by Jess B. Bessinger [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978] [henceforth *Poetic Concordance*]).

¹³⁸ For instance, it is used eight times in the *Christ* poems of the *Exeter Book*. Each use refers to moral zeal, earnestness of faith and repentance, and diligence against sin. However, the use of *georne* in non-religious texts (both prose and poetry) indicates that it could be used without reference to, or association with, religious zeal or repentance; for example, it is used five times in *The Battle of Maldon* to express eagerness for battle (73b, 84b, 107a, 123b, 206b).

Scholars have understood the *bedd* of ‘min bed brecan’ (‘break my bed’; 3a) as the noun *bedd* denoting ‘bed’, ‘couch’, ‘sleeping place’. However, the lexically distinct *bed* means ‘prayer’, ‘religious service’ or ‘religious worship’ and is a noun often used in homiletic and penitential contexts.¹³⁹ The potential for multiple meanings in the riddles allows both interpretations to exist simultaneously: the speaker may break from his sleeping place, presumably a metonymy for arising from his bed, but he may also break (*breca*n) his religious service to God. Appropriately, *breca*n, denoting ‘to break’, ‘violate’, is often used with the sense of breaking or violating oaths or obligations, sometimes of a religious nature.¹⁴⁰ It is unusual to observe alliteration falling on a verb; in this half-line the alliterative emphasis is on the verb, *breca*n, as well as the noun, *bed*. Although the *EBR* 4 poet also alliterates the verb *hyran* (2b), such emphasis here calls attention to the importance of the violation and seems more necessary and likely in reference to the violation of religious devotion, rather than to a metaphorical arising. The possible reading ‘violate my religious service’ again suggests that the riddle’s narrator makes reference to sin or evil.

Such reference is further implied with the riddler’s use of *breaktme cyþan* (‘noisily proclaim’; 3b). *Cyþan* can (usually in homiletic prose contexts) connote ‘to confess’.¹⁴¹ The usage of this confessional sense should not be overstated since it is very rarely used poetically and only sporadically in prose. Nevertheless, the half-line may have the sense of

¹³⁹ See *DOE*, s. vv, ‘bedd’, ‘bed’. For an example of the latter: ‘leofa cild, þonne ðu to cyrcan cume, þonne sing þu ðær singallice þine bedu’ (‘dear child, when you come to church, then continually sing your prayers there’; Anonymous Homily, ‘De Confessione’) (unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of ‘De Confessione’ are taken from Napier, pp. 289–91, no. 56; all further references to ‘De Confessione’ throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text).

¹⁴⁰ *DOE* has ‘to break or fail to keep a legal obligation or pledge; to break, violate or fail to keep a religious law or commandment’, s. v, ‘brecan’, 9 and 10. For examples see *Christ C*, 1393a; *Genesis B*, 599b.

¹⁴¹ As listed in *DOE*, s. vv, ‘cyþan’, 4; ‘gecyþan’, 4. See *Die Winteney-Version der Regula S. Benedicti*, ed. by Arnold Schröer (Halle: Neirmeyer, 1888; repr. with appendix by Mechthild Gretsch, 1978), Chapter 7, p. 39, 2; *Die angelsächsischen Prosabearbeitungen der Benediktinerregel*, ed. by Arnold Schröer, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 2 (Kassel, 1885–88; 2nd edn. with appendix by Helmut Gneuss, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), Chapter 7, p. 28, 18; Wulfstan’s *Lectio Secundum Lucam*, ‘Be Biscophadum’, 47–48 (*The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum [Oxford: Clarendon, 1957], p. 244, no. XVII).

‘noisily confess’ when read in the immediate context of interpreting *georne* and *min bed breca*n religiously. Thus, these lines may be understood as follows: having readily obeyed his servant-master and violated his religious service, the first-person speaker is condemned in fetters and must noisily confess.

In line 4a, we are told that the speaker must confess that his lord has given him a *halswriþan*. *Halswriþan* is another of *EBR 4*’s *hapax legomena*; it has generally been glossed and defined as ‘necklace’ or ‘neck-ring’, where the *hals* element refers to the neck, and the noun *wriþa* means ‘ring’. However, the noun *wriþa* also denotes ‘band’, ‘collar’ or ‘thong’, perhaps again indicating that the speaker is not rewarded by his lord with a necklace, but bound and marked by a neck collar or thong in servitude to him.¹⁴² *Halswriþan*, then, may further suggest condemnation and is potentially another perversion: where there should have been a necklace for good zealous service, there is broken obligation, the reward of servitude and a neck-chain, parallel to the *bringum hæfted* of line 2a.

The compound, *grombeortum* (‘grim-hearted ones’; 6b), is used only three times in the extant Old English corpus,¹⁴³ once of Grendel in *Beowulf*;¹⁴⁴ once in *Guthlac A* of the *grombeort* devils tormenting Guthlac, God’s man (569a), and once here in *EBR 4*. It is likely, then, that the grim-hearted ones of *EBR 4* can be understood as being in opposition to God, just as the grimhearted Grendel and devils are.

Gebundenne bæg (8a) requires consideration. *Gebundenne* is the past participle of *(ge)bindan* which means ‘to tie’, ‘bind’, ‘fetter’, ‘fasten’ or ‘restrain’, a verb which is in accord with the verbs meaning ‘to fetter’ already used in the poem. However, the verb *(ge)bindan* may also

¹⁴² Such a reading is supported by the denotations of the verb *wriþan*, ‘to fetter’, ‘tie’ or ‘bind’, a verb which can have the extended connotations of ‘to vex’ or ‘torture’.

¹⁴³ As listed in the *Poetic Concordance*.

¹⁴⁴ Grendel is described as ‘gromheort guma, godes ondsaca’ (‘grim-hearted man, God’s adversary’; 1682).

indicate non-physical, non-material binding: obligation.¹⁴⁵ *Gebundenne*, then, may indicate bound as in fettered or, alternatively, bound as in obliged. *Bæg*, qualified by *gebindan*, signifies a ‘circular ornament’, ‘necklace’, ‘collar’, ‘bracelet’, ‘circlet’, ‘monastic tonsure’, ‘Christ’s crown’ or ‘ring’ (especially as a symbol of marriage), and is, at least ostensibly, connected to the ring nouns already utilised in the riddle. The sense of *gebundenne bæg*, then, is a ‘bound ring’, which the warm limb breaks (*berstan*; 8b). As most commentators have previously noted, the construction of ‘wearm lim | gebundenne bæg hwilum bersteð’ (7b-8b) is particularly unusual: the verb *berstan*, otherwise always intransitive, is transitive here; *wearm lim* is an unusual disyllabic verse; and there is anacrusis before a type E verse at 8a.¹⁴⁶ However, despite the obvious anomalies of these lines, they do not require emendation and, as Williamson convincingly argues, may be translated as ‘a warm limb sometimes breaks the *gebundenne bæg*’ (whatever we understand that to mean) with reasonable confidence.¹⁴⁷ We will return later to the interpretation of these lines.

An analysis of the last line of the poem suggests the final clues which allow a satisfactory reading of this riddle. ‘On sped mæge spel geseccan’ has been translated variously as ‘may triumphantly tell the tale’, ‘if anyone can fathom and solve my riddle’, and ‘may tell my story successfully in words’,¹⁴⁸ where either ‘I’ or ‘you’ may successfully tell the story. Although his solution of a ‘bucket on a chain or rope in a cistern or well’ is unconvincing, Doane is correct to note that ‘the ending formula of this riddle is therefore rather unusual in the way the elaborate riddling question links to the riddle itself’,¹⁴⁹ since it is in the last line of *EBR* 4 that the two ultimate clues for its solution are provided. Firstly, it seems

¹⁴⁵ For examples see *Corpus Glossaries* 2, 4.81 (*An Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary Preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, ed. by John H. Hessel [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890]); Alfred’s translation of Gregory’s *Pastoral Care*, 26.185.21 (*King Alfred’s West-Saxon Version of Gregory’s Pastoral Care*, ed. by Henry Sweet, EETS 50 [London: Oxford University Press, 1871-72; repr. EETS OS 45, 1958]).

¹⁴⁶ See Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 141.

¹⁴⁷ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, pp. 144-45.

¹⁴⁸ Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, p. 19; Crossley-Holland, *Exeter Book Riddles*, p. 8; Doane, ‘Implement Riddles’, p. 247 (respectively).

¹⁴⁹ Doane, ‘Implement Riddles’, p. 247.

unnecessary to understand *on sped* as ‘triumphantly’, since it literally reads ‘in prosperity’ or ‘with effect’. The difference is crucial, because it is not necessarily (as usually has been assumed) the *immediate* triumph of the correct solving of the riddle to which this statement refers, but rather to the *general* prosperity or success of the solver or riddle-narrator. That is, rather than the solver triumphantly solving the riddle, his or her solving of it has an effect on his or her general prosperity, or that of the riddle-narrator. Secondly, although *spel* denotes ‘story’, *EBR 4* is the only riddle which is described as a *spel*. Importantly, *spel* often has the additional sense of an ‘instructive talk’, ‘sermon’, or ‘homily’.¹⁵⁰ That is, the unusual ending to *EBR 4* utilises a word often heard in prose, homiletic contexts to signify instruction of a religious or spiritual nature. Conversely, *spel* may also connote a ‘false story’, and it is possible that *EBR 4* is not a homily, but a false tale.¹⁵¹ Thus, the end line of the riddle may be understood as ‘and can tell my instructive talk/false story with effect’.

The solution and the way in which to read *EBR 4* are suggested through its carefully chosen language. The repeated implication of evil is significant, as are the repeated penitential and homiletic connections. If my arguments are accepted, the solution of *EBR 4* is a devil (distinct from the devil, Satan).¹⁵² The reading with the solution of devil

¹⁵⁰ It is used thus regularly in prose, for example in Ælfrician and Wulfstanian writing. See Ælfric’s Ash Wednesday homily (*ÆLS.12 [Ash Wednesday]*: pp. 260–83; 1 and 289).

¹⁵¹ Like the sinners of Psalm 118 (verse 85: 255a–56a) in *The Paris Psalter*, the riddle-narrator may be telling falsehoods as truth, an interpretation which is supported by the pervasive mood of evil-doing in *EBR 4*. See also *Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. by. Jane Roberts, Christian Kay and Lynne Grundy, 2 vols (London: King’s College London Medieval Studies, 1995) (henceforth *TOE*). *TOE* lists *spel* as belonging to the semantic fields of ‘untruth, falsehood’, ‘a speech, what is said, words’ and ‘preaching’ (as ‘a homily/sermon’), among others.

¹⁵² I accept Peter Dendle’s argument that ‘though not often explicitly addressed in theological or expository writings, there is an ambivalence between the singular devil and his multitude of minions sustained in the earliest patristic writings and throughout the early Middle Ages, both within sentences at the level of syntax, and at larger narrative levels’ (Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001], p. 88). This ambivalence could explain the grammatical ambiguity of to whom *bringum hæfted* refers in 2a (see discussion above, pp. 186–87). However, this possible ‘conflation of the single devil with his subordinate demons’ (Dendle, *Satan Unbound*, p. 89) supports the solution ‘devil’, although the meaning of the riddle is dependent on understanding its speaker as a subordinate demon/devil.

proceeds thus: a devil is *þragbysig*, eternally busy, a characteristic which is asserted repeatedly in other *Exeter Book* poems.¹⁵³ The *EBR 4* devil is obliged to follow his servant-master (*þegn*), Satan. This choice of *þegn*, like *aldorðægn* in *Christ and Satan*, identifies the *EBR 4* devil's world of a perverted hell, an inversion of the ideal social order. Thus in *EBR 4* Satan as *þegn* is both servant and master, a duality which finds pictorial confirmation in the *Junius Manuscript* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11). In the bottom register of 'The Fall of the Angels' illustration (p. 16; Figure 1), Satan is whipped and punished by a tailed devil with a flail: Satan is 'rewarded' by torture, tormented by his own *þegn* to whom he is servile. Equally expressive is the *Junius* illustration of 'The Temptation of Adam and Eve' (p. 20; Figure 2). There, Satan is clearly both servant and master: fettered over hell-fire by his wrists and ankles and tormented by a winged demon with a hooked flail, Satan appears utterly servile. Yet, he is simultaneously master as he orders an 'emissary devil to Eden to tempt Adam and Eve', an order obeyed since 'the emissary ascends through the gate of hell and, above [in the upper register of the picture], assumes the shape of the serpent in the Tree of Death'.¹⁵⁴ Correspondingly, in *Genesis B*, Satan words his call for an emissary devil in terms of retainer obligations, saying:

Gif ic ænegum þægne þeodenmadmas
 geara forgeafe
 [...]
 þonne he me na on leofran tid leanum ne meahte
 mine gife gyldan.

If I formerly gave princely treasures to any of my retainers [...] then not at a more valued hour could he reward me with compensations for my gift. (409a-413a)¹⁵⁵

In *Genesis B*, the perversion of hell is emphasised by Satan's ostensible participation in the 'normal' social order of lord-thane obligations. The use of *þegn* in *EBR 4*, then, represents

¹⁵³ For example, in *Juliana*, the devil calls his work endless evil ('yfel endeleas'; 506a).

¹⁵⁴ *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustrations: Photographs of Sixteen Manuscripts with Descriptions and Index*, ed. by Thomas H. Ohlgren (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), p. 91. On the development of demonic iconography see Louis Jordan, 'Demonic Elements in Anglo-Saxon Iconography', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, Studies in Medieval Culture, 20 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 283-317.

¹⁵⁵ Satan addresses his devils as *þegna* again in 414a.

this dual nature of Satan and allows both connotations – servant *and* master – to be correct at once in the riddle.

The *EBR 4* devil, and/or his *þegn* Satan, is condemned or bound by fetters, or the links of a chain (*bringum hæfted*). A devil/Satan is undoubtedly condemned, confirming this sense in the riddle, but he is concurrently bound with fetters, a concept which also finds pictorial and textual support in the *Junius Manuscript*. In a second illustration of ‘The Fall of the Angels’ (p. 17; Figure 3), Satan is again bound by wrists and ankles, although in this depiction he is restrained with chains. A servile winged devil, kneeling on hands and knees before Satan, is likewise fettered by chains. Indeed, it appears that he is bound by chains to Satan, a literal representation of the metaphorical description, *bringum hæfted* of *EBR 4*.¹⁵⁶

The riddle-devil zealously (*georne*) obeys his master, Satan, like the sinners in *The Whale*. He then breaks his bed, that is, arises, an action which is positioned in relation to his long-busy sleep-weariness (1a; 5a). At the same time, however, the devil continually breaks his religious service to God (*bed*), by obeying Satan. In *Genesis B* the connection between devils and the violation of religious service is explicit, since God turns the rebel angels into devils because they do not obey their duty to praise Him: ‘and heo ealle forsceop | drihten to deoflum. Forþon heo his dæd and word | noldon weorðian’ (‘and the Lord transformed them all into devils because they refused to praise His deeds and commands’; 308b-10a). In other words, the rebel angels are changed into devils because they violate their duty to God. The description ‘noisily’ (*breahþme*) confirms the solution of devil, since devils are often portrayed as noisy.¹⁵⁷ Like *georne*, the confessional implication of *cyþan* is deliberate: the narrator devil ‘noisily makes known’ his obedience and subservience to Satan through his telling of the riddle.

¹⁵⁶ See also the textual parallel in *Genesis B*, 762a, 765a.

¹⁵⁷ For example, the evil and wicked devils which torment Guthlac are described as torturing him by making the ‘breahþma mæste’ (‘greatest noise’; *Guthlac B*, 910a).

It is again in the *Junius Manuscript* that there is support for the understanding of *balswriþan* as ‘neck-fetter’. Returning to ‘The Fall of the Angels’ (p. 17; Figure 3), both Satan and the chained devil are fettered by their necks, a representation which is repeated in the illustration of ‘Lucifer’s Transformation to Satan’ (p. 3; Figure 4). There, Satan is bound by his neck, feet, and hands to fangs or stakes rising from Hell-mouth.¹⁵⁸ If the lord (*blaford*) referred to in line 4b is Satan, then *EBR 4*’s neck-ring (*balswriþan*) is not the treasure reward of the ideal social order, but the perverted hellish version of this reward – a neck chain condemning the devil to hell and torment. However, *blaford* may also refer to God. Satan laments that ‘me god hafað | gehæfted be þam healse’ (‘God has fettered me by the neck’; *Genesis B* 384b-85a) in hell, so that in *EBR 4* perhaps it is *the Lord* rather than *my lord* who fetters the devil by his neck to the torture of hell.

The riddle maintains its emphasis on the continual work of the devil with the adjective, sleep-weary (*slæpwerigne*; 5a), which like ‘always occupied’ (*þragbysig*; 1a) and ‘break my bed’ (‘min bed brecaþ’; 3a) accentuates the general tenet of the *Exeter Book* that the devil’s work is never done. The tense changes in *EBR 4* further highlight this focus on the devil’s perpetual work: Satan or God gave (*sealde*: past-tense; 4b) the devil a neck-fetter, but the devil’s actions are consistently present-tense. Since the devil works in the continuous present of now, his work is stressed as continual, a reminder to Christians to be ever vigilant. In ignorance of that reminder, the man and woman (‘secg oðþe meowle’; 5b) who come to greet the sleep-weary speaker are obliviously grim-hearted (*gromheortum*): they have given in to the devil, indeed have actively come to greet (*gretan eode*; 6a) him, supporting the accounts in other texts (such as *Juliana*) ‘that sin still requires the consent of the sinner’.¹⁵⁹ The riddle-devil is wintry-cold (*winterceald*; 7a). Since ‘*cald*’ had associations for Old English poets in several contexts which we no longer

¹⁵⁸ In ‘The Fall of the Rebel Angels’ (London, British Library, MS Cotton Claudius B. IV, f. 2; see above, p. 185, n. 133), it appears that Lucifer/Satan is similarly bound around the neck.

¹⁵⁹ Dendle, *Satan Unbound*, p. 30.

Figure 1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, page
16: Fall of the Angels



Figure 2. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, page 20:
Temptation of Adam and Eve



Figure 3. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, page 17:
Fall of the Angels

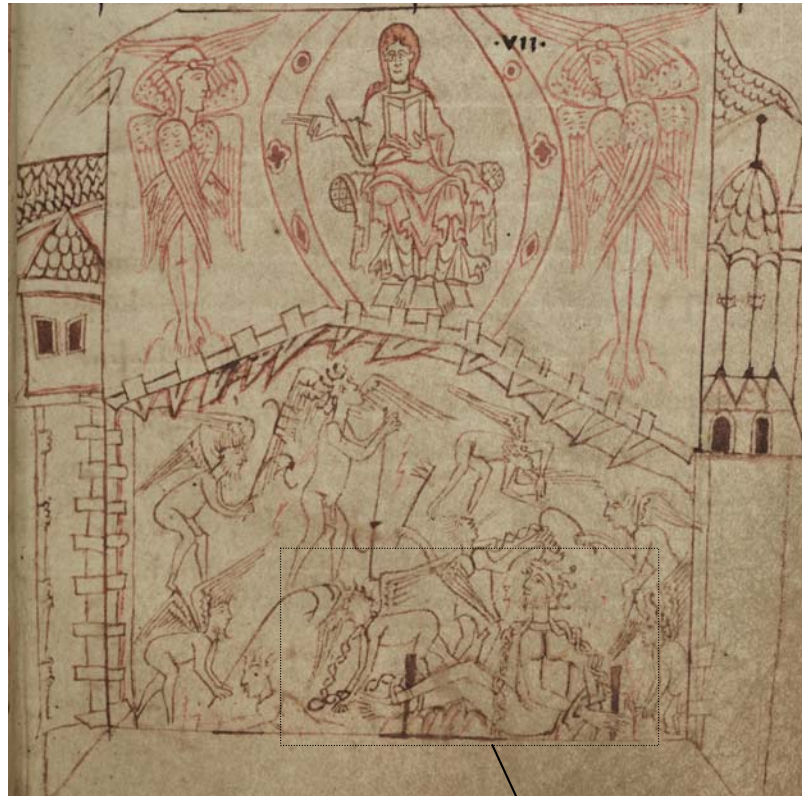
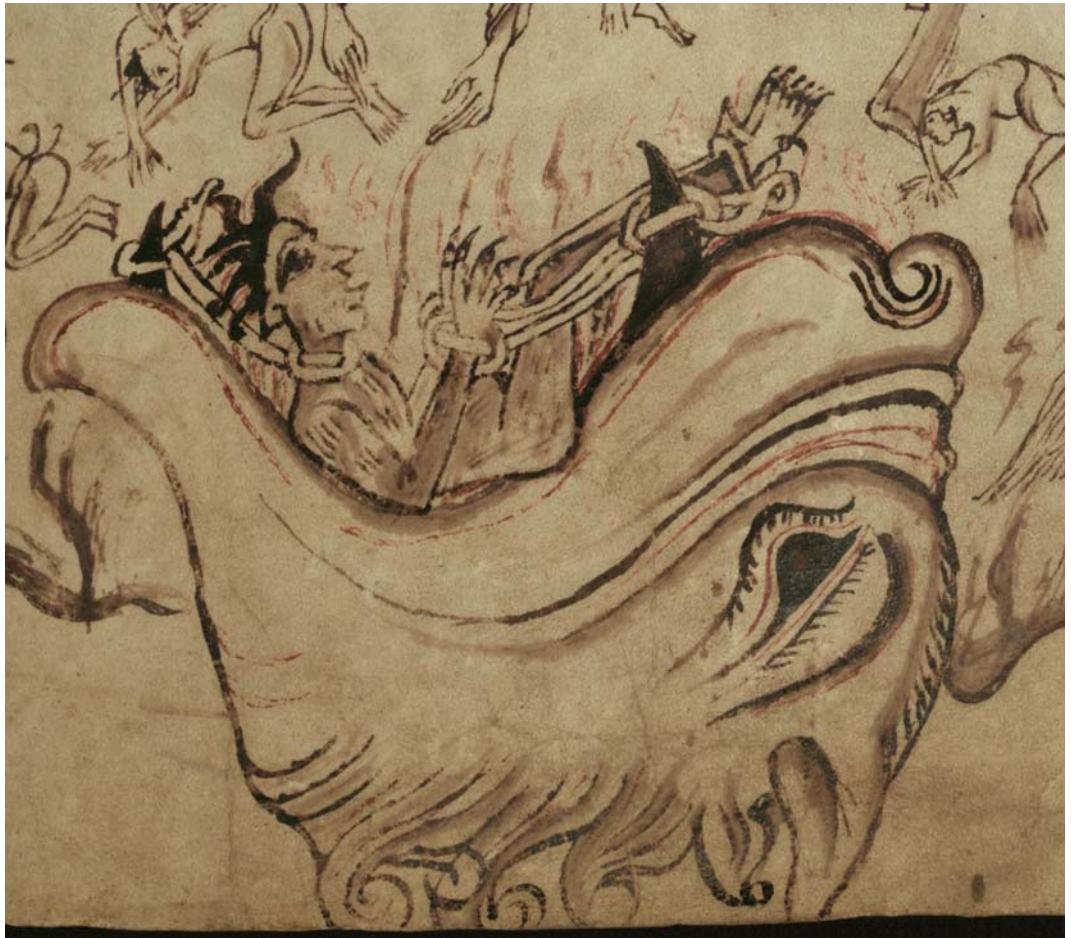


Figure 4. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, page 3:
Lucifer's Transformation to Satan



perceive today – implications of “hostility”, “treachery”, or “ill-omen”,¹⁶⁰ the riddler’s use of the emphatic *winterceald* emphasise the ill-intention of the devil. In *Genesis B*, hell is described as containing fire and ‘forst fyrnum cald. Symble fyr oððe gar’ (‘frost burning cold, always fire or piercing cold’; 316).¹⁶¹ *EBR 4*’s devil shares the wintry and icy-cold aspect of hell and thus anticipates the pain and torment which constitutes hell.

The description of the devil as wintry-cold (*winterceald*) is in immediate contrast to the warm limb or branch (*wearm lim*; 7b). This latter phrase has caused difficulty for modern solvers of *EBR 4* and is one which needs to be interpreted in the context of the whole sentence. How to understand *gebundenne bæg* (8a) is crucial, then. As noted, it is possible to understand *gebindan* as ‘bound’ in the non-physical sense of binding obligation. *Bæg*, denoting ‘ring’ or ‘crown’, marks a departure from the Satan-devil lord-retainer relationship to which *EBR 4* alludes in lines 1–4. The vocabulary which *EBR 4* utilises in these lines for rings or fetters (*bring*, *wriþa*) is semantically distinct from *bæg*. As noted, both *bring* and *wriþa* can have negative connotations: they can imply both ‘ring’ and ‘fetter’, ‘collar’, ‘chain’. *Bæg* does not have such negative associations.¹⁶² It denotes ‘ring’ or ‘crown’ in the sense of treasure and reward or gift-giving that is inherent in the ideal social order.¹⁶³ In *EBR 4*, then, the *gebundenne bæg* – ‘the obligation’s reward’ – carries a positive sense in contrast to the devil’s negative *bring* and *halswriþan*. In other words,

¹⁶⁰ Vivian Salmon, ‘Some Connotations of “Cold” in Old and Middle English’, *Modern Language Notes*, 74 (1959), 314–22 (p. 321).

¹⁶¹ The devil’s designation as wintry-cold, when coupled with the repeated fetter imagery of the riddle, strikes a similar parallel with imagery connected with hell’s torments, for example, in *Andreas*, 1210b–12a; *Judgement Day II*, 191a–93b.

¹⁶² In *TOE*, *bring*, *wriþa* and *beag* share some semantic fields (for example, ‘ring’ [for finger, arm, neck]), but *beag* is alone in not having associations with the field of ‘supports and fastenings’ (for strap, thong, tie, ring). *Hring* also belongs to the semantic field of ‘grasp, power, control, mastery’ (with its connotations of power over something/someone) and the verb (*ge*)*wriþa* belongs to the fields, ‘binding, fastening with bonds’ and ‘misery, trouble, affliction’.

¹⁶³ For example, see its listing in Stephen A. Barney, *Word-Hoard: An Introduction to Old English Vocabulary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), Group 64, pp. 29–30. In the *Exeter Book*, *bæg* is used seventeen times (as listed in the *Poetic Concordance*): all of these usages refer to the ideal, proper exchange of treasure for service (for example, *Widsith*, 74a, 90a), or to a bride’s ring (for example, *Christ A*, 292a), or with the religious associations of Christ’s crown or a saintly halo (for example, *Christ C*, 1126a, 1443b, and *The Phoenix*, 602a).

gebundenne bæg is constructed as the antithesis to *bringum hæfted*; we may understand it as representing the ideal social order – heaven – as the antithesis to the perverted social order – hell.

The warm limb (*wearm lim*) failing or breaking the *gebundenne bæg* is a metaphoric description of the possibility for any man or woman (*‘secg oðþe meowle’*) to pervert the ideal relationship of Christian service to God, that is, to fail or break the moral obligations of their Christian faith. In the ideal social order of heaven, God rewards his retainers with salvation in return for which they are obliged to show Him loyalty and faithfulness. The man (or woman) of *EBR 4* fails this obligation firstly when he comes to greet the devil, and secondly by means of his warm limb. In Latin texts, Old English *lim* often glosses *membrum* so that in the context of *EBR 4*, *lim* can be taken as referring to the *membrum virile* (‘male member’, ‘phallus’) of the man (*secg*).¹⁶⁴ Not only do the grim-hearted ones actively go to the devil; they also break their moral obligation to God, their true lord, by having unlawful sexual relations. That the church was occupied with the (im)morality of sexual intercourse is undeniable.¹⁶⁵ It is possible, then, that *EBR 4* exploits the prominence of this sin and that ‘warm limb’ is an allusion to unlawful sexual intercourse, a ‘hot penis’ so to speak.¹⁶⁶

There is further support for reading *lim* as ‘penis’ and *wearm lim* as a metaphor for an unlawful sexual interlude: *EBR 4* alludes to marriage through its language, and it is possible that the violation of Christian obligation is the very specific violation of the marital vow. Returning to *breca* (3a): *DOE* lists one of the connotations of *breca* as ‘to dissolve a marriage’ and thus the devil-narrator is potentially asserting his intention to break apart a lawful marriage. The import of this assertion is only made manifest in retrospect, when the devil tempts his man and woman (*‘secg oðþe meowle’*) to have

¹⁶⁴ *Lim* belongs to the semantic field of ‘male genitalia’ (specifically penis), among others, according to *TOE*. *Lim* may also signify a limb of Satan, reinforcing *EBR 4*’s satanic emphasis.

¹⁶⁵ See discussion above, Chapter 1, pp. 120–38. Cf. Magennis, ‘No Sex Please’, p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ My thanks to Jennifer Neville for suggesting this reading.

unlawful sexual intercourse. The *gebundenne bæg* which the sexual intercourse breaks apart, then, could be understood as representing marriage, since *gebundenne bæg* incorporates the sense of the obligation of marriage (*gebundenne*) with a symbol of it.¹⁶⁷ That is, the violation of God's law and Christian obligation is the specific violation of the Christian ideal of monogamous marriage. This understanding is confirmed when we acknowledge a connotation of *berstan* as 'broken of oath'.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the sentence can be understood as: 'adultery sometimes violates their marital obligation'.

This violation, or failure, is of course pleasing or satisfactory to the devil-narrator. The *þegne* of line 9b refers simultaneously to Satan (as he was addressed in 1b), who, like the devil, is pleased with the devil's successful work, and also to the riddle-devil's new retainer, the man and woman, who are too foolish (*medwisum*; 10a) to perceive the moral danger of the devil and whose foolishness leads them to violate their obligation to God and marriage. Indeed, they are foolish enough to be pleased by their sexual interlude. This is not a surprising sentiment when framed by the context of the *double entendre* riddles, which 'deal with sexuality in a frankly enthusiastic and descriptive manner'.¹⁶⁹ Like these *double entendre* riddles, *EBR 4* alludes to the pleasure of sexual relations, and it is credible to imagine the *EBR 4* participants 'undearnunga [...] plegan | hæmedlaces' ('openly amusing themselves with fornication'; *EBR 42*, 2a-3a).

The closing lines of *EBR 4* have two distinct meanings: one for the solver, and one for the devil-narrator. For the solver, solving *EBR 4* means recognising the devil in the riddle and in all facets of Christian life. The solver will retrospectively comprehend the significance of the confessional terms, *georne* and *cyþan*: parallel to the message of *The Whale*, the solver will perceive the existence of the devil in his or her life and be reminded to conduct penitential self-reflection and confession in order to eradicate him. The

¹⁶⁷ See *DOE*, s. v, 'beag', 1.e: 'ring, especially as a symbol of marriage'.

¹⁶⁸ As listed in *DOE*, s. v, 'berstan'.

¹⁶⁹ Williams, 'What's So New?', p. 138.

recognition of the devil-solution, then, will allow the solver to achieve prosperity (*sped*; 12a) and potentially salvation since the solver is alert to, and wary of, the devil's constant tempting work. For the solver, this riddle is a homily or instructive talk (*spel*), teaching that vigilance is necessary to protect against the devil's constant threat to prosperity (*sped*) and morality, insidious as he is even in the ostensibly innocent riddle form, preying on the unwary Christian. Solving the riddle allows alert Christians to reject the perverted reality that the devil offers and thus transform the devil's perverted reality into an ideal, Godly, one. The solver will recognise the true meaning of the devil's riddling words as:

[Now] long-afflicted and condemned in chains, I must readily obey my 'master', violate my religious service, and noisily confess that the Lord bound my neck in chains. Weary, never sleeping, I am often approached by man or maiden. I, cold as winter, give an answer to those grim-hearted ones: [as a result] adultery sometimes violates their marital obligation; this, however, is pleasing to my servant, that stupid man, and to myself, if I know anything and can tell my tale with effect.

In contrast to the faithful and alert Christian solver, the incautious Christian has not perceived the correct solution, and like the foolish man and woman ('medwisum secg oðþe meowle'), is oblivious (or at least credulous) to the devilish temptation inherent in his/her Christian life, a principal threat to salvation. For the devil-narrator, then, the audience of his riddle contains more people like *EBR* 4's man and woman to tempt. Just as he answered (*oncweþe*; 7a) them by betraying them into his perverted social order, so, if he tells his riddle with effect (*on sped*), he can seduce and betray more foolish Christians into his service. Thus, the devil-narrator is cast into his 'common role as tempter ... [and] the constant giver of bad advice'.¹⁷⁰ Just as the social order to which the devil belongs is a perversion of the ideal of heaven, the riddle-devil's tale (*spel*) is a perversion of the truth, a false tale concealed and disguised by a superficially cheerful, innocent and tantalising riddle:

Always active [and] bound with treasures, I must eagerly serve my hero, break my rest, noisily make it known that my lord entrusted a necklace to me. Often a man or woman went to greet me [when I was] weary for sleep: coldly, I gave an answer to those mean-minded ones. Sometimes, a warm branch breaks from the fastened ring, which is

¹⁷⁰ Woolf, 'Devil in Old English', p. 1 and p. 5. See also Margaret J. Ehrhart, 'Tempter as Teacher: Some Observations on the Vocabulary of the Old English "Genesis B"', *Neophilologus*, 59 (1975), 435-46.

nevertheless pleasing to my servant, an incompetent one, and likewise to me, if I know anything and may tell my story in words with effect.

Such an interpretation of *EBR 4* as I have expounded is indicative of the riddles' potential contribution to the *Exeter Book's* intentions of instruction for salvation, with special emphasis on the need for perpetual awareness of the devil's potential presence and penitential meditation. Thus, the Christian audience of *EBR 4* is reminded to be ever vigilant for the devil's constant threat to their morality and eternal life. The carefully chosen, suggestive language; the context of the *Exeter Book* with its attention to moral instruction; the form of the *EBR* as enigma giving primacy to the intellectual process of solving – of recognising the devil, rather than the solution 'devil' in and of itself – and the instructive parable-like discourse all contribute to the potential for *EBR 4* to be employed as a riddle for moral instruction, and it is through such moral instruction that this inscrutable riddle may be penetrated and made comprehensible.

2.4.2 *Concealing Spiritual Truth: Exeter Book Riddle 9*

An examination of *EBR 9* further illustrates the potential role for the *EBR* in the dissemination of Christian faith and its moral precepts, and their observation of Augustinian doctrine.

Exeter Book Riddle 9

Mec on þissum dagum deaden ofgeafun
 fæder ond modor; ne wæs me feorh þa gen,
 ealdor in innan. Þa mec an ongon,
 welhold mege, wedum þeccan,
 heold ond freoþode, hleosceorpe wrað
 swa arlice swa hire agan bearn,
 oþþæt ic under sceate, swa min gesceapu wæron,
 ungesibbum wearð eacen gæste.
 Mec seo friþe mæg fedde siþþan,
 oþþæt ic aweox, widdor meahte
 siþas assetan. Heo hæfde swæsra þy læs
 suna ond dohtra, þy heo swa dyde.

In these days father and mother deserted me for dead; the life spirit was not yet within me then. Then a kindly kinswoman covered me in garments, she fostered and cherished me, protected me in a sheltering robe, as graciously as if I was her own child; until, beneath the covering, among unrelated ones, I had become a great guest, as was my fate. Thereupon, the protector, kinswoman nourished me until I grew up, was able to perform journeys more widely. She kept fewer of her more precious sons and daughters because she did so. (1a-12b)

EBR 9 (solution: cuckoo) can be read allegorically, and, when stripped of its literary exterior shell of 'cuckoo', the inner truth of Christian faith may be found. Although Gregory Jember has proposed 'conception and birth', 'revenant', and 'soul' as solutions to *EBR 9*, it has generally been accepted that this riddle is uncomplicatedly referring to the cuckoo.¹⁷¹ Yet in the context of the *Exeter Book*, with its pervasive emphasis on the continual temptations of sin and devil that challenge every moral Christian, and the related emphasis on the need for every moral Christian to be persistently vigilant and to foster virtuousness, it is possible that *EBR 9* has another, religious and moral message. The first-person narrator of *EBR 9* is either the obvious cuckoo, or, read allegorically, may be the symbolic and enigmatic personification of sin.¹⁷² Such an allegorical reading of *EBR 9* is supported by the presence of three poems of the *Physiologus* in the *Exeter Book*, *The Panther*, *The Whale* and *The Partridge*, and the inclusion of *The Phoenix*. These early bestiary texts depict allegorically 'the mythical traits of a land-animal, a sea-beast, and a bird respectively, and deduc[e] from them certain moral or religious lessons'.¹⁷³ Further, the cuckoo may be allegorically interpreted in Alcuin's *Versus de Cuculo*,¹⁷⁴ and is referred

¹⁷¹ See *The Old English Riddles: A New Translation*, trans. by Gregory K. Jember (Denver: Society of New Language Studies, 1976) and Fry, 'Riddle Solutions', p. 22. The solution of cuckoo has been comprehensively argued by Dieter Bitterli in 'The Survival of the Dead Cuckoo: Exeter Book Riddle 9', in *Riddles, Knights and Cross-Dressing Saints: Essays on Medieval English Language and Literature*, ed. by Thomas Honegger, Variations Collection, 5 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 95-114.

¹⁷² I am indebted to Dr Jennifer Neville, who first suggested to me the possibility of reading *EBR 9* as an allegory for sin in the mode of later Medieval Bestiaries. Neville has proposed her own allegorical reading of *EBR 9* in a recent conference paper, 'Fostering the Cuckoo in *Exeter Book Riddle 9*', *London Medieval Society Spring Colloquium*, February 2005.

¹⁷³ *The Old English Physiologus*, ed. by Albert Stanburrough Cook, trans. by Albert Stanburrough Cook and James Hall Pitman, Yale Studies in English, 63 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1921; repr. Folcroft Library Editions, 1973), p. iii.

¹⁷⁴ See *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini*, I: Carmina Alcuini, ed. by Ernst Dümmler, (Zürich: Weidmann, 1964; first publ. Berlin, 1881), LVII.

to by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae*, a popular text throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁷⁵ Such a reading is also supported by Mercedes Salvador's persuasive argument that:

The Exeter Riddles' concern with animal lore might also be related to Benedictine teaching practices, since Bishop Æthelwold himself is said to have donated what seems to be an early version of a *Bestiary* – referred to in a book list as 'Liber Bestiarum' – to the abbey of St. Peter, Paul and Andrew at Peterborough. [...] In this light, the presence of the zoological descriptions found in the Old English *Physiologus* and in the Exeter animal section might be a vernacular attempt to adapt the didactic methods employed by continental Benedictine houses.¹⁷⁶

Salvador argues that a contemporary audience would have been aware of the potential 'allegorical dimension' of the ornithological series in the *EBR*, since such series often traditionally included didactic strategies and moralised discussions.¹⁷⁷

The allegorical reading of *EBR* 9 proceeds: sin is renounced by certain good and devout fathers and mothers – that is, the members, generally defined – of the church and is left as dead; that sin is 'dead' implicitly contrasts the eternal life which morality and Christianity offer. Sin, left for dead and without a life spirit, is 'merely an abstraction', a potential: sin may only 'live' with the soul's consent and must find a willing soul to foster it.¹⁷⁸ The riddle speaker's, or, sin's, passivity throughout the riddle indicates that sin needs the action of others to be transformed from an abstraction to a reality: sin itself is not active, but must be acted out by others. Thus, a kindly kinswoman ('welhold mæg'; 4a), possibly in ignorance and having given in to temptation, adopts sin and fosters it. The kinswoman is, allegorically speaking, a type of Everywoman, potentially representative of any Christian. Sin, living among unrelated ones (*ungesibb*; 8a), that is, virtues, becomes more dominant, and the kinswoman, inappropriately oblivious to the sin that pervades her life, continues to cherish and nourish sin, which journeys widely (11a) to tempt other good Christians. As a direct result of her cultivation of sin, she kept (*hæfde*; 11b) few

¹⁷⁵ See Isidori Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum*, ed. by J. P. Migne, vol. 82 (col. 0460A); XII.7; see also *Fontes*.

¹⁷⁶ 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context.'

¹⁷⁷ 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context.'

¹⁷⁸ Neville, 'Fostering the Cuckoo' (conference paper).

precious (*swæstra*; 11b) sons and daughters, that is, virtues. Like Everyman's Wealth and Friends, the implication here is that sin deserts the kindly kinswoman, perhaps at death, leaving her with few Good Deeds, virtues, to comfort her.¹⁷⁹ Read thus, *EBR 9*, like *EBR 4*, is a continuation of the warning and exhortation prominent throughout the *Exeter Book* to the unwary Christian that, kindly or gracious (*welhold*; 4a) though they may be, Christian morality requires perpetual vigilance. Strikingly, it should be noted that in *The Partridge*,

the partridge (like the cuckoo) broods the eggs of other birds. When they are hatched and grown, they fly off to their true parents. So men may turn from the devil, who has wrongfully gained possession of them, to their heavenly Father, who will receive them as his children.¹⁸⁰

Although the *Exeter Book's Partridge* text is too damaged to show this allegory firsthand, other versions of *The Partridge* do explicate it.¹⁸¹ It is possible, then, that *EBR 9's* cuckoo is the allegorical counterpart to, or inversion of, the partridge and that the similarities between the riddle and *The Partridge* (when intact) may have supported this riddle's allegorical undertones.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ *The Summoning of Everyman*, ed. by Geoffrey Cooper and Christopher Wortham (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1980), lines 463–83.

¹⁸⁰ Cook and Pitman, *Physiologus*, p. 22, n. 1.

¹⁸¹ Pitman reconstructs missing allegory of *The Partridge* text as: 'Strange is she, unlike all birds | In field or wood who brood upon their eggs, | Hatching their young. The partridge lays no eggs, | Nor builds a dwelling; but instead, she steals | the well-wrought nests of others. There she sits, | Warming a stranger brood, until at last | The eggs are hatched. But when the stolen chicks | are fledged, they straightaway fly to seek | Their proper kin, and leave the partridge there | Forsaken. In such wise the devil works | To steal the souls of those whose youthful minds | Or foolish hearts in vain resist his wiles. | But when they reach maturer age, they see | They are true children of the Lord of lords. | Then they desert the lying fiend, and seek | Their rightful Father, who with open arms | Receives them, as he long since promised them' (p. 23). Whilst the differences between this reconstruction and *EBR 9* are obvious, so too are the similar motifs and themes.

¹⁸² Cf. Salvador, who argues that, along with *EBR 10* (solution: barnacle-geese), *EBR 9's* cuckoo should be read as symbolising 'ungratefulness to diligent foster parents, an idea which probably had a special significance in the monastic context. With regard to the cuckoo, this bird has been regarded a traditional symbol of treason and ungratefulness in Anglo-Saxon literature, since it is said to betray its foster-mother by feeding on the legitimate nestlings', (as in Salvador's reading of Alcuin's 'Versus de Cuculo', and that 'in the context of the Benedictine reform those two birds might have been read as negative examples for brethren who were ungrateful to the Church (the foster-mother) as they were reluctant to adapt to the rule' ('Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context').

The language in *EBR 9* is carefully chosen, similarly to *EBR 4*. On three occasions phrases of concealment are used: ‘wedum þeccan’ (‘to cover’, ‘cover over’, ‘conceal with a covering’; 4b), ‘helosceorpe wraþ’ (‘to cover’, ‘conceal with a sheltering robe’; 5b) and ‘under sceate’ (‘beneath a covering’; 7a). Read allegorically, this riddle is correspondingly concerned with concealment. Firstly, concealment is inherent to allegory and riddle alike: the obvious answer of the cuckoo conceals the spiritual truth for which the moral Christian must search intelligently and diligently. Secondly, on a literal level, the nature of the cuckoo is synonymous with concealment: the cuckoo must conceal its true identity in order to infiltrate its adopted nest. Third, sin’s self-concealment: under the cover of virtue (the true sons and daughters of the kindly kinswoman) sin is disguised and may thus cunningly appropriate the place of virtue in the lives of inattentive and negligent Christians. This message finds confirmation in *The Whale*, in which a similar message is enunciated:

Se bið unwillum oft gemeted
 [...]

 Swa bið scinna þeaw,
 deofla wise, þæt hi drohtende
 þurh dyrne meaht duguðe beswicað,
 ond on teosu tyhtaþ tilra dæda,
 wemað on willan, þæt hy wraþe secen,
 frofre to feondum, oþþæt hy fæste ðær
 æt þam wærlogan wic geceosað.

That one is often encountered unintentionally [...] Such is the habit of evil spirits, the custom of devils, that they through secret strength deceive people associating with them and seduce them into the ruin of their more suitable deeds and lead them astray in delights so that they seek the angry ones, consolation from devils until there with that traitor they chose their constant dwelling-place. (4; 31b-37b)

In *The Whale*, the emphasis is placed on the deceptive nature of devils by the repetition of verbs concerning deception or seduction, and on the ill-preparedness of those Christians deceived. Thus, the devil is deceitful (*fæcne*; 71a) and cunning in his evil (*bealu cræftig*; 72b), and attacks those who do not suspect (*ne wenan*; 20b), the incautious, careless or unwary (*unwær*; 59a) Christian. Correspondingly in *EBR 9*, sin, disguised, deceives the kinswoman and ruins her virtues, her more precious offspring. The final concealment of

EBR 9 is that of the kinswoman herself for it is she who actively conceals the presence of sin in her life, covers over her sinful nature, and it is under her sheltering robe (*hleosceorpe*; 5b) and covering (*sceate*; 7a) that sin is able to burgeon and grow; because she fosters and cherishes ('heold ond freopode'; 5a) sin and nourishes it, sin is able to perform journeys to tempt other Christians. Perhaps we may even understand this sentence to mean that the kinswoman has wrapped sin up in the trappings of her gracious (*arlice*; 6a) life: she makes sin appear desirable to others and it thus 'travels' to them. Again, *The Whale* asserts a similar message:

Swa biþ gumena gehwam,
se þe oftost his unwærlice
on þas lænan tid lif bisceawað,
læteð hine beswican þurh swetne stenc,
leasne willan, þæt he biþ leahtrum fah
wið wuldorcýning.

Thus it is for every man who most often contemplates his life unwarily in this transitory time, he allows himself to be deceived by a sweet scent, a false purpose, so that he is stained with sins against the King of Glory. (62b-67a)

That is, the consequence for those Christians who are unwary, and who *allow* themselves to be deceived by the devil is estrangement from God and salvation. In this passive grammatical construction, *The Whale*, like *EBR 9*, attributes some blame to the Christian who is deceived by the devil and sin. The Christian who is unwary and unaware of the perpetual temptation of sin and the devil is complicit in accepting the devil's seduction: ignorance is no defence since ignorance is condemned for its tacit participation in moral collapse. There are three moral lessons of *EBR 9*, then, which correspond to the allegories of concealment in the riddles: in the Augustinian understanding, Christian truth must be sought under the concealment of the everyday; so too must the temptations of sin and the devil, which can be concealed from the unmindful Christian; and the vigilant Christian must eternally seek out and expel the sin in their lives, to which

they inevitably succumb, for the sake of their own soul and for the sake of other Christian souls.¹⁸³

2.5 ‘*Double Entendre*’ Riddles in the Monastic Context: Tales of Temptation

Not all the *EBR* are as easily defined as morally regulatory as those riddles already discussed: *EBR 11* (solution: wine) and *EBR 27* (solution: mead) may be unproblematically identified as proscriptive, and *EBR 4* (solution: devil) and *EBR 9* (solution: cuckoo) may be understood as conveying moral instruction, yet those riddles grouped into a subset commonly labelled ‘*double entendre*’ or ‘obscene’ are much less easily recognised as riddles of moral regulation. The definition of what constitutes a *double entendre* riddle is subjective. Barley says that ‘obscene’ or *double entendre* riddles ‘describe the relevant object in terms of part of the human body and its use is thereby transformed into a depiction of the sexual act’.¹⁸⁴ Yet scholars have classified riddles as *double entendre* even when there is no reference to the human body or the sexual act. The occasional inclusion of *EBR 46* (solution: Lot and his family) in this subset of ‘obscene’ riddles illustrates this possibility, since, although *EBR 46* requires knowledge of the story of the incest of Lot and his daughters (Genesis 19:30-38), it is not obscene or *double entendre* in and of itself. Generally speaking, however, the ‘obscene’ or *double entendre* riddles are easily and properly defined as those riddles which make reference to sexual behaviours and activities, either as their primary, literal meaning or secondary, implied meaning.

Thus far no division has been made between a specifically monastic audience and a secular one, since it seems most likely that the riddles’ audience may have been both lay *and*

¹⁸³ For a comparison, see the *Exeter Book* poem, *Almsgiving*, in which the narrator advises one to ‘ealle toscufeð / synna wunde, sawla lacnað’ (‘remove all wounds from sin [and] heal souls’; 8b-9b).

¹⁸⁴ Barley, ‘Structural Aspects’, p. 160.

ecclesiastical; in addition, the division between these two sets is arbitrary and unnecessary. Indeed, the riddles are well suited to bridging any ostensible ecclesiastical-secular divide because they embody multiplicity of meaning and thus manifold levels of interpretation. That is, the riddles may simultaneously impart different kinds of moral regulation to monastic and lay audiences since the riddle form may encode various meanings. Nevertheless, even this justification may be unnecessary: many ecclesiasts and monks had intimate connections with secular people and ideals, if only because they once participated in the secular world,¹⁸⁵ or because Anglo-Saxon church culture was permeated by secular ideals and lay clerics.¹⁸⁶ Thus, although the *Exeter Book's* audience can be safely assumed to have been Christian, there is no evidence to suggest that such an audience need necessarily have been homogenous in either its social position and role, or in its knowledge of and exposure to Christianity and Christian doctrine, since the *Exeter Book* poems deliberately appeal to a heterogeneous audience: to lay and church people alike. Patrick Wormald's conclusions regarding this phenomenon and the audience of *Beowulf*, are worth stating in full: Anglo-Saxon Christianity

had been successfully assimilated by a warrior nobility, which had no intention of abandoning its culture, or seriously changing its way of life, but which was willing to throw its tradition, customs, tastes and loyalties into the articulation of the new faith, and whose persisting 'secularity' was an important condition [...] Does the composition by a literate poet, who was probably, therefore, a cleric, of a great secular poem about the pagan kings of the past [i.e. *Beowulf*] still seem anomalous in a society where monasteries function partly as the royal court, and partly as royal family property, where bishops go to war, where Gospel-books [...] look like secular treasures, and where the adventures of saints resemble so closely those of heroes.¹⁸⁷

The *EBR*, like *Beowulf*, are comprehensible in their combination and assimilation of the everyday, the secular, and the heroic, with the religious, the spiritual, and the morally regulatory. As Barley further argues:

¹⁸⁵ See above, p. 157, n. 30.

¹⁸⁶ P. Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf", and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by R. T. Farrell, BAR British Series, 46 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), pp. 32-95.

¹⁸⁷ Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf", and Conversion', pp. 57-58.

it is at first surprising how many of the riddles of the *Exeter Book* involve the moral values of the heroic system [...] The reason for these constant allusions lies simply in the fact that [...] it [the heroic moral code] was, moreover, the only ethical system the Anglo-Saxons had to think with. Even the Church had been forced to come to terms with it. God had become not so much the *frea*, the lord of the household, as the *dryhten*, the war-lord.¹⁸⁸

The *EBR*, then, cannot be considered as composed or performed only for clerics and monks, or only for lay people. Rather, they impart a message to both.

It is, however, important to note that the *double entendre* riddles' blatant sexual overtones may have delivered one moral message to monks and ecclesiasts who were, at least nominally chaste and unmarried, and a different one to a sexually active and possibly predominantly married secular audience. This is not to say that a monastic audience would not have identified and comprehended the 'secular' moral regulation, or *vice versa*, since the ambiguity of the riddle potentially allows both moral messages to be understood simultaneously, but rather, that the influence and significance of the regulation – the exhortation and instruction – may have been targeted at specific groups (monastic and clerical, or secular and lay) of the audience. I will consider each audience, ecclesiastical and secular, in turn, beginning with the question: what and how did these 'obscene' and *double entendre* riddles contribute to the moral integrity and character of the ecclesiasts who listened to, or read, them?

It is a problematic if undeclared assumption of some Anglo-Saxon scholarship, particularly concerning these 'obscene' riddles, that Anglo-Saxon society was sexually repressed. For example, Smith's argument implicitly equates the tendency of Anglo-Saxon writers to 'downplay and censor the role of sexuality [... and their] strong preoccupation with the moral dangers of sexual activity' with a sexually repressed society.¹⁸⁹ Such an assumption leads to the unjustified categorisation of the 'obscene' riddle's sexual solution as 'wrong'

¹⁸⁸ Barley, 'Structural Aspects', pp. 171-72.

¹⁸⁹ Smith, 'Humour in Hiding', p. 83.

and ‘harmful’: the ‘obscene’ solution is not the correct one; it is morally dangerous. Thus, Williamson argues that the sexual solution is the ‘wrong’ one,¹⁹⁰ and Gleißner similarly states that the correct (non-sexual) solution is ‘harmless’, whereas the incorrect (sexual) solution is indecent.¹⁹¹ As Tanke expresses it, ‘the double-entendre riddle in Old English is a game of rhetorical seduction and censorship’;¹⁹² that is, seduction to the ‘wrong’ and sexual solution, and censorship by the assertion of the ‘correct’ and non-sexual one.¹⁹³

Smith contends that in a monastic context the *double entendre* riddles functioned as a mode of sexual censorship. He states that ‘in a form of private meditation individuals reading the riddles could have enacted their rejection of bodily desire by eschewing the sexual solution in favor of the innocent one’.¹⁹⁴ Eric Stanley posits a similar argument: he asserts that the *double entendre* riddles were a moral test for the monks. Stanley unconvincingly visualises a scenario where the monks, reading as directed by the *Regularis Concordia*, confront the ‘obscene’ riddles and display their moral fibre and pure minds by not only overlooking or not acknowledging the ‘obscene’ meaning, but further, not even perceiving the existence of its obscenity in the first place. That is, the riddles teach the monks that even when there is a blatantly sexual or morally sinister solution, the pure mind will not be able to realise or consider this – that mind should always see the non-sexual, the moral.¹⁹⁵ Alternatively, but equally as unconvincingly, Rulon-Miller argues that since Anglo-Saxon society was repressed, the *double entendre* riddles provide a moment of sexual liberation and fantasy. She does not accept the possibility of a secular audience for the riddles and contends that in ‘a tenth-century monastic community [...] this riddle

¹⁹⁰ Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 299; my emphasis.

¹⁹¹ Reinhard Gleißner, *Die ‘Zweideutigen’ Altenglischen Rätsel des Exeter Book in Ihrem Zeitgenössischen Kontext*, Regensburger Arbeiten zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 23 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984), p. 14; translated by and cited in John W. Tanke, “‘Wonfeax Wale’: Ideology and Figuration in the Sexual Riddles of the Exeter Book”, in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections*, ed. by Britton Harwood and Gillian Overing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 21–42 (p. 28); my emphasis.

¹⁹² Tanke, ‘Wonfeax Wale’, p. 29.

¹⁹³ Cf. Magennis, ‘No Sex Please’, pp. 16–17.

¹⁹⁴ Smith, ‘Humour in Hiding’, p. 86.

¹⁹⁵ I discussed Professor Stanley’s ideas with him in November 2003; he has not published his theory.

[*EBR* 12] was a text shared “Between Men”, men who lived in the homoerotically charged atmosphere of a medieval monastery, and who traded erotic badinage as a way to covertly express homosocial desire’.¹⁹⁶ That is, Rulon-Miller identifies the monastic role of the ‘obscene’ riddles not as morally motivated, but as a form of sexual liberation and verbal pornography.

Rulon-Miller’s argument that the *EBR* stimulate ‘the male fantasizing imagination’ is oversimplified; as Phillip Pulsiano asserts:

it is not, I would argue, simply a matter of seeing such scenes as finally pornographic: to argue that the narratives simply provide licit sites for the privileging of male voyeurism and sexual aggression offers a rather superficial estimate of male readers as brutish and perverse.¹⁹⁷

Certainly Smith and Stanley come closer to a role for the *double entendre EBR* in a monastic context. Yet, as noted, Stanley’s contention is also unconvincing. His vision of the abbot eagerly watching over his reading monks looking for signs of sexual arousal or even sexual understanding (for example, in the monks’ blushing at the riddles), does not seem reason enough for the inclusion of the ‘obscene’ riddles in this edificatory codex. Especially considering the context of the *Exeter Book* within the tenth-century monastic reform,¹⁹⁸ in a moral climate which was suppressing all ecclesiastical sexuality, it seems improbable that such lewdness would have been condoned for this reason: the risk of monks reading the riddles unnoticed or with an undiscovered sexual understanding (that is, if they didn’t blush or weren’t obviously physically aroused) seemingly outweighs the

¹⁹⁶ Nina Rulon-Miller, ‘Sexual Humour and Fettered Desire in Exeter Book Riddle 12’, in *Humour in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. by Wilcox, pp. 99–126 (p. 101).

¹⁹⁷ ‘Blessed Bodies: The Vitae of Anglo-Saxon Female Saints’, *Parergon*, NS 16 (1999), 1–42 (p. 14). Although Pulsiano is talking about the sexually explicit scenes in hagiography, I would argue that his point is well made for the riddles as well. Further, Rulon-Miller’s argument for homoeroticism is not borne out by the moral values depicted in the ‘obscene’ riddles, which, as I argue in an article that I am currently preparing for publication, use condemnatory language to describe non-heterosexual sexual encounters.

¹⁹⁸ As is argued by Mercedes Salvador in her forthcoming article ‘Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context’, and her ‘The Key to the Body: Unlocking Riddles 42–46’, in *Naked Before God: Uncovering the Body in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Benjamin C. Withers and Jonathon Wilcox, *Medieval European Studies*, 3 (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2003), pp. 60–96 (pp. 61–62); see also Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, and its review by Richard and Fiona Gameson (see above, p. 152, n. 7).

potential moral edification. Smith comes closest to what may be the most logical conclusion for the inclusion of the *double entendre* subset. His suggestion that in their reading of these riddles the monks ‘enacted their rejection of bodily desire’ is a compelling one, although his requirement that this be a ‘private’ act, and one in which the monk would ‘eschew’ the sexual solution needs refinement.¹⁹⁹

The *double entendre* riddles have been considered as tangential to mainstream Anglo-Saxon social mores; they have been sidelined because scholars see them as atypical in a sexually repressed society. However, if the assumption that Anglo-Saxon society was sexually repressed is discarded, then the cornerstone upon which Smith’s, Stanley’s and Rulon-Miller’s arguments are built dissolves: it becomes impossible to distinguish which solution, the sexual or the non-sexual, is ‘right’ (innocent) or ‘wrong’ (harmful), or even whether *either* of them is ‘wrong’, a contention supported by the lack of solutions to the *EBR*, which, as previously noted, explicitly disallows one absolute solution. In other words, both sexual and non-sexual solutions may be ‘right’, correct, or at least necessary. With this possibility comes the associated prospect that the sexual solution is neither ‘harmful’ nor ‘misleading’. That is, it does not ridicule the moral law: if the sexual solution is not ‘wrong’ then neither must it be sinister or concealed by the ‘correct’ and ‘harmless’ solution since it is potentially correct and harmless. It is possible, then, that the ‘obscene’ *EBR* may not be points of anomaly or liberation in otherwise repressed society. If there is no preconceived belief in the existence of sexual repression then the *double entendre* riddles have the potential to contribute to an understanding of Anglo-Saxon sexual morality: they can further modern hypotheses of Anglo-Saxon perceptions of sexuality and sexual roles.

The *double entendre EBR* do make reference to overt sexual behaviours and activities. In terms of riddle theory, it appears almost certain that such reference crosses the threshold

¹⁹⁹ Smith, ‘Humour in Hiding’, p. 86.

of the socially acceptable into the realm of the taboo. Hamnett's definition of the relationship between the taboo and the riddle is that riddles are a procedure by which the taboo is categorised; riddles reinforce (rather than undermine) 'the definitions and relations', that is, the taboo, 'which they fictitiously call in question'.²⁰⁰ The *double entendre* riddles can be understood in this way. As riddles which openly discuss sexual activity, the 'obscene' *EBR* 'fall under taboo'; however, they pose no threat to Anglo-Saxon society since the self-imposed moral regulation that they inspire reinforces the *status quo*. As John Tanke asserts, the classifications of sexual experience found in the *EBR* 'exert an ideological force whose aim is not simply to represent but to construct a sexual order [...] the riddle aims not to do battle with the [moral] law, but rather to exploit and thereby affirm it'.²⁰¹

Acknowledging the regulatory power of the riddle and taboo may direct the ways in which one can approach the previously stated question of what and how these 'obscene' and *double entendre* riddles contributed to the moral integrity and character of the ecclesiasts who listened to, or read, them. We should acknowledge that the riddles do not *necessarily* direct their audience away from their sexual content, since that sexual content potentially plays a correct and harmless role in teaching morality about sexual activity. That is, rather than 'eschewing' the sexual connotations of the riddles, it is possible to confront that sexual dimension and to engage with the suggestions which its inclusion implies. Thus, although Smith argues it in the context of repression and liberation, he is right to state that the 'obscene' riddle 'must, necessarily, promote both [solutions; ...] the sexual solution is always present'.²⁰²

In a monastic or ecclesiastical context, the *double entendre* riddles may have allowed the public and physical performance of pseudo-hagiographical temptation and resistance. In

²⁰⁰ Hamnett, 'Function of Riddles', p. 389.

²⁰¹ Tanke, 'Wonfeax Wale', p. 22 and p. 29.

²⁰² Smith, 'Humour in Hiding', p. 87.

hagiographies, a situation of temptation, in which a saint is tempted by some worldly or devilish lure (sexual or otherwise), is constructed in order that the saint could *perform* his or her sanctity and virtuousness and be publicly recognised as being able to resist even the most insidious temptations. As Magennis asserts, the ‘whole purpose’ of hagiographical writing ‘is to allow the demonstration of sanctity’.²⁰³ The public performance or ‘outward action’ of sanctity or ‘inward resolution’²⁰⁴ through the resistance of temptation is attested to in both Old English poetry and prose. *Guthlac A* is illustrative of this tendency. We are told that Guthlac is tempted by devils:

Oft þær broga cwom
 egeslic ond uncuð, ealdfeonda nið,
 searocræftum swiþ; hy him sylf hyra
 onsyn ywdon
 [...]
 He gecostad wearð
 in gemyndigra monna tidum.

Terror often came there, dreadful and strange, the ancient foes’ enmity, powerful in treacheries; they revealed their own aspect before him. [...] He was tempted during the times of the ones who remember [that]. (140b-43a; 153b-54b)

Guthlac then verbally and publicly asserts his allegiance to God and his rejection of such graphic temptation to his fellow believers:

Ðær he dryhtnes lof
 reahte ond rærde; oft þurh reorde abead,
 þam þe þrowera þeawas lufedon,
 godes ærendu, þa him gæst onwrah
 lifes snyttru, þæt he his lichoman
 wynna forwyrnde ond woruldblissa,
 seftra setla ond symbeldaga,
 swylce eac idelra eagena wynna,
 gierelan gielplices.

There he instructed and promoted the Lord’s glory; often he proclaimed by means of speech God’s message to those who loved the morality of the martyrs, when the Spirit had revealed to him life’s wisdom, so that he denied his body pleasures and worldly

²⁰³ Hugh Magennis, ‘Warrior Saints, Warfare, and the Hagiography of Ælfric of Eynsham’, *Traditio*, 56 (2000), 27–51 (p. 29).

²⁰⁴ Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100–1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 11.

bliss, pleasant residences and feast days, moreover, the eyes' vain joys and ostentatious dress. (159b-66a)

The narrator's emphasis on the public and verbal nature of Guthlac's resistance – he proclaims it with speech (*reorde abead*; 160b) to others – makes Guthlac's morality didactic: his denial of temptation both confirms his sanctity and reveals to others the manifestations of his morality. In *Andreas*, after his extreme torture at the hands of the Mermedonians and temptation by a devil from hell, Andrew similarly verbally and publicly announces his resistance by declaring aloud God's glory:

þa cwom wopes hring
þurh þæs beornes breost, blat ut faran,
weoll waðuman stream, ond he worde cwæð

There came a hoarse sound of lamentations proceeding out from the man's breast, a stream of tears flowed, and he spoke with words. (1278b-80b)

The importance and didactic power of Andrew's declaration of God's power is confirmed, ironically, by the tempting devil, who replies to it by saying to the gathered public: “Sleað synnigne ofer seolfes muð | folces gewinnan! Nu to feala reordaþ” (“Strike him in the mouth, the sinful enemy of the people! Now he speaks too much”; 1300a-1b): the public performance of Andrew's sanctity is a strong and, for the devil, threatening, model to those assembled. Even Mary of Egypt publicly performs her sanctity by reliving her rejection of sexual temptation in her retelling of it to Zosimus.²⁰⁵ Returning to *Guthlac A*, the narrator tells us that Guthlac:

Oft eahtade, (wæs him engel neah),
hu þisse worulde wyna þorfte
mid his lichoman læsast brucan.
No him fore egsan earmra gæsta
treow getweode
[...]
Swa sceal oretta a in his mode
gode compian, ond his gæst beran
oft on ondan þam þe eahtan wile
sawla gehwylcre þær he gesælan mæg.

²⁰⁵ See Chapters 13-19 of *The Old English Life of Saint Mary of Egypt*, ed. by Hugh Magennis, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), pp. 82-102.

Often he deliberated – the angel was near him – as to how it was required of him to least enjoy with his body the pleasures of this world. His belief did not hesitate before the horror of wretched spirits. [...] So must a warrior always fight for God in his mind and often stir his spirit to enmity against him who will persecute each soul where he may fetter it. (336a-40a; 344a-47b)

This statement indicates the need for constant vigilance against temptation; more importantly, it implies that the *miles Christi* must actively fight against temptation and must recognise the terror of wretched spirits in order to assert an enduring and certain faith. In other words, the warrior of God must be tempted in order to perform his/her sanctity in the mode of Guthlac, Andrew and Mary of Egypt. In Ælfric's *Life of St Eustace*, Christ offers Eustace the choice:

Hwæðer is ðe leofre þe ðu nu onfó þa costnunga . þe near þinum ende . Þa cwæð eustachius . Ic halsige drihten hælend buton hit unaræfnedlic sy to ofer-cumenne . þa þing þe us synd fram ðe forestihtode læt us nu onfon þa costnunge

Whether it is dearer to you to receive the temptations now, or near to your end? Then Eustace said, 'I implore you, Lord Christ, unless it is not permissible to overcome the things which are fore-ordained for us by you, let us now receive the temptations. (*ÆLS* XXX; 131-35)

In other words, temptations are Christ's tests for Eustace; Eustace embraces his temptations as a way in which to perform his sanctity and his faith in Christ.

It can be assumed that most monks living in Anglo-Saxon monastic communities did not endure the sorts of trials of faith and purity endured by the saints: torture, exile, temptation by devilish apparitions. Yet, as has been argued, temptations were a way in which the holy could perform their righteousness and publicly demonstrate their moral fibre: 'one might [...] legitimately see the hagiographic model as providing an ideal venue for exploring the mental world of temptation'.²⁰⁶ Perhaps, then, the *double entendre* riddles, functioning in such a hagiographic mode, were vehicles by which the monks, or other clergy, could be tempted and, like the holy saints, demonstrate their resistance to

²⁰⁶ Antonina Harbus, 'A Mind for Hagiography: The Psychology of Resolution in "Andreas"', in *Germanic Texts and Latin Models: Medieval Reconstructions*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra, Germania Latina IV, Mediaevalia Groningana, 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 127-40 (p. 128).

such temptation. In the monastic context, in mimicry of the saints, the monks could actively and publicly perform and validate their holiness.

The discussion above of *EBR 4* (solution: devil) and *EBR 9* (solution: cuckoo) indicated that one of the didactic morals of the *EBR* was to warn Christians to be wary and vigilant against temptation. The example of the kindly kinswoman of *EBR 9* teaches that ignorance of temptation is morally fraught: the good Christian must always be aware of temptation, and its potential moral corruption, in order to fight it effectively. In this context, the monk-solver of the *double entendre* riddle *must* recognise and embrace the sexual solution in order to understand its moral value. As Boryśłowski argues,

if we were to apply to them [the *double entendre* riddles] the rhetoric of morality, they might [...] be understood as representations of the satanic control over human mind: these riddles may seem to be saying that lust, cupiditas, one of the cardinal sins, may be found even there where it is least expected.²⁰⁷

In other words, these *double entendre* riddles embody the very temptation that all good Christians must battle: they are the lustful manifestations of bodily temptation, mimicking the devilish temptations which torment Guthlac and Mary of Egypt. By recognising the sexual solutions of these riddles, the monks could publicly resist the temptation of them to fantasise about sexual acts. These riddles, then, function antithetically to Rulon-Miller's contention that:

the *wale* [of *EBR 12*] whose genitals the riddler imagines he has exposed and whom he can 'watch' with his peers, temporarily provides a liberating release from the taboo of homosocial desire. Indeed, as they 'watch' the *wonfeax wale* [dark-haired Welsh woman] masturbate, the riddler and his auditors might also imagine their own masturbation, and, perhaps, their mutual masturbation.²⁰⁸

Rather, 'instead of being regarded as a sample of pornographic material deliberately concealed in the obscure context of a riddle collection, this series could have been designed to be read allegorically, presenting a warning against the dangers of the body',²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Boryśłowski, *Old English Riddles*, p. 151.

²⁰⁸ Rulon-Miller, 'Sexual Humour', p. 123.

²⁰⁹ Salvador, 'The Key to the Body', p. 63.

so that the sexually deviant temptation embodied by the ‘obscene’ *EBR* facilitated a monk’s enactment of pseudo-hagiographical trial and triumph. More readily than imagining a monk’s fantasies of mutual masturbation, we can imagine, in the mode of the *Life of St Mary of Egypt*, the monk acknowledging the sexual temptations of the *EBR* and struggling ‘on þam gewilnunga þære manðwæra and ungesceadwisra wildeora lustum’ (‘against the lusts of appetites of the placid and irrational wild animals’; *Life of St Mary of Egypt*, 19:617-18).²¹⁰ And when the monk, like Mary of Egypt, was tempted by the sexual riddles ‘me eallunga þræscende to þære hæmetes [geþohtas ongunnon] þonne geseah þyllice geþohtas on astigan, þonne astrehte ic me sylfe on eorðan and þa wargas mid tearum ofergeat’ (‘when I felt such thoughts arising in me, which completely tormented with the thought of intercourse, then I stretched myself out on the ground and drenched my cheeks in tears’; 19:645-48).²¹¹ That is, the monk physically and publicly demonstrates his temptation. Sexual temptation ‘became the privileged window through which the monk could peer into [and make public] the most private reaches of his soul’.²¹² Such temptation allowed the monk to display his faith in God’s saving grace, so that like Guthlac, he ‘sette | hyht in heofonas, hælu getreowde (‘placed his hope in the heavens, trusted in salvation’; *Guthlac A*, 434b-35b): his morality and sanctity is made manifest by embracing such temptation – understanding and acknowledging the sexual content of the riddles – and by declaring his faith, in the model of the saints.

²¹⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of the *Life of St Mary of Egypt* are taken from Magennis’s edition, *Life of St Mary of Egypt*; all modern English translations are also Magennis’s. All further references to this *Life* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

²¹¹ See also the *Life of St Mary of Egypt*, 19:630-41.

²¹² Peter Brown, ‘Late Antiquity – East and West: The New Marital Morality’, in *A History of Private Life I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. by Paul Veyne, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 297-311 (p. 300).

2.6 '*Double Entendre* Riddles in the Secular Context: Sexual Morality, Marital Bliss

Although a few scholars are determined to see the riddles in a purely monastic context,²¹³ or to separate their roles into monastic edification and secular entertainment,²¹⁴ in light of the *Exeter Book's* construction of a general and universal audience, it is important to acknowledge the possibility that the *Exeter Book*, and the *EBR* specifically, had (at least partially) a secular, lay audience. 'The riddles were not performed for just one audience with one frame of reference', rather, they were performed both for 'men in the mead halls and in the monasteries'.²¹⁵ Thus, although it is possible that the *double entendre* riddles were morally proscriptive in the monastic sense and context as texts of temptation, this does not preclude them being morally regulatory in another way in a secular context. As already argued, the *double entendre* or 'obscene' *EBR* may contain moral injunctions aimed at a specifically monastic audience by positing literary and fictive scenarios of pseudo-hagiographical temptation. However, to the *EBR's* universal, common audience, such a moral message would have been inappropriate and, indeed, invalid. The question thus arises as to what morals these *double entendre* riddles regulated to such an audience.

It has long been acknowledged that the *double entendre* riddles contribute to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon sexual activity and sexuality, although consensus as to what understanding their insights give us remains elusive (as evidenced by the arguments of Smith and Rulon-Miller discussed above). It is less well acknowledged that the *double entendre* riddles may have contributed to collective contemporary Anglo-Saxon social knowledge by prescribing certain ideal and moral models of behaviour. As *EBR 11*

²¹³ For example, see Gleißner, *Die 'Zweideutigen' Altenglischen Rätsel*; Rulon-Miller, 'Sexual Humour', p. 101. In my discussion with Professor Stanley in November 2003, he also noted his belief in a monastic audience for the riddles.

²¹⁴ See, Smith, 'Humour in Hiding', pp. 81ff.

²¹⁵ Nelson, 'Rhetoric of the Riddles', p. 421.

(solution: wine) and 27 (solution: mead) *proscribed* drunkenness as immoral behaviour by their use of condemnatory language,²¹⁶ it is possible to witness the *prescription* of moral behaviour in the *double entendre* riddles by closely analysing their vocabulary. Analysis of two of the *double entendre* riddles reveals the positive construction of sexual and emotional knowledge in approved marital relations: since marriage was the primary social institution in Anglo-Saxon England in which men and women related on both a sexual and an emotional level, the construction of an ideal marriage in the *double entendre* riddles allows us new insights into heterosexual sexual and emotional interaction.

EBR 20 has the non-sexual solution of 'sword'. Although some critics consider it a *double entendre* riddle, it does not conform to the classic form of *double entendre* riddle, which contains the sustained construction of both a sexual and non-sexual solution.²¹⁷ Instead, the sexual reference in *EBR 20* is observable only in the second half of the riddle and is just that: sexual reference, not *double entendre*. That is, the riddle contains explicit reference to sexual activity; its sexual references do *not* construct a double meaning.²¹⁸ As Marie Nelson describes it, solving *EBR 20* as a *double entendre* riddle

subtly violates what Tupper called the 'riddle sense', a way of thinking that requires taking the form of the riddle into account. We do not find in *Riddle 20* the simple description plainly intended to lead to two different solutions.²¹⁹

In other words, the sexual reference in *EBR 20* is integral to the non-sexual solution. Further, the sexual reference is not 'obscene': although it refers to procreation, which necessarily implies sexual activity, the riddle itself does not develop the sexual allusion. Nevertheless, *EBR 20* does conform to the general definition of 'obscene' riddles outlined above, in that it makes reference to sexual behaviour as its primary meaning.²²⁰

²¹⁶ See discussion above, pp. 175-80.

²¹⁷ John W. Tanke, 'The Bachelor-Warrior of Exeter Book Riddle 20', *Philological Quarterly*, 79 (2000), 409-27 (p. 409).

²¹⁸ Tanke, 'The Bachelor-Warrior', p. 409.

²¹⁹ Marie Nelson, 'Old English Riddle 18(20): A Description of Ambivalence', *Neophilologus*, 66 (1982), 291-300 (pp. 291-92).

²²⁰ See definition above, p. 205.

The sexual reference of *EBR 20*, evident in the second half of the riddle, can be divided into two sections. In the first section, lines 17b-27a, the first-person riddle narrator poignantly articulates a sense of loss accompanying his lack of offspring. The second section, lines 27b-35b, is concerned specifically with marriage and reads:

Ic wiþ bride ne mot
 hæmed habban, ac me þæs hyhtplegan
 geno wyrneð, se mec geara on
 bende legde; forþon ic brucan sceal
 on hagostealde hæleþa gestreona.
 Oft ic wirum dol wife abelge,
 wonie hyre willan; heo me wom spreceð,
 floceð hyre folmum, firenaþ mec wordum,
 ungod gæleð. Ic ne gyme þæs compes

With a bride I am not allowed to have marriage [or: sexual intercourse], but he [my lord] yet withholds from me this joyous play, he who formerly placed me in fetters; therefore I must enjoy the treasure of heroes unmarried. Often I, foolish with wire ornament, distress a wife, diminish her joy [or: purpose]. She shames me verbally, beats her hands, reviles me with words, yells evil. I do not care for this combat. (27b-35b)

Scholars have interpreted this closing passage of *EBR 20* variously. In the first sentence, disagreement arises because of the riddle's language, which is ambiguous: *hæmed* denotes 'marriage', 'cohabitation', or 'fornication' and *hagostealde* denotes 'unmarried state', 'celibacy', or 'bachelorhood'.²²¹ That is, the translator must decide between choosing a translation, and thus interpretation, of the riddle which enhances its sexual content so that the riddle-narrator/subject is not allowed sexual intercourse and must enjoy his treasure in celibacy, *or*, the scholar may follow a less sexual path and understand the lines to mean 'not allowed marriage' and 'enjoy unmarried'. The latter interpretation has been adopted here. Yet, adopting one or other interpretation, either sexual or marital, is an over-simplification that requires refinement: it is a limitation of the translation from Old

²²¹ In the following discussion, Old English word definitions are taken principally from the *DOE* and Andreas Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage in Old English* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986). Secondary reference has been made to *TOE*, *BT*, and Clark Hall.

English into Modern English that requires this choice between marital and sexual emphasis to be made at all.

Both *hæmed* and *hagosteald* belong to the diverse and complex Old English vocabulary of marriage and sexual activity. Andreas Fischer, in his philological study of the Old English terms for marriage, wedding and engagement, says:

The major words for ‘wedding’ and ‘marriage’, *gifta*, *gēmung* and *sinscipe*, are monosemous. Most of the other [marriage terms], however, are polysemous with additional (sometimes primary) meanings that belong to semantic fields other than that of ‘engagement, wedding and marriage’.²²²

The principal adjoining semantic field to marriage terms is that of ‘sexual intercourse, adultery and fornication’, witnessed by the stems *wīf-*, *hām-*, *sam-*, *gader-*, *ðēod-*, *gement-*, *gemæn-*, *gemæc-*, *gemāna*, *nēawest*.²²³ A few examples may serve here to illustrate this semantic trend: *wiffæst* translates as ‘bound to a wife’, ‘married’ but *wifgemana* connotes ‘intercourse with a woman’; *gaderscipe* connotes ‘matrimony’ but *gaderwist* connotes ‘intercourse’; *gemænung* indicates ‘marriage’ but *gemæennes* indicates ‘intercourse’; in terms of agent nouns, *gebedda* is a ‘husband’ or a ‘wife’, but is also a ‘bedfellow’. The verb *hæman* follows this pattern, denoting ‘to have intercourse’, ‘to cohabit’ and ‘to marry’; *hæmed* (the word used in *EBR 20*) takes on all these senses of ‘fornication’, ‘cohabitation’ and ‘marriage’.²²⁴ The compounds and derivatives of the stem *hām-* imply that *hæmed* is regularly used to indicate both sexual activity and marriage: *hæmedceorl* denotes a ‘married man’; *hæmedgemana* denotes ‘matrimony’; *hæmedlac* denotes ‘sexual intercourse’; *hæmedscipe* denotes ‘cohabitation’ or ‘wedlock’; *hæmedþing* denotes ‘coition’, ‘cohabitation’ or ‘marriage’; *hæmedwif* denotes a ‘married woman’, and *hæmere* denotes a ‘bedfellow’. As Margaret Clunies Ross has noted that ‘the morally neutral Old English verb *hæman*, “to have sexual intercourse”, and its cognate noun *hæmed* describe sexual intercourse which

²²² Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 148.

²²³ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, pp. 148–49.

²²⁴ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 70.

breaches the law [fornication] as well as that which conforms to it [marital]'.²²⁵ What this vocabulary indicates is that the separation of ideas of marriage from those of sexual activity when understanding *hæmed* is erroneous and obscures the fact that the Old English word intimately links marriage *with* sexual activity. This is unsurprising, since Christian Anglo-Saxon society designated marriage as the only socially permissible relationship in which a sexual union could take place.²²⁶ The vernacular vocabulary, then, emphasises that a component of Anglo-Saxon marriage was sexual intercourse, and that sexual intercourse could (in terms of Anglo-Saxon social ideals) only occur in a marital relationship. This semantic association also perhaps accounts for the fact that *hæman* ('to have intercourse') is 'basically neutral and only receives a pejorative colouring from the situational or verbal context it appears in'.²²⁷ In other words, the neutrality of *hæman* as a sexual term implies a relationship to marriage, since intercourse outside marriage nearly always takes on a pejorative or condemnatory sense.²²⁸

A similar semantic trend also applies to *hagosteald*. According to Bosworth Toller, the basic meaning of *hagosteald* is 'one living in the lord's house, not having his own household [...] a young person', where the meanings 'unmarried', 'bachelorhood' and 'celibacy' are necessary extensions of such youth and dependence. *Hagosteald* compounds confirm these extended senses of *hagosteald*, since *hagostealdbad* denotes 'unmarried state'; *hagostealdlic* denotes 'virgin'; *hagostealdman* denotes 'bachelor', and *hagostealdnes* denotes

²²⁵ Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Past and Present*, 108 (1985), 3-34 (repr. in *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings*, ed. by David A. E. Pelteret, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 6 [New York and London: Garland, 2000], pp. 251-88), p. 19. Fischer further points out that *hæman* translates 'a whole series of Latin verbs meaning "to have intercourse" such as the neutral (like *nubere*) *coire* and *dormire* or the pejorative *adulterare*/*i*, *fornicare*/*i* and *moechari*' (*Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 67).

²²⁶ Magennis, *Images of Community*, pp. 37-38.

²²⁷ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 67. Fischer thus disagrees with Clunies Ross and BT who, he argues, make central the distinction between the 'neutral and pejorative meaning' (p. 67). Clunies Ross argues that although *hæmed* and its compounds were only 'morally neutral [...] most commonly used to refer to all sexual relationships that came to the notice of the law' in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period; 'in the later legal codes', *hæmed* 'came to be used of relationships which the church regarded as illicit' ('Concubinage', p. 21).

²²⁸ See Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, pp. 67-75.

‘virginity’. These compounds emphasise the interrelation of the two concepts of the unmarried and celibate states: socially speaking, being unmarried necessarily implied celibacy, as celibacy implied being unmarried.

In *EBR 20*, then, both the marital and sexual senses are present simultaneously in the words *hæmed* and *hagosteald*: the riddler may have deliberately chosen words with a dual marital-sexual meaning in order to emphasise both the sexual element of marriage, and the marital necessity for sexual activity. If we accept that the riddler is referring both to marriage *and* to conjugal sexual intercourse, then his designation of *hæmed* as *hyhtplega* (‘joyous play’; 28b) is particularly interesting. If the use of *hæmed* constructs marriage as a sexual as well as a social and personal experience, then the use of *hyhtplega* constructs an image of marriage as potentially both joyous and playful, sexually and non-sexually speaking. It is not incongruous to expect marriage, or sexual intercourse, to be described as ‘play’ or ‘sport’: *brydlac*, *hæmedlac* and *wiflac* all share the same *-lac* suffix denoting ‘play’ or ‘sport’ (distinct from the *-lac* suffix denoting ‘gift’, ‘present’ evident in *wedlac*). *Brydlac*, then, denotes ‘marriage ceremony’ and ‘marriage to Christ’ (literally, ‘bride play’), *hæmedlac* indicates ‘coition’ (literally, ‘sexual play’) and *wiflac* translates as ‘intercourse’ or ‘fornication’ (literally, ‘woman play’). The designation of *hæmed* as *plega* ‘play’ in this riddle, then, is not surprising. Thus, part of the ‘joyous play’ of marriage in *EBR 20* is the sexual activity; further, however, the institution of marriage itself is also designated as ‘joyous play’. It is symptomatic of the scholarly tendency to ignore positive marital experience in Anglo-Saxon England that has prompted some critics to argue that the use of *hyhtplega* proves that *hæmed* and *hagosteald* are sexual references, unrelated to marriage.²²⁹

The final sentence of *EBR 20* is also illuminating. Nina Rulon-Miller illustrates her contention that the riddles ‘reveal an attitude to female sexuality that is more malevolent

²²⁹ For example, Tanke says ‘*hæmed* in line 28a clearly means ‘sexual intercourse,’ inasmuch as it is immediately varied by *hyhtplega* (joyful play)’ (‘The Bachelor-Warrior’, p. 417).

than benevolent', by reading the 'distressed wife' of *EBR 20*'s final lines as 'a 'scold', who insults, chides, and speaks evil to the celibate sword for his avoidance of women'.²³⁰ According to Rulon-Miller, *EBR 20* 'resonates with the fear of an insatiable woman [...as] a threat to male chastity' and displays 'patristic misogyny'.²³¹ Similarly, Wim Tigges asserts that, 'the subject [the sword] wanders off the manuscript giving a scolding woman tit for tat or at least shrugging off her usual complaints'.²³² Kevin Crossley-Holland is particularly imaginative, saying, 'the conflict between the beautiful, chaste sword and the scold, resentful at her husband's lack of attention, is vivid and amusing'.²³³ None of these interpretations is particularly complimentary to the distressed wife, nor are they supported by the text itself. Rulon-Miller's assumption that the wife chides the sword for his avoidance of women seems unsubstantiated: there is no textual evidence to suggest that the wife desires the sword sexually. Similarly, there is no textual evidence to support the idea that the sword is the wife's husband, as Crossley-Holland argues, and none to support John Tanke's argument that the sword has committed a sexual crime against the wife. Primarily, it is the use of *willa* in line 33a that has led these scholars to interpret these lines as they have. The noun *willa* may mean 'purpose', 'will', 'desire'; however, scholars, in an attempt to see the wife as sexually active, have reinterpreted the sense of *willa* from desire in terms of will or purpose, to desire in sexual terms, that is, lust. The noun *willa*, however, also means joy, delight or pleasure. Since the narrator has recently described marriage (including its sexual component) as joyous play (*hyhtplega*), it seems possible that the *willa* referred to here is a similar joy – the wife's marriage.

Such a reading is supported when the riddle-narrator derides himself by calling himself foolish (*dol*; 32a), a word used in other *EBR* to describe immoral as well as imprudent subjects. For example, as has been discussed, it is used in *EBR 11* (solution: wine) of

²³⁰ Rulon-Miller, 'Sexual Humour', p. 109.

²³¹ Rulon-Miller, 'Sexual Humour', pp. 111-12.

²³² Wim Tigges, 'Snakes and Ladders: Ambiguity and Coherence in the Exeter Book Riddles and Maxims', in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, ed. by Aertsen and Bremmer, pp. 95-118 (p. 102).

²³³ Crossley-Holland, *Exeter Book Riddles*, p. 93.

foolish drunkards.²³⁴ We are told in *EBR 20* that the narrator condemns himself as foolish (*dol*) because he often ‘wife abelge, | wonie hyre willan’ (‘distress[es] a wife [and] diminish[es] her joy’; 32b-33a). It seems incongruous for the sword to label himself foolish if the lines are understood as Rulon-Miller, Crossley-Holland and Tanke propose. A more satisfactory reading is that the sword is self-condemnatory because he has diminished the wife’s joy – her marriage – presumably by killing her husband. In lines 8b-9a, the sword confesses to often ‘gæstberend | cwelle compwæpnum’ (‘execut[ing] a living soul with battle-weapons’): thus the sword has already attested to his potential to kill. Indeed, the three occasions on which the formula ‘oft ic’ (‘often I’) is used all refer to the sword’s destructive power. The first, as mentioned, is at line 8b; the second proceeds, ‘oft ic oþrum scod | frecne’ (‘often I fiercely crush others’; 15b-16a); the third is when he often distresses a wife. That is, the sword’s admission that he often executes and oppresses men is formulaically connected to distressing a wife by diminishing her joy: killing her husband.

Further evidence for reading *willa* as referring metonymically to marriage comes when the wife shames the sword: ‘heo me wom spreceð’ (‘she shames me verbally’; 33b). Since there is no shame in celibacy and chastity, why would the wife declare the sword’s shame if this was what these lines meant? On the other hand, it *was* a socially shameful deed to break up a lawful marriage, as is made clear in the ‘Handbook for Use of a Confessor’ in which it is stated that ‘Se man þe æwe brycð. fæste vii gear ii dagas on wucan on hlafe *and* on wætere, sy hit wif si hit were’ (‘the one who breaks a lawful marriage, let him fast 7 years for 3 days in the week on bread and on water, whether it is a woman or a man’; IV, 171-72). That is, the sword has committed a shameful deed by depriving the wife of her joy, her husband and marriage.

²³⁴ See discussion above, p. 176.

The wife beats her hands (*'floceð hyre folmum'*; 34a) in grief or anger.²³⁵ Flanked, as this clause is, by the wife shaming the sword and then reviling it with words (*'firenaþ mec wordum'*; 34b), it is obvious that *EBR 20*'s wife is not applauding the sword or rejoicing in its behaviour; rather, her hand-beating is a form of ritual or public mourning, a performance of grief. This point has been argued comprehensively by Tauno Mustanoja in terms of funeral lamentation.²³⁶ Hand-clapping or beating is an intrinsic aspect of ancient lamentation rituals, and so, like Aeschylus' Libation Bearers who 'come | to convey libations; my hands strike me sharp blows' (strophe 1; 22-23) in sorrow,²³⁷ *EBR 20*'s wife publicly announces her grief, and emphasises the sword's shame, with her clapping.

The sword-narrator ends the riddle repentant since he *'ne gyme þæs compes'* ('does not care for that combat'; 35b), neither the literal killing which deprives the wife, nor the combat which the wife wages as a consequence. In *EBR 20*, then, marriage is a joy and a delight and something to be longed for by the individual participants, the bride, the wife, the would-be husband sword. Further, marriage is semantically associated with sexual activity in this riddle, and part of the joy of marriage comes with its inherent association with sexual intercourse. In this sense, *EBR 20* is 'underlain by a reassuring social morality which does not deny or repudiate sexuality but gives it a place in everyday life'.²³⁸ Simultaneously, the moral prescription confining sexual activity to the marital relationship is confirmed in the vocabulary, and the sacredness of marriage is also confirmed in the sword's shame at violating the marital union, not sexually, but mortally.

²³⁵ *DOE*, s. v, 'flocan'.

²³⁶ Tauno F. Mustanoja, 'The Unnamed Woman's Song of Mourning over Beowulf and the Tradition of Ritual Lamentation', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 68 (1967), 1-27 (esp. pp. 13-27).

²³⁷ Aeschylus: *Oresteia*, *The Choephorae* ('The Libation Bearers'), trans. by Hugh Lloyd-Jones (London: Duckworth, 1970; rev. 1979).

²³⁸ Magennis, 'No Sex Please', p. 18.

The explicit connection between sexual activity and marriage has parallels in Old Icelandic literature. Unnr's lawful divorce of Hrútr in *Brennu-Njáls Saga* due to his inability to satisfy her sexually and to fulfil his sexual duty as a husband is an infamous example. Despite Unnr's affection and sexual desire for Hrútr, satisfactory sexual intercourse was a necessity in the sustained viability of their marriage: Hrútr's impotence renders the marital bond null.²³⁹ Conversely, Anglo-Saxon society provides few such explicit examples of the need for sexual compatibility in marriage. It is possible to read Hrothgar's need to join his wife Wealhtheow in bed as a muted example. As Beowulf awaits his imminent meeting with Grendel, we are told of Hrothgar that 'wolde wigfruma Wealþeo secan | cwen to gebeddan' ('the war-lord wished to seek out the queen, Wealhtheow, for his bed-fellow'; 664a-65a). Two points are worthy of note here. Firstly, Hrothgar is called a *wigfruma* ('war-lord') on his way to bed and his wife. He is not condemned, shamed, or de-masculinised for his behaviour; rather, he is given a laudatory epithet (he is also called *kyningwuldor*, 'glorious king', in line 665b). Hrothgar's is not unexpected behaviour in a war-lord for *Beowulf's* Anglo-Saxon audience; it is not incongruous or ironic.²⁴⁰ Secondly, twenty-three lines before this episode we are told of Wealhtheow's complementary behaviour: after hearing Beowulf's speech the narrator chooses to tell us that Wealhtheow 'to hire frean sittan' ('went to sit by her lord'; 641b). That is, the narrator chooses to show us a picture of marital union, companionship and support, by neatly complementing Wealhtheow's choice to go to, and be with, her husband, Hrothgar, with his reciprocal choice to go to, and be with, her.

The Hrothgar-Wealhtheow bed scene raises another important semantic trend that contributes to the construction of an approved marriage. As discussed, terms for marriage and for sexual activity are semantically linked. However, this linkage is further extended

²³⁹ See *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 12 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1954), Chapter VII, p. 24.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Brian McFadden, who has argued that this scene signifies the feminisation of Hrothgar, suggesting that 'power has moved to the women's quarters' ('Sleeping after the Feast: Deathbeds, Marriage Beds, and the Power Structure of Heorot', *Neophilologus*, 84 [2000], 631-48 [p. 633 and p. 635]).

by a third semantic field, which adjoins both sexual activity and marriage. The semantic field of ‘togetherness and companionship’ shares the stems *sam-*, *gader-*, *ðeod-*, *gemana* and *neawest* with *both* marriage and intercourse terms. For example, the base meaning for *gemana* is ‘companionship’, ‘society’, ‘fellowship’, glossing or translating the Latin *communio*, *societas*, *consortium*, but *gemana* may also denote ‘marriage’, and it may also denote ‘sexual intercourse’ (Latin *concubitus*). The semantic field of ‘togetherness and companionship’ further adjoins the marriage semantic field with such examples as *gefera* (‘associate’, ‘comrade’, ‘wife’), *ferscipe* (‘community’, ‘society’, ‘fellowship’, ‘companionship’, ‘wedlock’) and *gemæcca* (‘companion’, ‘mate’, ‘consort’, ‘husband’ or ‘wife’) which derives from the stem *gemæc-* (‘equal’, ‘companionable’, ‘well-matched’, ‘suited’).²⁴¹ It similarly adjoins the sexual activity semantic field, for example, with *gemænnes* (‘fellowship’, ‘community’, ‘union’, ‘sexual intercourse’). Semantically, then, we can map out the Anglo-Saxon ideal of marriage as being constituted in part by sexual activity and in part by companionship. As Fell notes:

References to the relationship between retainer and lord in Anglo-Saxon society almost always put the stress on friendship [...] In the same way we regularly find the terms *freond*, ‘friend’, and *freondscype*, ‘friendship’, in texts describing the relationship of lovers, or of husband and wife [...] In Old English, then, *freond* is used of a relationship of ‘loving’ or ‘liking’ [...] It is not always clear whether the implications are those of desire rather than companionship or vice versa.²⁴²

I would argue that the implications are *both* desire (sexual activity) *and* companionship, since the semantic inter-dependence of these words allows us to see a complex relationship where sexual activity is limited to the marital relationship and where that sexual activity was integral to marriage; where sexual activity created a sense of companionship and where companionship was inherent to sexual union; and finally where companionship was foundational to marriage and where marriage created companionship.

²⁴¹ This vocabulary supports Jack Goody’s observation that ‘a significant feature of [marriage in] Western societies’ is “marriage tending towards the companionate” (Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983], p. 129; Goody quotes Peter Laslett from *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations: Essays in Historical Sociology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], p. 13).

²⁴² Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 68.

EBR 61 (solution: helmet) confirms this semantic nexus by constructing the marital relationship as a union of sexual companionship:

Exeter Book Riddle 61

Oft mec fæste bileac freolicu meowle,
 ides on earce, hwilum up ateah
 folmum sinum ond frean sealde,
 holdum þeodne, swa hio haten wæs.
 Siðþan me on hreþre heafod sticade,
 niþan upweardne, on nearo fegde.
 Gif þæs ondfengan ellen dohte,
 mec frætweðne fyllan sceolde
 ruwes nathwæt. Ræd hwæt ic mæne.

Often a beautiful woman, a wife, enclosed me firmly in a coffer, sometimes she removed me with her hands, and gave me to her husband, gracious prince, just as she was commanded – then he stuck his head into my breast, upwards from below, into constricted confines: if the courage of the adorned receiver of me was worthy, something or other hairy must satisfy me. Advise of what I speak. (1a-9b)

Unlike *EBR 20*, *EBR 61*'s *double entendre* is sustained throughout the riddle and there is the simultaneous development of a sexual solution, vagina, and a non-sexual one, helmet.²⁴³ The sexual activity of the wife and her lord in *EBR 61* is clearly sexual intercourse. It is possible to see the wife in this riddle as a passive bedfellow since she is sexually available to her husband on his command: it is sexual intercourse, or, in keeping with the sexual solution of the *double entendre*, her vagina, which the wife offers on command to her lord in lines 1-4. Yet, it is important to scrutinise further the action in the context of moralisation. The wife here gives (*sellan*; 3b) her vagina to her husband – that is, her sexuality is hers to present to her husband. But the verb *sellan* may denote more than simply 'to give': it often takes the extended meaning 'to give into the keeping of', 'to entrust'. Interestingly, the act of marrying is often semantically related to the act of entrusting: *ætfastan*, *befæsten* and *giefan* signify both 'to commit', 'to entrust', 'to give' as well as 'to pledge or give (someone) in marriage', 'to betroth'. That is, in *EBR 61*, the

²⁴³ I accept that the sexual solution is a vagina, despite some scholarly unease with this idea. See Sarah L. Higley, 'The Wanton Hand: Reading and Reaching into Grammars and Bodies in Old English Riddle 12', in *Naked Before God*, ed. by Withers and Wilcox, pp. 29-59 (p. 49 and p. 55).

wife's act of sexual entrusting parallels the act of marital entrusting so that an audience may again perceive the inherent links between sexual activity and marriage: the language of the riddle allows us to see the marriage relationship at work.

The wife sexually *entrusts* herself into the marital relationship with her husband, as she has been entrusted to him by the marriage act. She is obedient to her husband in that she pays her 'conjugal debt' on his request. Her husband, however, has a duty to his wife; that is, her obedience and sexual availability are not the only morals encoded in this riddle. In line 7 we are told that the wife will engage in intercourse with her husband '*gif þæs ondfengan ellen dohte | mec frætwedne*' ('if the courage of the adorned receiver of me was *worthy*'; 7a-8a, my emphasis); that is, if the husband is worthy of his wife. Whilst the practical manifestation of what that worthiness entails is absent (perhaps a good reputation, as when *ellen* is used in *Beowulf*), the riddle implies that a husband has a duty to be worthy, however that worthiness might be performed, to repay his wife's obedience and sexual availability.

Further to the construction of marriage that *EBR 61* offers when interpreting its sexual solution, the riddle also provides us with an insight into marital domesticity in a reading of its non-sexual solution, helmet. It describes a wife looking after her husband's armour (storing it in a coffer) and then assisting him in dressing by removing the helmet from the coffer and offering it to her husband. Although no words of affection are used to portray the action of giving and receiving described here, it provides a rare glance into domestic intimacy. Similarly, we glimpse loving domesticity in the Frisian wife's marriage in *Maxims I*:

Leof wilcuma

Frysan wife, þonne flota stondeð;
biþ his ceol cumen ond hyre ceorl to ham,
agen ætgeofa, ond heo hine in laðað,
wæsceð his warig hrægl ond him syleþ wæde niwe,
liþ him on londe þæs his lufu bædeð.

Dear is the welcome one to his Frisian wife, when his ship stands; his ship is come and her husband, her own food-giver, [is] home; and she invites him in, washes his dirty clothes and gives him fresh garments, gives him on land, what his love requires. (94b-99b)

The marriage described here explicitly has its foundations in love and devotion. Paralleling the moment of domestic companionship portrayed in *EBR 61*, the Frisian wife cares for her husband's clothes. Similarly parallel is the emphasis on the husband's duty to his wife: the riddle-husband must be worthy of his wife; the *Maxims*-husband must provide for his wife. The marriages that these two poems envisage are ones of physical reciprocity.

EBR 20 and *61* prescribe marital behaviour through the construction of an idealised marriage. Initially I argued that some riddles (like the alcohol riddles, *EBR 11* and *27*) proscribed immoral behaviours (excessive drunkenness) by employing condemnatory language. In *EBR 61* the wife and her husband, sexually active in their marital relationship, are described with laudatory epithets: she is a glorious lady (*freolic*, 1b; *ides*, 2a) and he is a gracious prince (*holdum þeodne*; 4a). If the purpose of condemnatory language in the *EBR* is to *proscribe* behaviour, then the corollary purpose of laudatory language in *EBR 61* is to *prescribe* behaviour, to urge its audience to similar conduct to that of the riddle-wife and her husband. In other words, *EBR 61* recommends that a wife should restrict her sexuality to the pleasure of her husband, but be sexually available to him at his request; she should trust her husband and do as he directs. Yet a husband has duties and responsibilities to his wife in return: he should have courage and be worthy of his wife; he should satisfy and fulfil her, at least sexually.

Other *Exeter Book* poems express related sentiments, in line with the sense portrayed in *EBR 20* and *61*, and *Maxims I*. In Cynewulf's ending to his hagiographical poem, *Juliana*, he implores St Juliana to help him after death. He describes death in the metaphoric terms of the dividing of his soul from his body, saying:

Me gedælað deorast ealra,
 sibbe toslitað sinhiwan tu,
 micle modlufan.

The dearest of all things shall separate from me, the wedded couple shall tear asunder their relationship, their great heart's love. (697a-99a)

These lines, most probably not in the Latin source for the Old English *Juliana* but an innovation of Cynewulf,²⁴⁴ express the emotional aspect of the marital relationship: marriage here is synonymous with great love. The wife in *The Wife's Lament* mourns the loss of her love and perhaps refers to marital sexual intercourse when she laments that she, unlike her friends, is neither beloved or occupying her, possibly marital, bed ('leofe lifgende, leger weardiað'; 34).²⁴⁵ The husband of *The Husband's Message* lacks for nothing pleasurable if he has his wife: 'Nu se mon hafað wean oferwunnen; nis him wilna gad [...] gif he þin beneah' ('Now that one has overcome [his] woes, there is no lack to him of desirous things [...] if he possesses you'; 43b-47b). Such glimpses of Anglo-Saxon marriage, when coupled with a new reading of marriage in *EBR 20* (solution: sword) and *61* (solution: helmet) and a broader appreciation of the nexus surrounding the marriage semantic field, should persuade us to re-evaluate the unqualified understanding of Anglo-Saxon marriage as the dry and unemotional experience of, as Fischer puts it, 'a business deal; [or...] "marriage by purchase"', at least in terms of the moralised marriage.²⁴⁶ As *EBR 20* exemplifies, these riddles actively prescribe marriage as the institution within which love should be expressed and sexual intercourse may be enjoyed through the vocabulary which they utilise; as *EBR 61* illustrates, the riddles recommend sexual marriage as both moral and normal – the ideal is for marital consummation and wifely obedience. In this sentiment, then, the riddler echoes traditional Pauline doctrine: 'uxori vir debitum reddat

²⁴⁴ The closest Latin source to that used by Cynewulf has been edited by Michael Lapidge in 'Cynewulf and the "Passio S. Iulianae"', in *Unlocking the Wordbord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. by Mark Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 147-71 (pp. 156-71). See also Richard North, 'Metre and Meaning in "Wulf and Eadwacer": Signý Reconsidered', in *Loyal Letters: Studies on Mediaeval Alliterative Poetry and Prose*, ed. by L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), pp. 29-54 (p. 35).

²⁴⁵ Magennis, 'No Sex Please', p. 19.

²⁴⁶ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, pp. 19-20.

similiter autem et uxor viro' ('let the husband render the [conjugal] debt to his wife: and the wife also in like manner to the husband'; 1 Corinthians 7: 2-3), and also 'mulieres viris suis subditae sint sicut Domino quoniam vir caput est mulieris sicut Christus caput est ecclesiae' ('Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife; as Christ is the head of the church'; Ephesians 5:22-23). In his moralisation of marriage, characterised by sexual relations and wifely obedience, the *EBR* riddler is doctrinally correct and reiterating biblical morality.

2.7 Conclusion

Patrick Conner's argument that the *Exeter Book* was written at Exeter and that the codex comprises three distinct 'booklets', each of which points to discrete moments of Exeter's cultural and religious development over the twenty years from circa AD 950, is not entirely persuasive.²⁴⁷ However, importantly, his work does acknowledge Exeter's development into a fully reformed house, and thus argues for its involvement in the Benedictine Reform movement.²⁴⁸ Whilst his contention that the *Exeter Book* reflects Exeter's general movement towards reform is doubtful because it remains impossible to prove conclusively that the codex was written at Exeter, his thesis does emphasise the points of connections between the reform and some of the poetry in the codex. Like the works of Mercedes Salvador and Michael Drout, Conner's work has opened the discussion of the *Exeter Book* and its purpose in its tenth-century reform context.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ See *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, esp. Chapters 5 and 6. For a concise evaluation of Conner's work, see Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', and the review of Conner's *Anglo-Saxon Exeter* by Fiona and Richard Gameson in *Notes and Queries*, 42 (1995), 228-30.

²⁴⁸ *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, esp. Chapter 6; see also his 'Exeter's Relics, Exeter's Books', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 117-56. The latter work is a substantial article defending his argument against criticisms such as Gameson's.

²⁴⁹ Salvador, 'Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context'; Drout, *How Tradition Works*.

Whilst the *Exeter Book* is not exclusively religious in theme and subject, most of its poems are didactic and moralising in tone in line with its reform context: the majority of its texts prescribe morality or proscribe immorality, both explicitly and implicitly. Since the *Exeter Book* should be read within its tenth-century context and the *Exeter Book* riddles should be read within their manuscript context, it must be acknowledged that at least some of the *EBR* may be considered to be working towards a concomitant goal of moral reform and regulation. As Mercedes Salvador concludes, ‘the study of the thematic organization of R[iddle]s 1-40 [...] suggests that their compilation was governed by an evident didactic intent which was most likely in accordance with the educational plans of the Reform’.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, a survey of the *EBR* as a group indicates that they defy unqualified classification as moralistic texts; the diversity of subject, tone, and, indeed, form, renders the riddles difficult, if not impossible, to describe categorically. Yet some riddles, such as the wine and mead riddles (*EBR* 11 and 27) do indicate that their riddler understood their potential for encoding and affirming accepted moral sentiments. These riddles, by giving a moral value to drunkards as *dol* (foolish), proscribe drunkenness and reiterate the moral sentiment found elsewhere in the extant Anglo-Saxon sources. The form of their implicit proscription also echoes the proscriptive moral regulation found in the penitentials and law-codes discussed in Chapter 1. These particular riddles *proscribe* immoral behaviour and the immorality of drunkenness is the focus of their attention. They are only implicitly *prescriptive* through the logical progression from the acknowledgement that the proscription is the ‘what not to do’, to the understanding that the contrary behaviour, sobriety, is moral and valued behaviour.

Whilst not all of the *EBR* lend themselves to moral sentiment like *EBR* 11 and 27, *EBR* 4 (solution: devil) and *EBR* 9 (solution: cuckoo) are examples of riddles which encode morality in different ways. *EBR* 4 is not straightforwardly proscriptive in the sense that the alcohol riddles are; rather, its moral message is intrinsic to the riddle itself and its

²⁵⁰ Salvador, ‘Latin Tradition and Benedictine Context’.

clues and thus solution *are* the moral message: the morality embedded in *EBR 4* is only explicable through the complex intellectual experience of solving the riddle. The allegorical reading of *EBR 9* is validated by other Bestiary-type poems in the *Exeter Book*: *The Phoenix*, *The Whale*, *The Panther* and *The Partridge* introduce the fundamental purpose of the *Physiologus* to interpret ‘metaphysically, morally, and, finally, mystically the transcendent significance of the natural world’.²⁵¹ Such texts signal the rectitude of reading at least some of the bird and animal riddles allegorically. Whilst a fundamental difference between the *Exeter Book’s Physiologus* texts and *EBR 9* is that the former explicitly announce their allegory,²⁵² the language of concealment which pervades *EBR 9* perhaps signifies that the ultimate concealment in this riddle is of its spiritual and allegorical truth.

The riddles that have most belied their manuscript context are the *double entendre* or ‘obscene’ riddles. Yet, even these riddles have the potential to fulfil a moral and regulatory purpose. In a monastic setting, they may have facilitated the demonstration of moral strength rather than moral knowledge *per se*. Through their ability to represent temptation, they may have directed the performance of morality. In a secular setting, these riddles regulated a particular positive view of marriage and marital sexuality. Through their exploitation of specific Old English marital vocabulary, they construct an moral and approved marriage as one that is sexual. This sentiment closely follows the conventional Pauline doctrine which prescribes the payment of the conjugal debt (marriage should involve sexual relations), and legitimises sexual relations within marriage (marriage is the only legitimate institution in which sexual intercourse may occur). It is important to note, then, that these *double entendre* riddles embody a different form of moral regulation: prescriptive moral regulation. They indicate that the construction and regulation of morality in Anglo-Saxon England was not simply the *proscription* of the

²⁵¹ *Physiologus*, trans. by Michael J. Curley (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. xv.

²⁵² For example, after describing the panther’s attributes, the poet says, ‘Swa is dryhten god’ (‘Just as is the Lord God’; 55a).

immoral: it was also *prescription* of the moral. Whereas the penitentials, law-codes and some of the riddles constructed how not to act and what not to do for the late Anglo-Saxons, *EBR 20* (solution: sword) and *EBR 61* (solution: helmet), and texts like them, described the ideal of morality by valuing certain behaviours as positive and by recommending their imitation.

Such prescriptive moral regulation is the cornerstone of hagiography, since hagiographies construct, through the description and performance of sanctity, the ideal morality. In Chapter 3, continuing the focus on prescriptive regulation and on the ideal marriage and marital sexuality, I will analyse Ælfric's version of the *Life of St Agnes*. In this text, it becomes obvious that Ælfric, whilst acknowledging the view of marriage and marital sexuality propounded in these *double entendre* riddles, imagines and idealises a radically different, yet in some ways analogous, concept of the marital relationship within his prescriptive hagiographic form.

Chapter 3

Morality, Orthodoxy and Ideal: Ælfric on Marriage

The previous chapters were concerned firstly to determine the nature of moral regulation in late Anglo-Saxon England, and secondly to examine some texts which contributed to projects of regulation during that period: penitentials, law-codes, and riddles. In those chapters, I ascertained that moralisation, or moral discourse, originated from both the secular and the religious spheres; that the mechanisms of moral regulation reveal the nexus of religious and secular power, and that it is thus useful to associate the regulation of morality with the more generic domain of ‘those in power’, a group which transcends any religious-secular divide. I established that a characteristic of moral regulation in late Anglo-Saxon England is that it was both proscriptive and prescriptive: texts, such as laws and penitentials, proscribed immoral behaviour thereby both regulating morals and implicitly creating models of moral behaviour by negative examples; on the other hand, some texts, such as some of the *EBR*, constructed narratives of moral behaviour, prescribing morality by creating models to emulate.

The combination of the collusion of church and state and the presence of proscriptive and prescriptive regulation has two main implications for the character of moral regulation in late Anglo-Saxon England. Firstly, it means that moral regulation was endemic: it pervaded even texts which have not usually been regarded as imparting any social moral content, such as the Old English riddles. This is not, of course, to say that every text in Anglo-Saxon England had a regulatory agenda, but rather that, when considered in the

context of moral discourses, texts are ideologically charged. Secondly, the distinction between morality (as a religious concern) on the one hand, and social ideals and values (as secular, cultural concerns) on the other, is not one evident in late Anglo-Saxon texts. The modern, semantic differentiation between ‘morals’ and ‘values’ is blurred, if not eliminated, since these were virtually indistinguishable in Anglo-Saxon society, where morals were inculcated as social values and ideals by both religious and secular pro- and prescriptions.¹

I ended Chapter 2 with an examination of the moral content of two *Exeter Book* Riddles in respect to marriage. Those comments indicated that the *Exeter Book* riddler’s approved marriage was traditionally Pauline in nature. The aim of this chapter is to continue analysing that intersection between marriage and moral regulation. Thus, this chapter examines the moral regulation of marital relationships as they were constructed in the *Life of St Agnes*, while Chapter 4 examines the married saints’ *passiones*, found in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*. An analysis of these texts helps to temper the ‘undue emphasis upon the utilitarianism of medieval marriage which has dominated historical accounts of sexual relationships in the Middle Ages’.²

3.1 Ælfric’s Marital ‘Orthodoxy’

It is an oft repeated statement that Ælfric was, first and foremost, concerned with orthodoxy and the dissemination of orthodoxy in line with the aims of the Benedictine Reform.³ He was concerned with moralising and teaching orthodoxy and proper Christian

¹ *Values* are ‘the principles or standards of a person or society, the personal or societal judgement of what is valuable and important in life’, that is, a social construction; *morals* are those principles ‘relating to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, desires, or character of responsible human beings’, that is, a frequently religious construction (*OED*).

² Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 5.

³ See for example, Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 14-15; E. G. Whatley, ‘Late Old English

practice to lay and monastic congregations.⁴ So pervasive was this concern that Ælfric's theological and doctrinal orthodox inheritance has been debated at length.⁵ In different and separate discussions, the Catholic Church's attitude to marriage and its effort to define Christian marriage has also been repeatedly examined.⁶ Less well documented is the nexus between these two lines of inquiry: Ælfric's perception and reconstruction of his received church position on marriage has been given relatively little attention;⁷ it is this nexus that is in part the concern of this chapter. For the most part, the critical works which address both Ælfric and the theology of marriage are unpublished doctoral theses,⁸

Hagiography, ca. 950-1150' in *Hagiographies: Histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550*, ed. by G. Philippart, Corpus Christianorum, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 429-99 (p. 436). Mary Clayton argues for 'how consistently and deeply he [Ælfric] had absorbed the principles of the peculiarly Anglo-Saxon type of Benedictine monasticism under which he lived' which necessarily affected his interpretation of orthodox doctrine ('Hermits and the Contemplative Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives And Their Contexts*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, SUNY Series in Medieval Studies [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996], pp. 147-75 [p. 147]). See also Rachel S. Anderson, 'Saints' Legends', in *A History of Old English Literature*, ed. by R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 87-105 (pp. 94-95). As Janet Bately expresses it, Ælfric was 'a product of the cultural renaissance resulting from the Benedictine reforms' (Janet Bately, 'The Nature of Old English Prose', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; repr. 1996], pp. 71-87 [p. 72]).

⁴ Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, pp. 85-88. See also Stephen Morrison, 'The Figure of "Christus Sponsus" in Old English Prose', in *Liebe – Ehe – Ehebruch in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. by Xenja von Ertzdorff and Marianne Wynn, Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie, 58 (Gießen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1984), pp. 5-12 (p. 9).

⁵ See most notably Lynne Grundy, *Books and Grace: Ælfric's Theology* (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1991), and Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*.

⁶ See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 25-39. For some examples see: James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Christopher N. L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London and Boston: Faber, 1989; repr. 1991); Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London and New York: Verso, 1991); Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Liesl Ruth Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints in Ælfric's "Lives of the Saints": The Translation of an Ideal' (unpublished doctoral thesis, the University of Toronto, 2000).

⁷ As Clare A. Lees asserts, 'Ælfric's treatment of spiritual marriage, indeed his attitude to marriage in general, has yet to receive detailed examination' (*Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing and Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures, 19 [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999], p. 151).

⁸ For example: Marc D. Glasser, 'Marriage in Old and Middle English Saints' Legends' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 1978); Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints'; Robert Kimmons

the focus of which are on virginity, with marriage as a secondary or peripheral concern. My discussion of Ælfric's attitude to marriage will necessarily explore his attitude to virginity since much of his construction of marriage is inseparable from his construction of virginity. However, with its primary focus on marriage, this chapter seeks to redress the imbalance present in most recent scholarly works which focus primarily on virginity.⁹

Lynne Grundy emphasises Ælfric's theological dependence on Augustine of Hippo:

it is no exaggeration to say that almost all the ideas contained within Ælfric's sermons are to be found in Augustine, who was either their originator or their refiner. Augustine is the direct source of much of what Ælfric teaches. [...] Equally important, Ælfric is the inheritor of a set of ideas which are recognizably Augustine's.¹⁰

Peter Jackson concurs with Grundy's conclusions and emphasises the orthodox line which Ælfric took in his approach to translating and adapting Augustine for his Anglo-Saxon audience. Concerning marriage specifically, Jackson says:

[Ælfric's] views on marriage are highly orthodox, consistent, frequently repeated and unoriginal: lifelong virginity, though perhaps not wholly appropriate to the laity, is none the less preferable to marriage; sexual activity within marriage is only to be engaged in at the prescribed seasons and for the purpose of procreation, and couples must revert to continence after the wife can no longer conceive; separation for any purpose, even to enter the religious life, is permissible only by mutual consent.¹¹

Jackson's presentation of Ælfric's 'highly orthodox' interpretation of Augustine's doctrine on marriage over-simplifies the position both of Ælfric and of Augustine. Jackson assumes that Augustine had a single position concerning marriage and that that position reflected the orthodox view of the church. However, as discussed in the Introduction, Augustine was often self-contradictory in his attitude to marriage, and indeed, the writings of the

Upchurch, "The Hagiography of Chaste Marriage in Ælfric's "Lives of Saints"" (unpublished doctoral thesis, City University of New York, 2001). Peter Jackson addresses both themes in his article on Ælfric's *Life of St Æthelthryth*; the short-comings of this article are discussed more fully below ('Ælfric and the Purpose of Christian Marriage: A Reconsideration of the "Life of St Æthelthryth", lines 120-30', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 29 [2000], 235-60).

⁹ For example, the recent doctoral works of Smith and Upchurch ('Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints' and 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage' respectively) follow this pattern: although they ostensibly address marriage, they are both more preoccupied with the construction of virginity.

¹⁰ Grundy, *Books and Grace*, p. 7.

¹¹ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 247.

church Fathers and Doctors whose works on marriage Ælfric knew (or may have known) contained inconsistencies and ambiguities.¹² As Marc Glasser expresses it,

much of the theology of marriage during apostolic times and the Middle Ages records the interplay of two conflicting attitudes: a deprecatory distrust of the role of sex and an elevating faith in marriage which emphasizes its symbolic and spiritual values [...]. These two views – marriage as a threat to the Christian, or marriage as a sacred relationship – both of which can sometimes be found in the works of an individual writer, created a fundamental question in the minds of those who wished to portray marriage in didactic literature. Was the marriage of Christians a thoroughly earthly pact only a step removed from the flames of hell, or was it an indissoluble, holy bond between husband and wife and a symbol of Jesus's union with the Church? The problem of which attitude to apply to marriage was an important matter particularly for medieval hagiographers.¹³

Glasser overstates the dichotomy between the variant positions on marriage, but it is nevertheless clear that the 'theological giants', whose comments on marriage shaped the prevailing Christian attitudes towards it in the medieval West, 'did not all agree on Christian doctrine or practice'¹⁴ and thus often presented divergent positions on marriage. Indeed, as noted in the Introduction, by Ælfric's time in the late Anglo-Saxon period, an orthodox position on marriage was still at least a century away from being agreed upon:¹⁵ in terms of marital orthodoxy it must be recalled that 'orthodoxy itself was not monolithic, and the various, sometimes conflicting' attitudes to marriage evident in late Anglo-Saxon England 'spring ultimately from divergent conceptions of Christianity'.¹⁶ Thus, since 'the writings of hagiographers display a sensitivity to the theological and canonic[al] discussions of marriage; and the attitudes of the doctrinal writers are generally reflected in contemporary saints' legends'¹⁷ it is imperative to keep in mind the varied and often disparate strands of 'highly orthodox' attitudes to marriage, as discussed in the Introduction, to which Ælfric may have referred.

¹² See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 25–39.

¹³ Marc Glasser, 'Marriage in Medieval Hagiography', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, NS 4 (1981), 3–31 (pp. 3–5). See also, Cooper, *Virgin and Bride*, p. 91.

¹⁴ Salisbury, *Independent Virgins*, p. 11.

¹⁵ See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 25–39.

¹⁶ Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992; repr. 1998), p. 51.

¹⁷ Glasser, 'Marriage in Hagiography', p. 6.

3.1.1 *Ælfric's Sources on Marriage*¹⁸

Ælfric knew, or might have known, many of the biblical and patristic works which contributed to the church's ambiguous attitudes towards marriage, as discussed in the Introduction (the Bible, Tertullian, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine). Undoubtedly, Ælfric knew the Bible, both directly ('presumably he had access to a copy of the Latin Bible') and indirectly ('but there would have been other sources for his quotations [and knowledge] as well').¹⁹ Ælfric was certainly aware of Christ's pronouncements on marriage,

¹⁸ The following discussion is based upon the premise that each of the authors discussed would have, or could have, been known to Ælfric. The secondary resources used to collate this information are: *Fontes; Handlist; Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS SS 18 (London: Oxford University Press, 2000) (henceforth *ÆCH: Introduction*); J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin Writers from Aldhelm to Alcuin (670-804)* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936); J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597-1066* (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1967) and J. D. A. Ogilvy, 'Books Known to the English: Addenda and Corrigenda', *Old English Newsletter*, Subsidia vol. II (1985) (repr. from *Mediaevalia*, 7 (1981 [1984]), 281-326); *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by John C. Pope, EETS 259, 260, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967-1968) (henceforth *ÆHom*); Skeat, *ÆLS*; Patrick H. Zettel, 'Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in BL MS Cotton Nero E. i + CCCC MS 9 and Other Manuscripts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1979); Patrick H. Zettel, 'Saints' Lives in Old English: Latin Manuscripts and Vernacular Accounts: Ælfric', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 17-37. *Fontes*, Godden, Pope, Skeat and Zettel all address the sources known to or directly used by Ælfric in his works. *Fontes*, Gneuss and Ogilvy testify to particular authors and texts known in the Anglo-Saxon period (although not necessarily directly used by Ælfric); Ælfric thus possibly knew these works either directly or indirectly (for example, through the works of Bede or Aldhelm).

¹⁹ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xliv.

as recounted in the gospels.²⁰ He also knew the Pauline doctrine of I Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5, deploying the former at length in his homilies.²¹

As noted in the Introduction, Tertullian's works are not well attested in Anglo-Saxon England and thus Ælfric is unlikely to have known Tertullian's attitudes directly. Ælfric may or may not have known Ambrose's works on virginity and marriage directly; he did, however, quote Ambrose's *Hexameron* in his *CHI.16* (*Dominica Prima post Pasca*) and in his *Homily for the Common of a Confessor*²² and he thus knew at least some of Ambrose's work directly.²³ Ælfric also cited Ambrose as the source for his *Life of St Agnes*, although he may either have been referring to the account of Agnes in Ambrose's sermon *Exhortatio Virginitatis*, or to Ambrose's hymn *Agnes beatae virginis*, or alternatively to Ælfric's actual source, the anonymous pseudo-Ambrosian *Passio S. Agnetis*.²⁴ At the least,

²⁰ Ælfric appears to be most interested in the Matthew passages. According to *Fontes*, he directly quotes from Matthew 19:3-15 and 27-29 in his *Catholic Homilies: The First Series* (*CHI.11* [*Dominica in Quinquagesima*]; *CHI.27* [*Nativitas S. Johannis Baptiste*]; *CHI.34* [*Decollatio S. Johannis Baptiste*]; *CHI.36* [*Dedicatio Ecclesie S. Michaelis*]); in his *Catholic Homilies: The Second Series* (*CHII.6* [*Dominica in Sexagesima*]; *CHII.7* [*Dominica I in Quadragesima*]; *CHII.19* [*Feria II Letania Maiore*]); in *ÆHom* (*ÆHom.4* [*Dominica III in Quadragesima*]; *ÆHom.11* [*Sermo ad Populum*]; *ÆHom.13* [*Dominica V Post Pentecosten*]; *ÆHom.16* [*Dominica X Post Pentecosten*]; *ÆHom.19* [*De Doctrina Apostolica*]; *ÆHom.30* [*From 'De Virginitate'*]); in *ÆLS* (*ÆLS.10* [*Chair of St Peter*]), and in his *Excerpts from Julian of Toledo*. Ælfric directly quotes from the Mark and Luke extracts with considerably less frequency. All references to Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* are to *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series: Text*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, EETS SS 17 (London: Oxford University Press, 1997) (henceforth *CHI*) and *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series: Text*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS SS 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) (henceforth *CHII*).

²¹ Ælfric quoted directly from I Corinthians 7 at length, especially in *ÆHom.19* (*De Doctrina Apostolica*) and in the *Homily for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (*Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, ed. by Bruno Assmann [Kassel, 1889; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964, with a new introduction by Peter Clemoes], §3, pp. 24-48). Ælfric similarly uses I Corinthians 7 as one of his sources in *CHI.9* (*Dom. III. post Epiphania Domini*) and *CHII.19* (*Feria II Letania Maiore*). He also uses Ephesians 5 in *CHII.19*, which indicates both his knowledge of this text and his awareness of the Pauline link between I Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5. *CHII.19* contains the only direct quotation from Ephesians 5 (see *Fontes*).

²² Printed in Assmann, *Homilien*, §4, pp. 49-64.

²³ *Fontes*; *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xlvii.

²⁴ Auctor incertus (Ambrosius Mediolanensis?), *Epistolae ex Ambrosianarum Numero Segregatae, Epistola 1*, in *PL*, vol. 17. See Anne B. Thompson, 'The Legend of St. Agnes: Improvisation and the Practice of Hagiography', *Exemplaria*, 13 (2001), 355-97 (p. 362); Hugh Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery in Old English Hagiographical Texts', *English Language Notes*, 33 (1996), 1-9 (p. 8, n. 17). Thompson calls this version the *Gesta sanctae Agnetis*, but it is often (and more correctly) also called a *passio*. Ælfric accessed this redaction of the Agnes legend through his chief hagiographical source, the Cotton-Corpus legendary, on which see discussion below, pp. 255-56.

Ælfric would have had access to Ambrose's ideas regarding marriage and virginity indirectly through Aldhelm's prose *De Virginitate* and through extracts found in Paul the Deacon's *Homiliary*; Ælfric knew and used both these works.²⁵

Ælfric evidently knew some of Jerome's works. Jerome was listed after Augustine as Ælfric's main source for the Catholic Homilies by Ælfric himself (*CHI* [*Præfatio*]). However, 'Jerome is not quite the guarantor of good doctrine that he might appear from Ælfric's reference, and his prominence in second position perhaps reflects his value as an authority rather than his actual use by Ælfric'.²⁶ Godden points out that although Ælfric repeated Jerome's authority in some individual homilies, 'the references are in fact to pseudonymous works [...] Jerome was so heavily used by other sources known to Ælfric (Bede, Haymo, Smaragdus) that it is hard to be certain of his direct use of Jerome'.²⁷ Skeat argues that Ælfric knew Jerome's translation of Eusebius's *Chronicon* and Jerome's 'translation of the Bible'.²⁸ Pope further argues that Jerome is one of Ælfric's non-biblical Latin sources, and Ælfric directly quoted from Jerome's *In Matthæum* and *Epistula CXXI, ad Algasiam*.²⁹

Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum*, an important witness to his attitudes to marriage, is found in three extant manuscripts of the late Anglo-Saxon period (s. xi/xii);³⁰ whilst we currently do not know whether Ælfric had *direct* access to this work, these extant manuscripts do attest to its presence in late Anglo-Saxon libraries.³¹ Ælfric knew of *Adversus Jovinianum* (he quotes it in *CHI.27* [*Nativitas S. Johannis Baptistæ*] and in his

²⁵ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xli, p. xlvii, p. lviii.

²⁶ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xxxix.

²⁷ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. lvi-lvii.

²⁸ *ÆLS*, vol. II, p. xlv-xlvi.

²⁹ Pope, *Supplementary Homilies*, p. 170.

³⁰ *Handlist*, nos. 426, 544, 805.5.

³¹ Cf. Ogiliv who states that there appears to be no English manuscript of 'Against Jovinian'. Ogiliv justifies that 'the number of manuscripts of Jerome surviving from Anglo-Saxon England is surprisingly small' probably because 'the excellent twelfth-century editions of his works superseded the older texts and led to their destruction' (*Books Known to English*, p. 174 and p. 182).

Preface to Genesis)³² but Godden concludes that it was ‘probably not a direct influence’;³³ *Adversus Jovinianum* may have been transmitted to Ælfric through the works of Aldhelm, Bede and Alcuin.³⁴ Another of Jerome’s marital tracts, his Letter to Eustochium and Furia (including the *Eustochium de virginitate*), was known in late Anglo-Saxon England.³⁵ Indeed, according to Ogilvy, Ælfric knew and quoted Jerome’s letter to Paula and Eustochium in his *CHI.30 (Dominica XI. post Pentecosten)*, although Ælfric’s knowledge of the letters probably came indirectly, through the *Homiliary* of Paul the Deacon.³⁶

It has been noted already that Ælfric used Augustine heavily.³⁷ Most importantly for this discussion, it is clear that Ælfric knew Augustine’s ‘De bono conjugali’ as he referred to it directly in *ÆHom.19 (De Doctrina Apostolica)*,³⁸ in his *Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Assmann, §3),³⁹ and possibly in *CHII.16 (Alius Sermo de Die Paschae)*.⁴⁰

It is finally important to note that, although he may have been most influenced by the attitudes he found in Augustine and other early church Doctors, Ælfric was also exposed to other influences which in all probability contributed to his ideology of marriage and his understanding of it. For example, Ælfric probably knew the opinions of Gregory the Great (d. AD 604). Gregory was one of Ælfric’s primary, named sources for his Catholic

³² *Fontes*.

³³ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. lvii.

³⁴ Ogilvy, *Books Known to Anglo-Latin*.

³⁵ In a manuscript of s. xi: *Handlist*, no. 264.

³⁶ Ogilvy, *Books Known to English*, p. 174. Godden states that the text by Paschasius Radbertus, which was the main source for Ælfric’s *CHI.30*, purported to be a letter by Jerome (Paschasius Radbertus is also known as Pseudo-Jerome), thus explaining Ogilvy’s assumption. Although the Paschasius Radbertus text (‘De assumptione sanctae Mariae Virginis’) probably incorporated Jerominan ideas, it itself was probably an indirect source since it ‘was included in two collections used by Ælfric, the homiliary of Paul the Deacon and the Cotton-Corpus legendary’. In other words, if Ælfric did know Jerome’s *Epistolæ*, as Ogilvy purports, it is likely that this knowledge was third-hand, via Paschasius Radbertus and Paul the Deacon/Cotton-Corpus legendary. See Malcolm Godden, ‘The Source of Ælfric’s *CHI.30* (Cameron B.1.1.32)’, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register* (1989; updated 2002) <<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>> [accessed September 2004].

³⁷ See discussion above, p. 239.

³⁸ Pope, *Supplementary Homilies*, p. 164.

³⁹ *Fontes*.

⁴⁰ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xlvii. See also Jackson, ‘Purpose of Christian Marriage’, p. 248.

Homilies. Indeed, according to Godden, Gregory ‘was probably used more than any of Augustine, Jerome or Bede by Ælfric’.⁴¹ Gregory rated the ‘moral danger’ of marriage very seriously.

Although sexual intercourse, save for procreation, might be a minor sin in itself, Gregory worried that it could lead to graver, more serious kinds of sexual misconduct from which married couples could remain immune only if they renounced sexual relations altogether.⁴²

Gregory advised ‘couples not to consummate their marriages at all [...] to avoid the temptations that sexual experience might generate’.⁴³ Ælfric also knew the work of Isidore of Seville (d. AD 636),⁴⁴ who, though less strident than Gregory, asserted that ‘sex for pleasure was wrong, even for married couples [...] procreative sex, however, was a good use of an evil thing, and hence married couples should confine their sexual relations to the minimum required for procreation’.⁴⁵ Isidore was not unusual in this attitude, and he and Gregory, like many others before them, identified the danger of marriage as its sexual character. Similarly, Aldhelm (d. AD 709), whose work Ælfric knew directly,⁴⁶ ‘felt that he was writing in a venerable patristic tradition’ when he wrote his prose treatise on virginity (and marriage), *De Virginitate*, ‘and much of his discussion of virginity is traditional. Nevertheless, Aldhelm’s teaching departs in several respects from what might be described as orthodox Christian doctrine’.⁴⁷ Aldhelm, like Gregory and Isidore, had difficulty with the sexual foundation of marriage. He saw marital chastity as holier than technically sinless marital intercourse and constructed an original, tripartite hierarchy of

⁴¹ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xxix.

⁴² Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 138. Gregory expresses this opinion in his *Moralia siue Expositio in Iob* (Gregorius I, ‘Sive Expositio in Librum B. Job’, in *PL*, vol. 76; XIII.21), with which Ælfric shows ‘familiarity’ (*ÆCH: Introduction*, p. liii; *Fontes*).

⁴³ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 138–39.

⁴⁴ See *Fontes* and *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. lvi.

⁴⁵ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 138.

⁴⁶ Aldhelm’s prose *De Virginitate* is a source in *CHII (Praefatio)* (*Fontes*; see also Aldhelm, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren [Ipswich and Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979], p. 2). Clare Lees and Gillian Overing argue that although Ælfric knew Aldhelm, Aldhelm’s ‘direct influence on Ælfric is negligible’ (*Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*, The Middle Ages Series [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001], p. 127).

⁴⁷ Lapidge and Herren, *The Prose Works*, pp. 52–53.

‘virginity’ (*virginitas*), ‘chastity’ (*castitas*) and ‘conjugalit’ or ‘marriage’ (*iugalitas*), in which virginity:

Omni spurcitia carnali illibata spontaneo caelibatus affectu pudica perseverat; castitas vero, quae pactis sponsalibus sortita matrimonii commercia regni coelestis causa contempsit, iugalitas quae ad propagandum posteritatis sobolem, et liberorum procreandorum gratia licitis connubii nexibus nodatur.

Unharmd by any carnal defilement continues pure out of the spontaneous desire for celibacy; (and) chastity on the other hand which, having been assigned to marital contracts, has scorned the commerce of matrimony for the sake of the heavenly progeny; or conjugalit which, for propagating the progeny of posterity and for the sake of procreating children, is bound by the legal ties of marriage. (col. 0117B)⁴⁸

Since the commerce of matrimony was sexual intercourse, to Aldhelm, marriage was synonymous with sexual and bodily interests; the spiritual or emotional content of marriage was comprehensively ignored in Aldhelm’s conception.

On the other hand, Ælfric directly knew and extensively cited Alfred’s Old English translation of Boethius’s *Consolatione Philosophiae*,⁴⁹ which contained rather different sentiments about marriage:

Sio lifað nu þe, þe anum, forðæmðe hio nanwuht elles ne lufað buton þe. Ælces godes hio hæfþ genoh on ðys andweardan life, ac heo hit hæfð eall forsawen ofer ðe anne; eall heo hit onscunað, forðæmþe heo þe ænne næfð; þæs anes hire is nu wana. For þinre æfweardnesse hire þincð eall noht þæt hio hæfð, forðæm hio is for þinum lufum ormod 7 fulneah deað for tearum 7 for unrotnesse.

She [your wife] lives now for you [her husband], for you alone, because she loves nothing else except you. She has abundance of everything desirable in this present life, but she has rejected it all, except for you alone; she despises it all, because she doesn’t have you alone: now she lacks that one thing. Because of your absence everything that

⁴⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations from Aldhelm’s prose *De virginitate* are taken from Migne’s edition, Aldhelmus Schireburnensis, ‘De virginitate sanctorum’, in *PL*, vol. 89; all translations are taken from Aldhelm, ‘De virginitate’, in *The Prose Works*, trans. by Lapidge and Herren, pp. 59-132. All further references to *De virginitate* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

⁴⁹ Alfred’s translation is a primary source for *ÆLS.17* (*On Auguries*) and, to a lesser extent, *ÆLS.1* (*Nativity of Christ*); he uses it also in *CHII.23* (*Dominica III post Pentecosten*) (*Fontes*; Malcolm Godden, ‘King Alfred’s Boethius’, in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. by Margaret Gibson [Oxford: Blackwell, 1981], pp. 419-24 [p. 420]: ‘Ælfric [...] knew the work and borrowed from it’).

she has seems as nothing, because she is despondent with love for you, and almost dead because of [her] tears and grief. (II:10.16-22, p. 22)⁵⁰

Perhaps Ælfric understood these lines in the context of patristic exegesis which argued that a spouse was less dedicated to God than was a virgin because a spouse was concerned primarily with the earthly interest of her husband or his wife ('hio nanwuht elles ne lufað buton þe').⁵¹ He may also have understood this love-sick wife as allegorical of the church yearning for Christ. However, the context of these lines is that Wisdom reminds Mod (Boethius) that

even in the utter despair of his fallen state he has not lost all happiness. He still has his family – his wife, two fine sons, and his wife's father. The social cohesion formed by kinship and friendship is one of the rewards that fortune cannot take from him. Alfred describes these kinsmen as anchors that keep Mod from complete desolation in this life; these anchors have a counterpart in the life to come, the triad of virtues: faith, hope and love.⁵²

Alfred's description, then, depicts Mod's mourning wife, grief-stricken at his absence, and Ælfric may have recognised the poignancy in Alfred's construction of a loving relationship through which a permanent bond is forged.⁵³ Works like Alfred's may have added a human and nuanced dimension to Ælfric's understanding of marriage, primarily based though it probably was on the remote doctrinal discussions of patristic writers.

Current scholarly opinion shows that to assume that there was a unified orthodoxy concerning marriage in Ælfric's time is wrong. As was demonstrated in the Introduction, although some concerns remained constant throughout the writings of the early church Fathers, especially on the relationship of marriage to sexual intercourse,⁵⁴ the actual

⁵⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of Alfred's Boethius are taken from W. J. Sedgefield's edition, *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899). All further references to the Old English Boethius throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

⁵¹ See I Corinthians 7:32-34.

⁵² Allen J. Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne, 1986), p. 52.

⁵³ Alfred is following his Latin source in including reference to Boethius's wife; however, Alfred does extend the description substantially (see Boethius, 'Consolatione Philosophiae', in *PL*, vol. 63).

⁵⁴ It is by and large true that 'patristic writers generally viewed marriage with a degree of suspicion' (Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 89).

theories which these writers proposed in response to their concerns varied and often resulted in, at best, unclear doctrine, or, at worst, self-contradictory assertions. It must be acknowledged, then, that Ælfric knew, either directly or indirectly, part of this large body of paradoxical church writing on marriage. If, as is often argued, Ælfric's purpose was to analyse and then disseminate a comprehensible and unambiguous doctrine to his audience that was practically applicable to their lives,⁵⁵ he would have been unable merely to regurgitate 'highly orthodox, consistent, frequently repeated'⁵⁶ principles of marriage, since he had not received such a body of doctrine, even from Augustine.

3.2 *Ælfric and Christian Marriage in his Lives of Saints*

3.2.1 *Ælfric's Ideal, Moral Marriage*

Ælfric inherited a rich and complex tradition of ambiguous patristic attitudes to matrimony. Since he was concerned to resolve ambiguities and inconsistencies in doctrine, it is not surprising to find Ælfric having attempted, like so many authors before him, to clarify church teachings regarding marriage. Because Ælfric's most pressing concern was with the dissemination of orthodoxy, he faced considerable difficulties when he came to explicate the church's doctrine on marriage because of its ambiguous status in the church. This ambiguity arose not just from the contradictory patristic attitudes towards it, however: as has been discussed at length in the Introduction, control of the institution of marriage remained in the secular, not the ecclesiastical, domain until well after the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.⁵⁷ Although the church attempted to make 'its influence felt through the canons and the penitentials [...] a wedding in Anglo-Saxon England was a

⁵⁵ See discussion above, p. 238, n. 4 and n. 5.

⁵⁶ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 247

⁵⁷ See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 39-43.

purely secular affair, and no church ceremony was necessary'.⁵⁸ Further, Ælfric's church did not consider marriage a sacrament: rather, it was not until

the twelfth century [that] Peter Lombard's annunciation of the 'seven sacraments' proposed that marriage be included among them. The law of the Church on the definition of a valid marriage varied over time and only became fixed in the course of the twelfth century.⁵⁹

Ælfric, then, was faced with marriage as a social and secular institution which had more of a concern in preserving property than in regulating sexual morality.⁶⁰

Despite the secularity of the marital institution, Ælfric and his church had a vested interest in 'issues of legality and legitimacy in marital affairs'.⁶¹ This interest was especially conspicuous in the context of the Benedictine Reform.

We are here in a world in which churchmen are constructing an ideology of an ordered theocratic society [...] For those, like Ælfric, interested in developing in late Anglo-Saxon England a highly organized Christian society in which the religious fuses with the secular [... it was necessary to fight any] independence both from the secular world and from the all-embracing institution of the church.⁶²

The church's desire to order society meant that the Benedictine Reform period was one in which the church participated in unprecedented attempts both to regulate secular, and indeed private, institutions, and also to transform such secular institutions into religious ones: reformists were less concerned with encroaching on secular institutions, than with

⁵⁸ Andreas Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage in Old English* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986), p. 23.

⁵⁹ Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 46.

⁶⁰ Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women, 450-1500* (London: Phoenix, 1995), p. 42. See also Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Past and Present*, 108 (1985), 3-34 (repr. in *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings*, ed. by David A. E. Pelteret, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 6 [New York and London: Garland, 2000], pp. 251-88).

⁶¹ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 18.

⁶² Hugh Magennis, 'St Mary of Egypt and Ælfric: Unlikely Bedfellows in Cotton Julius E.vii?', in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. by Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), pp. 99-112 (p. 107).

assimilating them with Christian institutions to work in harmony with religious interests.⁶³ Neil Cartlidge is discussing twelfth-century church reform when he states that:

the ideology of marriage changed in this period not simply in response or reaction to political and religious pressures: it was enriched by a new attention to the nature of the relationships structuring society. The profound demographic, economic and political changes [...] provided a stimulus for a re-evaluation of basic institutions.⁶⁴

Although, in Ælfric's time, the church's purchase on marriage had not developed even this far, Cartlidge's comments may shed light on the Benedictine Reform and Ælfric's purpose within that Reform: Ælfric's treatment of marriage was such a 're-evaluation of basic institutions', since he attempted to moralise and Christianise secular practice to support the reformed structure of Anglo-Saxon society by denying any separation of marriage from ecclesiastical influence.⁶⁵

Jack Goody has further explicated the church's interest in marriage, especially in the Reform context, as motivated by church acquisitions: 'the loss of Church lands was one factor behind the movement for ecclesiastical reform [...including] an extension of the Church's jurisdiction over marriage'.⁶⁶ Goody's conclusions are worth stating in full:

the reformers were keenly aware of past secularisations [of the church and, just as importantly, its property] and were interested in recovering what they could of the Church's pillaged patrimony. The reforms instigated at this time included the

⁶³ See, for example, Whatley, who states that the primary motivation for the Reformists' concern to enforce 'holy days' was to enable 'the clergy and their royal sponsors to "regulate the rhythm of laypeople's lives" throughout the year and to assemble them periodically in regional centers as "captive audiences" for instruction in religion, morality and appropriate cultural values [...] The aim of such preaching was to promote the creation of a "holy society" that was believed to be essential to the stability, prosperity, and security of the kingdom. The link between the Church calendar and royal power is succinctly expressed [...] and] Ælfric's compositions are rich in social and political teaching as in more overtly religious themes' ('Late Old English Hagiography', pp. 441-42). See also Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 44.

⁶⁴ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 11.

⁶⁵ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 135-37. This is not to say that the impetus for the church to regulate marriage was absent prior to the Reform period. On the contrary, Stephanie Hollis has convincingly shown that the early, missionary church considered 'the establishment of "lawful marriage"' as of 'paramount concern' (*Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 37). Nevertheless, Hollis also admits that 'what was at stake, in as much as the process was ultimately purposive, was the figurative dimensions of its [the church's] particular conception of marital union' (p. 37) and that during the Benediction Reform 'the scale and degree of regulatory control at which the reformers aimed, and the degree of regulation, was one that the church in England had never before achieved' (p. 44).

⁶⁶ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 133.

enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy and the wide extension of the prohibitions on marriage, the latter tending to weaken the control of property by kin, the former helping to retain in Church hands what had already been secured [... Further] a considerable proportion of the immense possessions of the Church came from donations made by particular families, either in a person's lifetime or, more usually, in a testament. [...] By setting itself against certain 'strategies of heirship' that would assist a family line to continue – namely adoption, cousin marriage, plural marriage or concubinage, unions with affines, or the remarriage of divorced persons, the Church brought about the further alienation of family holdings. Its teaching emphasised the elementary family as all-important, thus eroding the rights of collaterals and of wider kin groups.⁶⁷

In this formulation of marriage, the church had biblical support from the statements of Christ and Paul, who

espoused a view of marriage as an emotional [...] relationship between two people, with no reference to parents, property rights, the claims of ancestors, progeny or the state. His [Paul's] view reinforced Jesus' indifference to broader community claims over individual preferences.⁶⁸

In other words, the church formulated the moral marriage as one which was most likely to alienate patrimonies and thus promote donations to the church: 'the "so-called Christian" marital morality, characteristically prohibitive, [...] was consistently and subversively antifamilial from its very beginnings'.⁶⁹

It is significant, then, that Ælfric was concerned to regulate marriage in his *Lives of Saints*, since 'although the encouragement of moral or spiritual improvement was the expressed purpose of hagiographic literature, *vitae* were in fact often written with the more pragmatic, self-serving political and economic ends in mind'.⁷⁰ Undoubtedly, for Ælfric, the distinct purposes of moral improvement and political gain merged into a single purpose. By regulating marriage Ælfric hoped to encourage spiritual enrichment by defining the moral marital relationship and by constructing sexual morality; further

⁶⁷ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 118 and p. 123.

⁶⁸ Jo Ann McNamara, *A New Song: Celibate Women in the First Three Christian Centuries*, Women and History, 6/7 (New York: Haworth, 1983), p. 37.

⁶⁹ Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 3.

⁷⁰ Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1100* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 23-24.

‘Ælfric’s interest in marriage is in part a tightening up of monastic and clerical chastity in the period of the Benedictine reform’.⁷¹ However, his regulation of marriage equally had political significance since it further empowered the church’s ‘purchase on secular life outside the monastery’ by appropriating marriage ‘as a disciplinary practice’ intended to be ‘embedded in this culture’s imaginary’,⁷² at least in part for reasons of property and power. As Malcolm Godden has shown, the *Lives of Saints* ‘were to be read, in part at least, as providing important political and ethical lessons for the present’:⁷³ it is possible to witness the conflation of all these aims in Ælfric’s treatment of marriage in the *Lives of Saints*.

Beyond its acquisitive motives, the church was further concerned to regulate marriage because marriage itself was a regulating mechanism.

Regulation, officialization, control, codification: the institution of marriage is, by its very position and by the role which it assumes, enclosed in a rigid framework of rituals and prohibitions – rituals because it involves publishing, that is making public, and thereby socializing and legalizing a private act, and prohibitions because it involves setting boundaries between the norm and the marginal, the licit and the illicit, the pure and the impure.⁷⁴

Because marriage was represented as a social act that publicly ordered society, normalised private behaviour, and constituted a fundamental social bond, the marital institution was a powerful regulator.⁷⁵ This regulating potential brought with it the possibility of constructing and dictating basic social values (for example, the construction and regulation of ‘normal’ or lawful sexual relations, and, as noted above, the control of inheritance, wealth and property): marriage is ‘both an ideological and a political structure (a *seminarium civitatis*), it is also a personal and emotional ideal (a *seminarium caritatis*). It

⁷¹ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 152.

⁷² Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 149.

⁷³ Malcolm Godden, ‘Ælfric’s Saints’ Lives and the Problem of Miracles’, in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 5 (New York and London: Garland, 2000), pp. 287–309 (p. 301) (first publ. in *Leeds Studies in English*, NS 16 [1985], 83–100).

⁷⁴ Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Jane Dunnett (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), pp. 3–4. Although Duby’s study concentrates on marriage in the twelfth-century and later, this remark is made in his introductory comments on marriage in his chapter, ‘Marriage in Early Medieval Society’, which encompasses the Anglo-Saxon period.

⁷⁵ Duby, *Love and Marriage*, p. 5; Hollis *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 27.

represents a pattern of conduct by which individuals identify themselves and determine their duties in society'.⁷⁶ Further, marriage regulated not only the married couple, but also the extended family: the institution of marriage was broadly didactic since it taught normal social interaction. The regulatory capability of the marital institution accounts in part for the church's sustained interest in 'intermeshing' this secular union with Christian morality.⁷⁷

The church was concerned to modify and in some cases to eradicate traditional Anglo-Saxon customs regarding sexual behaviour, for it was in this area of social life, perhaps more than in any other, that Christian morality was in closest conflict with pre-Christian custom.⁷⁸

Control of the marital institution, then, with its potential to regulate its participants, was a key to the church's aim of normalising its conception of sexual morality, regulating 'the sexual activity of their flocks and enforc[ing] celibacy in the monastery and among priests and *nunnan*'.⁷⁹

Despite the church's, and indeed Ælfric's, interest in the institution of marriage, it was, as has been noted, a civil institution in Ælfric's time. Indeed, Ælfric was confronted by a martial institution that was both secular and constitutively sexual, as indicated by the Old English vocabulary used of it, such as *hæmed* meaning both 'marriage' and 'sexual intercourse'.⁸⁰ Ælfric's recourse was to employ moral persuasions to present marriage as a specifically Christian good, and he attempted to admonish and encourage the laity to Christian moral marriages 'to maintain the social order, to prevent and allay the discord which could arise out of the institution of marriage'.⁸¹ Ælfric's portrayal of moral marriage

⁷⁶ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ Mary Clayton, 'Centralism and Uniformity Versus Localism and Diversity: The Virgin and Native Saints in the Monastic Reform', *Peritia*, 8 (1994), 95-106. Clayton makes a convincing case for the 'intermeshed' aims of the monks and the political elite during the reform movement (p. 99); see also, Duby, *Love and Marriage*, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage', p. 7.

⁷⁹ Hugh Magennis, "'No Sex Please, We're Anglo-Saxons'? Attitudes to Sexuality in Old English Poetry and Prose', *Leeds Studies in English*, NS 26 (1995), 1-27 (p. 15).

⁸⁰ See discussion above, Chapter 2, pp. 220-21.

⁸¹ Duby, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 12-13.

in his hagiographies was one strategy ‘that the medieval church adopted to gain authority over the domestic sphere in European society and hence over the means of both production and reproduction’.⁸² However, in his *Lives of Saints* Ælfric did not merely reiterate patristic doctrine regarding marriage and propagate its discrepancies; rather, he constructed and advocated a new ideal and definition of marriage.

Ælfric gave ‘new life’ to patristic ideas to make them ‘appropriate to his own time and place [... and his] new circumstances reshape[d] the original ideas’.⁸³ Thus, although

it was never Ælfric’s intention to write a new theology [... and] Ælfric considered himself merely a translator [...], he was much more than that, shaping the received doctrines of the church into a manageable body of teaching which could readily be believed, understood and learnt.⁸⁴

In other words, Ælfric attempted to turn the abstract and contradictory conceptions of marriage into an understandable doctrine: he did so by selecting from the church Fathers’ beliefs and constructing an original theology of marriage which was doctrinally valid, didactic and unambiguous.

That Ælfric would have understood his creation of an essentially new theology of marriage as permissible orthodoxy is less surprising than it may first appear. Smith has argued that:

Ælfric both builds upon and diverges from the earlier patristic portrayal of virginity. He follows the Latin Fathers in treating the virginal life as the highest expression of the Christian life. Ælfric’s consideration of virginity, or *mægðhad*, however, is shaped primarily by considerations of practical service to God.⁸⁵

Thus Ælfric utilised patristic writing to support a nuanced and original design for virginity that suited his particular Anglo-Saxon (and Reform) context. That Ælfric

⁸² Clunies Ross, ‘Concubinage’, p. 34.

⁸³ Grundy, *Books and Grace*, p. 7.

⁸⁴ Grundy, *Books and Grace*, p. 267.

⁸⁵ Smith, ‘Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints’, p. 81. See Ælfric’s *Homily for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Assmann, *Homilien* §3, pp. 24–48) and *Letter to Sigefyrth* (printed in Assmann, *Homilien*, §2, pp. 13–23).

presented an innovative position by combining different patristic sources is also confirmed by Mary Clayton, who, in her consideration of Ælfric's treatment of the active and contemplative lives of the religious, states that

while following Augustine for the greater part of his exegesis [...] Ælfric departs from his sources to introduce a concept which has no place in them. What seems to be at the root of Ælfric's treatment of his source here is his wish to follow Augustine's exegesis, combined with a desire to follow Gregory and Bede's promotion of the life of the teacher as the highest form of the Christian life.⁸⁶

In other words, by assimilating disparate strands of his various patristic sources' exegeses, Ælfric, whether consciously or not, invented a new understanding of the role of the religious in society. His theology of marriage, then, can be understood as a similar 'invention'.⁸⁷

The question must be addressed as to whether it is possible or helpful to identify Ælfric as the author of an original theology in his *Lives of Saints* when they are based on pre-existing hagiographies. Patrick Zettel has shown that Ælfric used a collection akin to the so-called Cotton-Corpus legendary as his source for his hagiography both in the *Lives of Saints* and in the *Catholic Homilies*.

The Cotton-Corpus legendary is a heterogeneous collection which, in common with Ælfric's own writings, includes not only the *vitae apostolorum* but also the lives of virgins, confessors and other early martyrs, as well as narratives for semi-hagiographical feasts [...] The Cotton-Corpus legendary almost invariably includes the particular account [for each saint] used by Ælfric [...] and is] manifestly closer to the Old English translation [of Ælfric] than anything yet in print [...] In my view, it suggests that some early form of the collection, or at least something very similar to it, must have served as Ælfric's chief quarry for hagiographic matter.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Clayton, 'Hermits and the Contemplative Life', p. 161.

⁸⁷ Eric John, 'The World of Abbot Ælfric', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 300-16 (p. 300).

⁸⁸ Zettel, 'Latin Manuscripts and Vernacular Accounts', pp. 20-22.

Ælfric's indebtedness to 'some early form of the collection' is well-traversed ground⁸⁹ and various doctoral theses of the past decade have closely mapped Ælfric's deviations from and adaptations of his Latin sources.⁹⁰ Generally, it should be noted that 'Ælfric has an abbreviating style, or from another point of view, an abstracting style, that takes a source and transforms it, oftentimes for his own, special purposes'.⁹¹ That is, Ælfric deleted or condensed those episodes in his sources which he considered inappropriate or peripheral to his main aim; he also inserted explanatory notes or *exempla* to make that aim more readily comprehensible.⁹² In this way, Ælfric conformed to the general practice of Old English hagiographers: 'most notably, they display a tendency toward some abbreviation of source and an emphasis on narrative rather than on direct discourse'.⁹³

Since Ælfric had no reluctance about adapting (indeed radically changing if necessary) his hagiographic sources for his own purpose, whatever he included in his *Lives of Saints* was deliberate and meaningful. Ælfric's willingness to remove or reduce unnecessary elements from his sources renders his translations of them unique. It is for this reason that this chapter, and Chapter 4, are not specifically source studies: the texts that Ælfric created, whether close to or largely deviating from his source, served his purpose and were immediately relevant to his needs and aims. This is not to invalidate the necessity and

⁸⁹ For example, see the various chapters in *Holy Men*, ed. by Szarmach: Michael Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', pp. 115-29 (p. 123); Peter Jackson and Michael Lapidge, 'The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary', pp. 131-46 (p. 134); Joyce Hill, 'The Dissemination of Ælfric's "Lives of Saints": A Preliminary Survey', pp. 235-59 (p. 242). See also *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. xlii; Michael Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 243-63 (pp. 255-57).

⁹⁰ Upchurch's recent dissertation is particularly useful for its close comparison of the Latin in the Corpus-Christi Legendary and Ælfric's Old English in regard to the *Life of St Cecilia*, the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* and the *Lives of St Chrysanthus and Daria*, all of which I will analyse in detail in Chapter 4 below ('Hagiography of Chaste Marriage').

⁹¹ Paul E. Szarmach, 'Ælfric and the Problem of Women', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 571-90 (p. 580). See also, Ann E. Nichols, 'Ælfric and the Brief Style', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 70 (1971), 1-12.

⁹² Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', pp. 236-40.

⁹³ Hugh Magennis, "'Listen Now All and Understand": Adaptation of Hagiographical Material for Vernacular Audiences in the Old English Lives of St. Margaret', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 27-42 (p. 28).

importance of source studies, merely to emphasise that in this context and for my purposes, we may assume that Ælfric's texts were meaningful and discrete entities which consciously reflected his rationale and ideas, whether or not those ideas were his own or already encoded in his source. Although it is possible to identify the boundary between Ælfric's authorial voice and that of his source, these chapters concentrate instead on hearing Ælfric's 'voice as it emerges from and interacts with its contexts'.⁹⁴ Ælfric's hagiography 'registers the unconscious ideological stresses of the community'⁹⁵ since 'saints' lives say as much, if not more, about the spiritual and cultural preoccupations of their hagiographers and intended readers as they do about their ostensible subjects'.⁹⁶

Cultural anthropologist Robert Lopez has observed that 'like epics, hagiography is a very bad chronicle of the past, but a precious mirror for its own present'. The same applies to medieval translation practices, that they say more about the perceptions and agendas of the translator than they do about the original text. When a hagiographic text is translated, it becomes, through its status as an interpretation of the source text informed by contemporary concerns, a valuable site of cultural information.⁹⁷

Ælfric's texts as he wrote them reveal his specific preoccupations, as well as the preoccupations of his religious and social context. For this reason, these chapters focus on the idiosyncrasies in Ælfric's selection of *which* sources to translate, rather than his actual translation of those sources.⁹⁸

Eight of the twenty-nine saints' lives which Ælfric included in his *Lives of Saints* are either virgin-martyr or married-virgin *passiones*.⁹⁹ Considering that, according to Lapidge, Ælfric

⁹⁴ Thompson, 'The Legend of St. Agnes', p. 359.

⁹⁵ Andrew P. Scheil, 'Somatic Ambiguity and Masculine Desire in the Old English Life of Euphrosyne', *Exemplaria*, 11 (1999), 345-61 (p. 360).

⁹⁶ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 37.

⁹⁷ Antonina Harbus, 'A Mind for Hagiography: The Psychology of Resolution in *Andreas*', in *Germanic Texts and Latin Models*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra, *Germania Latina IV*, Mediaevalia Groningana, 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 127-40 (p. 127); Harbus quotes Lopez from, 'The Practical Transmission of Medieval Culture', in *By Things Seen: Reference and Recognition in Medieval Thought*, ed. by David L. Jeffrey (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), pp. 125-42 (p. 133).

⁹⁸ Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', pp. 119-24; Clayton, 'Hermits and the Contemplative Life', pp. 162-67.

⁹⁹ This count does not include the non-Ælfrician interpolations or non-hagiographic material included in the *Lives of Saints* (see Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', pp. 118-19).

has some ‘curious omissions’ in his collection,¹⁰⁰ it seems significant that he included so many virgin-martyrs/married-virgins. For example, in the analysis of the *Life of St Agnes* in this chapter, I shall argue that one reason why Ælfric was particularly attracted to this *Life* was because it developed the *Christus sponsus* motif extensively.¹⁰¹ Also fascinating is the fact that Ælfric included three legends of married saints in his collection: the *Life of St Cecilia*, the *Lives of SS Julian and Basillisa* and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*.¹⁰² If one of the ‘eccentricities’ of Ælfric’s *Lives* is his peculiar omissions,¹⁰³ then

his choice to include a legend of two saints [Chrysanthus and Daria] who do not appear to have been liturgically central in late Anglo-Saxon England indicates that this legend held some other attraction for him.¹⁰⁴

In Chapter 4, I shall argue that Ælfric was attracted to, and found particular resonance in, these married saints’ *Lives* because they manifested his theology and ideal of marriage.

In his *Lives of Saints* it appears that, having identified the sexual component as the problem with marriage, Ælfric chose to combine the ideas of Augustine and Gregory and divorce marriage from sexuality altogether. ‘In their elevation of virginity, the church fathers [...], wittingly or unwittingly, opened the door to a spiritualized definition of marriage that allowed the institution to exist independent of sex’¹⁰⁵ and thus Ælfric’s ideal marriage was totally independent from sexual intercourse; it was based not on the bodily considerations of sexual gratification, but on companionship and compatibility. To Ælfric, a marriage which included sexual intercourse was not a true marriage, but a bodily and

¹⁰⁰ In *Feasts of Universal Observance*, Ælfric omits several church Doctors: Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. He also omits the story of Perpetua and Felicitas, perhaps because neither was a virgin. Ælfric similarly omits twenty-five Frankish, Flemish and English saints which were widely venerated in Late Anglo-Saxon England and which Lapidge would have expected him to include (‘Ælfric’s “Sanctorale”’, pp. 119–23).

¹⁰¹ Of course, Agnes’s popularity appears the most obvious reason for Ælfric’s inclusion of her *Life* in his collection; however, as will be discussed further, it is striking that he translated his source *verbatim*, rather than abbreviating it. See discussion below, pp. 272–74.

¹⁰² The *Life of St Ethelbryth* could also be included here, although its construction is somewhat different from those of the other three married saints’ *Lives*. See below, Chapter 4, pp. 370–79.

¹⁰³ Lapidge, ‘Ælfric’s “Sanctorale”’, p. 124.

¹⁰⁴ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 150. The same point may be made for the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*.

¹⁰⁵ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 4.

lesser reflection of that higher, non-bodily form. That is, 'true' marriage was an emotional and a spiritual union (*gemacan, geðeodan*) wholly separate from the physical, sexual union misunderstood as marriage (*sinscipe, gehæmed*).¹⁰⁶ Like Augustine, Ælfric saw marriage as an institution in which love was the formative bond. As Goody notes, the church favoured marriage which 'was bound by affective ties' and encouraged 'the love match rather than the arranged marriage', and Ælfric echoed this emphasis on 'affection and love in marriage'.¹⁰⁷ Taking Gregory's recommendation to married couples to live in unconsummated matrimony to its logical conclusion, Ælfric conceptualised an ideal marital relationship unconnected to sexual or bodily needs, and he thus 'split marital sexuality from marital affection and intention [... by denying] that sexual consummation was integral to the definition of marriage'.¹⁰⁸ However, unlike Augustine, Ælfric did not complicate this basic principle, because he never admitted in his *Lives of Saints* that 'true' marriage was at all sexual.

By separating 'true' marriage from sexual intercourse in his *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric was able to circumvent some of the issues over which Augustine stumbled. For Ælfric, virginity was not in opposition to 'true' marriage, nor were virginity and 'true' marriage differentiated on a hierarchy: since 'true' marriage did not involve sexual intercourse, then truly married people were virgins. Virginity remained the highest ideal for Christian life; truly married couples participated in the glory of virginity because 'true' marriage was virginal.¹⁰⁹ To Ælfric, 'the prestige of celibacy [...] implied an alternative practice, which was chastity in marriage [...] as a realization of the resurrection on earth'.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Ælfric defined the offspring of 'true' marriage as non-bodily: 'true' marriage resulted in spiritual progeny, in the conversion of people to Christianity and the support of the

¹⁰⁶ In order to alleviate any confusion, henceforth the former will be referred to as 'true' marriage and the latter as 'carnal' marriage.

¹⁰⁷ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 153, p. 155 and p. 205 respectively.

¹⁰⁸ Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine's Writing on Women* (London: Longman and Todd, 1995), p. 105.

¹⁰⁹ Ælfric thus does not contravene the 'spiritual meritocracy outlined by the early medieval Church, [in which] virginity was awarded the highest value' (Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, p. 177).

¹¹⁰ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 40.

Christian faithful. In other words, Ælfric's understanding of marriage *per se* stood in contradiction to the Jeromian assertion that 'the sexual act [...] does not constitute marriage but is, nevertheless, fundamental to it. One cannot talk about marriage without talking about [sexual] love'.¹¹¹ In the *Lives of Saints* Ælfric deconstructed the fundamentally sexual conception of marriage and re-constructed a totally non-sexual union: 'true' marriage.¹¹² To this end, Ælfric's interest in marriage in his *Lives of Saints* reflected part of his contribution to the Benedictine Reform: he did not merely comment on the secular practice of marriage, but rather re-constructed that practice as a religious and spiritual one.¹¹³ In constructing the model for moral marriage, Ælfric stood at the 'intersection between the monastery and the secular Church, religious ideology and social practices, vernacular literacy and Latin learning'.¹¹⁴

Ælfric's positive treatment of marriage in his *Lives of Saints* (specifically his virgin-martyr and married saint *passiones*) requires the re-assessment of the assumption that early hagiography is by definition anti-matrimonial. This assumption is often accepted without any critical reflection. For example, Glasser states that 'the earliest legends of saints', which he defines as those written before the twelfth century, 'in which marriage is an issue, the legends of virgin martyrs, treat marriage as an evil which the virgins must avoid in order to achieve the status of sainthood'.¹¹⁵ Even without the immediate context of Ælfric's constructive re-assessment of the good of marriage, the anti-matrimonial assumption may be criticised, as it is by Cartlidge who argues that 'even in anti-matrimonial polemic, for example, a pristine ideal of marriage can be sustained in the

¹¹¹ John Oppel, 'Saint Jerome and the History of Sex', *Viator*, 24 (1993), 1-22 (p. 11).

¹¹² For a discussion of this understanding of marriage as found in the *Lives of Saints* in the context of Ælfric's other works, see below, Chapter 4, pp. 383-91.

¹¹³ Ælfric's interest in marriage can also be understood in the broader, continental context, where, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the church actively tried to impose impediments, such as consanguinity and affinity, to marriage (Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 137-41).

¹¹⁴ Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, 'Before History, Before Difference: Bodies, Metaphor, and the Church in Anglo-Saxon England', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 11 (1998), 315-34 (p. 325).

¹¹⁵ Glasser, 'Marriage in Saints' Legends', p. i; see also his 'Marriage in Hagiography'.

suggestion that marriage on earth is the debasement of an essentially heavenly state'.¹¹⁶

Further, Cartlidge notes that hagiographies are

the products of religious institutions, and as such, their composition is naturally biased towards material which either problematizes marriage or places a particular moral or ideological emphasis upon it. The paradox which has emerged [...] is that even while several of these authors [hagiographers] specifically subscribe to the established anti-matrimonial discourse inherited from patristic antiquity, their work nevertheless often betrays a sensitive and flexible approach to the intellectual value and emotional impact of marriage.¹¹⁷

Glasser ignores the fact that there exist several early medieval hagiographies in which couples chose to live in marital unions that were asexual and loving, and that 'this motif [virginal marriage] virtually dominated hagiographical depictions of marriage until the eleventh century'.¹¹⁸ That Ælfric chose to include three such married saints in his *Lives of Saints* is indicative both of his interest in marriage and his generally pro-('true') matrimonial stance.

3.2.2 Moral Regulation and Hagiography

Ælfric disseminated his ideal, 'true' marriage through the regulatory genre of hagiography. Hagiography as a genre was didactic: saints were role models for exemplary Christian living, inspiration for Christians who were better instructed by the examples of the saints than by precepts.¹¹⁹ As Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg explains:

the alleged purpose or expressed end of all saints' Lives was [...] pastoral and didactic: to edify the faithful, to teach Christian virtue, and strengthen Christian resolve [...] The Church hoped that through the use of *exempla*, or models of saintly behavior, the faithful might modify their behavior or bring about 'conversions' in their own spiritually

¹¹⁶ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 73.

¹¹⁹ Ambrose 'vel [...] arrogasse amplius videremur, exemplis potius quam praeceptis putavimus imbuendam: licet amplius proficiatur exemplo' ('thought it better to instruct by examples [of the virgin saints] than by precepts; for more progress may be made by means of an example'; *De Virginibus*, II:I.2, col. 0207D).

deficient lives. Many of the saints' Lives specifically mention edification as their primary purpose.¹²⁰

Hagiography, then, was didactic in its confirmation of Christian doctrine and its provision of saintly exempla, whose behaviour manifested that doctrine; such didacticism was regulatory because its purpose was the modification of behaviour. Further, 'in the late tenth century hagiography became a part of the remarkable movement to provide sermons in the vernacular for the common people'¹²¹ so that, for Ælfric, vernacular hagiographies represented accessible didactic models for imparting and demonstrating morality.

There exists an inherent contradiction in the hagiographic genre, however. Saints were 'idealized figures',¹²² quintessential paragons modelled on Christ's image. They were not, however, attainable models: the saints were ultimately inimitable, too saintly and too idealised to 'provide models for mortals'¹²³ precisely because their behaviour was too supremely excellent and/or extreme to be emulated by individual Christians. In addition, as Hill argues, saints' lives

reflect a world where God's presence and judgement, rather than being as agonizingly remote as they often seem to be in the [audience's] world of experience, are immediate and omnipresent and where Christian ideals and values have decisive finality unhindered by any 'realistic' considerations.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, p. 22. See also Margaret Enid Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, *Anglistica*, 22 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1984), p. 18; J. E. Cross, 'English Vernacular Saints' Lives Before 1000 AD', in *Hagiographies*, ed. by Philippart, pp. 413-27 (p. 413); Thomas D. Hill, 'Imago Dei: Genre, Symbolism and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography', in *Holy Men*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 35-50 (p. 40); Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, pp. 8-9; Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 9.

¹²¹ Rosemary Woolf, 'Saints' Lives', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. by Eric Gerald Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 37-66 (p. 39).

¹²² Leslie A. Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives in Old English Prose*, Library of Medieval Women (Cambridge: D S Brewer, 1999), p. 10.

¹²³ Patrick Geary, 'Saints, Scholars, and Society: The Elusive Goal', in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. by Sandro Sticca, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 141 (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 1-22 (p. 15). As Geary states, 'imitatio is not a constant goal of hagiography' (p. 15).

¹²⁴ Hill, 'Imago Dei', p. 40. Hill further accounts for this hagiographic contradiction, since one 'of their [saints' lives] functions is to provide moral *exempla*; and yet it could easily be argued that typically the *vitae* are so utterly unrealistic that they hardly provide appropriate *exempla* for real Christians living in the world of history. It could even be argued that the world of absolutely clearest moral choice depicted in the *vitae*

In other words, hagiographies portrayed ideal models in a remote and extreme world, not necessarily examples for emulation.

Nevertheless, hagiography was still a form of moral regulation. Whether or not a saint's *concrete* behaviour was imitable, the *abstract* moral principle and doctrine which informed that behaviour usually was. For instance, in terms of the virgin-martyr *passiones*, Anglo-Saxon audiences could not reasonably have hoped to emulate the virgins' ultimate sacrifice of their lives through martyrdom; however, the virgins' unwavering devotion to, and faith in, Christ's majesty (the moral basis on which the virgins' martyrdoms were founded) did establish a basic tenet of Christianity which should be replicated in the lives of individual Christians. It is not the saints' concrete behaviour that the audience needed to replicate, then; rather, they should learn morality from the saint's idealised, abstract, faith and dedicate their lives to imitating (or at least attempting to imitate) this aspect of saintliness. Hagiography, then, was a genre which was 'aim[ed] at edification'¹²⁵ through the saints' examples of perfect Christian morality and faith, albeit made manifest by the saints' quasi-divine, 'superhuman' actions.¹²⁶ Thus, as Hippolyte Delehaye asserts, hagiographies 'are parables or stories designed to bring out some religious truth or moral principle. The author tells a story in order to drive home a lesson more effectively'¹²⁷ and the action of the narrative is distinct from the moral principle which that narrative illustrates. Such an understanding of hagiography reconciles the seemingly contradictory duality of the saint as a model of Christian living and a figure impossible to emulate.

conflicts with that fundamental aspect of Christian ethics which forbids one Christian to offer final judgement upon another' (p. 47). See also Hugh Magennis, 'Warrior Saints, Warfare, and the Hagiography of Ælfric of Eynsham', *Traditio*, 56 (2000), 27-51 (pp. 48-49).

¹²⁵ Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. by Donald Attwater (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998; first publ. Société des Bollandistes, 1955), p. 3.

¹²⁶ Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives*, p. 10.

¹²⁷ Delehaye, *Legends of the Saints*, p. 50.

Ælfric himself concurred with this assessment of the two-fold purpose of hagiography. In his Latin *Praefatio* to his *Lives of Saints*, he said:

Hunc quoque codicem transtulimus de latinitate ad usitatam Anglicam sermocinationem, studentes aliis prodesse edificando ad fidem lectione huius narrationis [...] Illa uero que scripturus sum suspicor non offendere audientes, sed magis fide torpentes recreare hortationibus, quia martyrum passiones nimium fidem erigant languentem.

This book also have I translated from the Latin into the usual English speech, desiring to profit others by edifying them in the faith whenever they read this relation [...] But I think that those things which I am now going to write will not at all offend the hearers, but will rather refresh by their exhortations such as are slothful in the faith, since the Passions of the Martyrs greatly revive a failing faith. (*ÆLS [Pref]*: pp. 2-7; 1-3, 14-17)

Two points are worthy of note here: firstly, Ælfric identified his purpose as ‘edificando ad fidem’ (‘edification in the faith’; 3); secondly, Ælfric saw this edification stemming from his *hortationibus* (‘exhortations’; 16) and from the inspiration of the ‘martyrum passiones’ (‘Passions of the Martyrs’; 16). Ælfric, then, did not see the examples of the saints as discouraging in their extremity; although absolute emulation may not have been possible, these examples were intended by Ælfric to encourage his audience to the faith. In his Old English preface dedicated to the laymen, Æthelweard and Æthelmær, Ælfric further refined his intention:

We awritað fela wundra on þissere bec . forþan þe god is wundor-lic on his halgum swa swa we ær sædon . and his halgena wundra wurðiað hine. forþan þe he worhte þa wundra þurh hi [...] Him gerisð þæt he hæbbe halige þenas þe his willan gefyllað [...] Hi synd ungeryme swa swa hit gerisð gode.

In this book, we will write about many wonders because God is wonderful in His saints, just as we said previously, and His saints’ wonders honour Him because He performed those wonders through them [...] It befits Him that He should have holy servants who fulfil His will [...] They are countless in number, just as befits God. (56-58, 64-65, 69)

Ælfric, then, identified two distinct purposes for his *Lives of Saints*. One was to inspire the faithful by recounting the passions of the saints: the Old English preface defined the source of that inspiration as God, whose power was embodied in the saints’ miraculous deeds. The other was to exhort his audience to be God’s holy servants, to emulate the

saints' model of faith so as to join the fellowship of the innumerable devout servants of Christ. On the one hand, the saints' wondrous behaviour could not be emulated because it was God-given. On the other, the faith and devotion which the saints taught should be emulated: 'We magon niman gode bysne [...] æt þam halgum þe þam hælende folgodon' ('We may take good examples [...] from the saints who followed the path of the Saviour'; *ÆLS.16 [Memory of Saints]*: pp. 336-63; 9-12). The saints, then, were the intermediaries between heaven and earth: their inimitable behaviour befitted and reflected God's wonderful power – indeed they were human mediums through which God demonstrated His power – whilst their imitable motivation translated the highest ideal of absolute faith into the earthly, and thus accessible, realm.¹²⁸ The regulatory moral content of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* was not contained in the saints' miracles or the extreme deeds that they performed through the passion sequences, but rather in their earthly epitomization of moral Christian living: faith, obedience and virtue.¹²⁹

Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* were written for a mixed ecclesiastical-secular audience and thus maintained the lack of division between the religious and secular spheres which was characteristic of texts of moral regulation. Although there has been considerable debate concerning Ælfric's primary intended audience for the *Lives of Saints*, most scholars acknowledge that while he wrote his *Lives* with the specific patronage of his secular dedicatees in mind (Ælfric explicitly dedicated his *Lives* to the laymen Æthelweard and Æthelmær),¹³⁰ he also envisaged the dissemination of his work to a much wider, mixed

¹²⁸ This idea is explored in Augustine's *De civitate dei*, a book 'devoted to redefining the nature of the true intermediaries between God and men'. For Augustine, saints (specifically martyrs), as true servants of God, were intermediaries between men and God. See Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 1-6, pp. 60-61; Peter Brown, 'The Notion of Virginity in the Early Church', in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopaedic History of the Religious Quest*, 16 (London: Routledge, 1986), pp. 427-43 (p. 433).

¹²⁹ 'The fact that the increase in writing [hagiographies] occurred at the same time as the reforming movement indicates a connection between the efforts of the hagiographers and the general ambience created by the reformers' (David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1989], p. 176).

¹³⁰ See *ÆLS (Pref)*: 35-41.

audience.¹³¹ Thus, in his Old English Preface, Ælfric foresaw the potential for the further distribution of his *Lives of Saints* beyond Æthelweard and Æthelmær since he concluded his Preface by saying:

Ic bidde nu on godes naman gif hwa þas boc awritan wille . þæt he hi wel gerihte be þære bysne . and þær namare betwux ne sette þonne we awendon.

Now I pray, in God's name, that if anyone wishes to write out this book that he should correct it well according to this exemplar, and insert no more in it than we have translated [here]. (74-76)

Ælfric's provision anticipated the transmission of his work beyond his immediate lay patrons. Since it has been comprehensively argued that Latin literacy among ecclesiasts remained low in the eleventh-century,¹³² it is probable that Ælfric understood that his translations would be useful and necessary in such ecclesiastical centres in which Latin literacy remained problematic. Indeed, as Lees argues, his 'choice of English blurs the distinctions between lay and learned, cleric and people, so evident in Latin works. [...] English homilists were writing for multiple levels of intended readers, editors and listeners'.¹³³ Thus Ælfric says that:

Ne secge we nan þincg niwes on þissere gesetnysse . forþan ðe hit stod gefyrn awriten on ledenbocum þeah þe þa *læwedan* men þæt nyston.

We say nothing new in this instruction since it has stood written down long ago in Latin books, although *unlettered* men did not know that. (*ÆLS [Pref]*: 46-48; my emphasis)

That is, Ælfric's work was only necessary because Latin versions were inaccessible to men who were illiterate in Latin, whether clerical or secular: thus, the *Lives of Saints* had application in both ecclesiastical and lay circles.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 128.

¹³² Whatley, 'Late Old English Hagiography', p. 447.

¹³³ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 34.

¹³⁴ On this issue see Mary Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), 207-42 (p. 241); Malcolm Godden, 'Experiments in Genre: The Saints' Lives in Ælfric's "Catholic Homilies"', in *Holy Men*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 261-87 (pp. 261-62); *ÆCH: Introduction*, pp. xxi-xxix. Hugh Magennis identifies the potential for a monastic audience in his 'St Mary of Egypt and Ælfric', see especially p. 105 and p. 109. See also Elizabeth A. Gulley, 'Virginity, Chastity, and Modes of Female Piety: Ælfric's Virgin Martyr Legends and His Sources' (unpublished doctoral thesis, the University of North Carolina,

When we turn to Ælfric's construction and consequent idealisation of 'true' marriage in his *Lives of Saints*, it is reasonable to assume that he was directing his regulation at laymen and married clergy,¹³⁵ although ecclesiasts, too, needed to know what the ideals of Christian marriage were, so that they were able to promote that morality to their lay congregations. For the purposes of my argument both in this chapter and in Chapter 4, however, I have confined my understanding of Ælfric's audience to that which he explicitly identifies – the noble, devout laity represented by Æthelweard and Æthelmær, to whom the *Lives of Saints* is dedicated – since Ælfric's wider audience is ultimately unknowable. Ælfric's prescription of the church's ideal of moral marriage through hagiography resulted in the Christian regulation of a secular institution:¹³⁶ 'in the later Anglo-Saxon period vernacular saints' lives may be seen as providing an instrument by means of which church authorities increasingly brought the faithful into its saving embrace and its control'.¹³⁷ However, it is important to stress the fact that this discussion about Ælfric's construction of 'true', asexual marriage concerns his construction of an ideal: Ælfric's 'true' marriage reflected his ultimate ideal for matrimony. It is unlikely that Ælfric expected his ideal to be reflected regularly in the reality of his audience's marital lives. It is likely, however, if only because of the didactic hagiographic mode within which he expounded his ideal, that Ælfric expected his audience to attempt to imitate the ideal, and thus 'modify their behavior or bring about "conversions" in their own spiritually deficient lives' accordingly.¹³⁸ As Elliott asserts, although hagiographies 'are often pious fabrications, they are no less culturally "true" – true to beliefs, yearnings, and fantasies of their writers and readers. Whether representative of actual situations or not, they struck a

1997) who argues throughout her dissertation that Ælfric rewrote his lives of the Roman virgin saints so as to be *exempla* for nuns or female monastics. For arguments pertaining to Ælfric's potentially secular audience, see Anderson, 'Saints' Legends', p. 94; Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', p. 225; Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 128. See also Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints', p. 158.

¹³⁵ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', pp. 160–61.

¹³⁶ Brooke, *Idea of Marriage*, p. 39.

¹³⁷ Magennis, 'Warrior Saints and Warfare', p. 50.

¹³⁸ Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, p. 22.

responsive chord'.¹³⁹ It is not my intention, then, to suggest that Ælfric's construction of a theology of 'true' marriage points towards the social reality of Anglo-Saxon marital experience.

3.3 '*Christus Sponsus*' as Ideal: The Construction of Christ in the Life of St Agnes

3.3.1 Life of St Agnes: Backgrounds and Contexts

Agnes was undoubtedly one of the most popular saints, both in the Roman tradition and throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. She died in Rome in the late-third or early-fourth century.¹⁴⁰ She was reportedly honoured by Constantina, Emperor Constantine's daughter, with the erection of a basilica over her grave (on the Via Nomentana, Rome), in the 350s.¹⁴¹ Further,

her name was in the Roman Canon; her feast was kept in numerous churches of both East and West from early times. This evidence from calendars and martyrologies makes her one of the most famous and universal of the early Roman martyrs.¹⁴²

In terms of calendars and martyrologia, Farmer notes that 'the earliest witness to her cult is the *Depositio Martyrum*', a list of the martyrs' feast-days included in the commonplace book (or 'Philocalian Calendar' or *Chronographia*) of Furius Dionysius Philocalus (AD

¹³⁹ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 65.

¹⁴⁰ Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints*, 1 (London: Charles Dolman, 1847), pp. 246-50 (p. 246).

¹⁴¹ *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. by Everett Ferguson, 2nd edn, 2 vols, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1839 (New York: Garland, 1997), p. 26; Veronica Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual, and Artistic Exchanges* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 136; E. Gordon Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Pres, and Acta Sanctorum*, ed. by Frederick Biggs *et al.*, 1 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), pp. 22-486 (p. 58). It is usual to find Constantia's *alia sententia* appended to Agnes's, as it is here in Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes* (296-429) (*The Old French Lives of Saint Agnes and Other Vernacular Versions of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Alexander Joseph Denomy, Harvard Studies in Romance Languages, 13 [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938], pp. 35-37).

¹⁴² David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), p. 5.

354).¹⁴³ Her presence in the *Depositio Martyrum* suggests that Agnes was honoured in Rome in the mid-fourth century. She is also found in the influential *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (a pseudo-Jeromian martyrology, probably composed in Southern Gaul or Aquileia, late fifth century), and ‘Agnes occurs in [...] many of the most influential early martyrologies and calendars’, (for instance, in the late sixth century ‘Calendar of Carthage’), attesting to her popularity throughout the early Christian era.¹⁴⁴

The earliest extant version of the Agnes legend is that found in Ambrose’s *De Virginibus* (I:II.5–9; written AD 377),¹⁴⁵ and indeed her *passio* was probably the earliest of the Roman *passiones*.¹⁴⁶ Ambrose’s account of her martyrdom dwells at length on her age and on her steadfastness of faith and courage, but is not a fully developed narrative of her *passio*; rather, in his own words, it is a *laudatio* (‘panegyric’; I:II.6, col. 0190D). A number of other early versions also exist: a hymn, *Agnes beatae virginis*, ‘dated later than Ambrose’s sermon (and sometimes attributed to him), but written before the end of the fourth century’;¹⁴⁷ the so-called inscription of Pope Damasus (AD 366 to 384);¹⁴⁸ a short dedication to her by Augustine (*Sermo* 273:6, col. 1250),¹⁴⁹ and an account in the *Peristephanon* of the Spanish Christian writer, Prudentius of Calahorra (written c. AD 400;

¹⁴³ Farmer, *Dictionary of Saints*, p. 5; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 60.

¹⁴⁴ Donovan, *Women Saints’ Lives*, p. 46. Anne-Marie Palmer summarises the early Agnes history thus: ‘St Agnes was one of the few saints commemorated in the early *Depositio martyrum*: “XII Kal. Feb. Agnetis in Nomentana”. This date recurs in the *Hieronymian Martyrology*[.] in the calendars of Carthage and Naples, in the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum* and *Gregorianum*, in the *Capitularia evangeliorum*, and in the Lectionaries’ (Prudentius on the Martyrs [Oxford: Clarendon, 1989], p. 250).

¹⁴⁵ Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginité and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages*, Routledge Research in Medieval Studies, 2 (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 54; Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 4–7; Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 58.

¹⁴⁶ Michael Lapidge, ‘Roman Martyrs and their Miracles in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic Literature*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra, Germania Latina V, Mediaevalia Groningana, NS 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 95–120 (p. 103).

¹⁴⁷ Kelly, *Performing Virginité*, p. 54; Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 7–11.

¹⁴⁸ Lapidge notes that ‘Damasus [...] was largely responsible for the establishment of cult centres for martyrs in Roman churches, and for the provision of *tituli* or epigrams to commemorate the martyrs in question’ (‘Roman Martyrs’, p. 102); Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 11–14.

¹⁴⁹ Augustinus Hipponensis, ‘Sermo CCLXXIII’, *Classis III, De Sanctis*, in *PL*, vol. 38; Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 58.

no. XIV).¹⁵⁰ Regarding these sources, Thompson notes that ‘the information provided [...] suggests little more than that Agnes was martyred at a young age during the time of the Diocletian persecutions, perhaps around 305’.¹⁵¹ A final early witness to Agnes’s *passio* is in the *Acts of the Martyrdom of St Agnes*, including two Greek recensions,¹⁵² and one late-fifth or early-sixth century Latin recension, the *Gesta sanctae Agnes*, which incorporates some seventh-century additions:¹⁵³ it is this Latin, pseudo-Ambrosian *Gesta sanctae Agnes* which ‘forms the basis for virtually all medieval versions of the popular and widely disseminated legend of St. Agnes’.¹⁵⁴ The *Gesta* is the basis of the version found in the Cotton-Corpus legendary,¹⁵⁵ upon which Ælfric, in turn, modelled his vernacular translation of the *Life of St Agnes* in his hagiographic collection.¹⁵⁶

Agnes was one of ‘the three most popular Roman martyrs in Anglo-Saxon England (and possibly on the Continent as well)’,¹⁵⁷ and since ‘there is no doubt that the Roman calendar had a major impact on the observance (or at least knowledge) of saints’ festivals in the English church’,¹⁵⁸ her popularity in the Roman tradition fostered her similar reputation in England. During the Anglo-Saxon period, her name is commemorated in

¹⁵⁰ Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 14–17. Denomy notes that ‘it becomes clear’ that Prudentius knew the writings of both Ambrose and Damasus on Agnes (p. 15), but Palmer’s conclusion is that ‘it is impossible to connect Prudentius’ version of the story too closely with either of the two earlier treatments, which seem incomplete, or perhaps even the products of two slightly different traditions. Prudentius may represent a third tradition’ (*Prudentius on the Martyrs*, p. 253). Whatley further notes that Damasus’s inscription, ‘along with an acrostic inscription attributed to Constantia, are preserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 23 ([...]ca. 1000, at Malmesbury by the eleventh century), after the end of the text of Prudentius’s *Peristephanon* XIV’ (Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, pp. 58–59).

¹⁵¹ Thompson, ‘Legend of St. Agnes’, p. 362.

¹⁵² Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 17–23: ‘it immediately becomes apparent that the Greek *Passio* has very little in common with the tradition as portrayed by Saints Ambrose and Damasus, and the poet Prudentius’ (p. 19).

¹⁵³ Thompson, ‘Legend of St. Agnes’, p. 362; Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 24–32.

¹⁵⁴ Thompson, ‘Legend of St. Agnes’, p. 355.

¹⁵⁵ Jackson and Lapidge, ‘Contents of Cotton-Corpus’, p. 135; Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 58; Zettel, ‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources’, p. 213. Denomy recounts the *Gesta* which is immediately recognisable as the source of the legend found in the Cotton-Corpus legendary, and thus the ultimate source of Ælfric’s version (*Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 25–26).

¹⁵⁶ Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 59; Lapidge, ‘Roman Martyrs’, p. 117; Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, p. 135; Zettel, ‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources’, p. 213.

¹⁵⁷ Lapidge, ‘Roman Martyrs’, p. 114.

¹⁵⁸ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 61–62.

forty-three of the extant litanies of the saints,¹⁵⁹ as well as in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' (an Anglo-Saxon handbook for pilgrimages to martyr-shrines in Rome).¹⁶⁰ Her feast day, 21 January, is commemorated in all of the extant calendars of the Anglo-Saxon period;¹⁶¹ her octave (28 January) also appears in the majority of these calendars.¹⁶² Both her feast-day and her octave are commemorated in the Anglo-Latin metrical calendars: Agnes is named in the Metrical Calendar of York (henceforth MCY), in the Metrical Calendar of Hampson (henceforth MCH), and in the Metrical Calendar of Ramsey (henceforth MCR).¹⁶³ Lapidge notes that such metrical calendars appear 'to have been intended as a sort of poetic martyrology'.¹⁶⁴ The MCY, composed in the second half of the eighth century at York, 'enjoyed the widest circulation and diffusion in medieval Europe'.¹⁶⁵ Both the MCH (English, early tenth century) and the MCR (English, Ramsey, late tenth century) were probably at least partly based upon a continental redaction of the MCY;¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, Henry Bradshaw Society, 106 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), nos. I.109, II.i.61, IV.ii.29, V.133, VI.109, VII.i.61, VII.ii.80, VIII.i.76, VIII.ii.74, IX.i.122, XI.30, XII.133, XIII.99, XVI.i.98, XVI.ii.300, XVIII.79, XIX.61, XXI.104, XXII.i.120, XXIII.272, XIV.183, XXV.26, XXVI.53, XXVII.106, SSVIII.57, XXIX.ii.135, XXX.29, XXXII.113, XXXIII.82, XXXIV.55, XXV.i.58, XXXVI.87, XXXVII.i.82, XXXVIII.130, XXXIX.92, XL.69, XLI.i.61, XLI.iii.74, XLII.i.35, XLII.ii.29, XLIII.121, XLIV.236, XLV.91. The following discussion of Agnes's popularity in Anglo-Saxon England has been verified against Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', p. 117.

¹⁶⁰ 'The work is preserved uniquely by William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta regum*, but clearly dates from many centuries earlier: the shrines commemorated point to the period of 648-682' (Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', pp. 110-11).

¹⁶¹ *English Kalendars Before AD 1100*, ed. by Francis Wormald, Henry Bradshaw Society, 72 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988; first publ., 1934); *The Calendar of Willibrord from MS. Paris. Lat. 10837*, ed. by H. A. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society, 55 (London: Harrison, 1918).

¹⁶² Farmer notes that 28 January 'seems to have commemorated her birthday rather than her octave', although it should equally be noted that most of the calendars (including metrical) tell us that it is her octave (*Dictionary of Saints*, p. 6).

¹⁶³ See André Wilmart, 'Un témoin anglo-saxon du calendrier métrique d'York', *Revue Bénédictine*, 46 (1934), 41-69; P. McGurk, 'The Metrical Calendar of Hampson: A New Edition', *Analecta Bollandia*, 104 (1986), 79-125; Michael Lapidge, 'A Tenth-Century Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', *Revue Bénédictine*, 94 (1984), 326-69.

¹⁶⁴ Lapidge, 'Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', p. 326.

¹⁶⁵ Lapidge, 'Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', p. 327.

¹⁶⁶ Lapidge notes of the MCH that 'a continental redaction of MCY apparently travelled back to England and served as the point of departure for a more ambitious metrical calendar by a poet who was arguably active in Anglo-Saxon England' ('Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', pp. 342-43) and of MCR that 'at some time in the last decade of the tenth century [...] an anonymous poet at Ramsey produced a metrical calendar by relying on MCY (possibly in a continental redaction), MCH, and a liturgical calendar in local use at Ramsey' (p. 356).

the MCH is also a source for the MCR.¹⁶⁷ The significance of these relationships is that they are witnesses to Agnes's continued popularity from the eighth through to the late tenth century, both on the continent and in England: her dedication on 21 January in the MCR (the latest redaction) is derived from the MCY.¹⁶⁸ Donovan also notes that 'material from the *Life of St Agnes* is included in English liturgical ceremonies after the tenth century, in which nuns made their permanent vows'.¹⁶⁹ She is thus one of the most regularly and consistently venerated saints in Anglo-Saxon England, although she not honoured in the Old English *Menologium* (metrical calendar).¹⁷⁰

Agnes's popularity is thus attested by such liturgical apparatus as calendars and litanies. However, before an analysis of Ælfric's version of her legend (the *Life of St Agnes*, *ÆLS.7 [Agnes]*: pp. 170-93) can be undertaken, it is important to contextualise further his reworking of it by reference to the other extant, Anglo-Saxon redactions of Agnes's *passio*. Of particular importance to this chapter is the prominence, or lack thereof, given to Agnes's extended speech to her Roman suitor, in which she rejects the suitor and employs the *sponsa Christi* motif at length: it is this speech which is the subject of the analysis in the following section. Agnes's legend is retold by Aldhelm in his prose *De Virginitate* and in his *Carmen de Virginitate*; in Bede's *Matyrologium*, and in the anonymous Old English *Martyrology*.¹⁷¹ In his prose *De Virginitate*, Aldhelm presents a full account of Agnes's martyrdom (no. XLV), including an abbreviated version of her rejection speech to her suitor, in which she declares that she has another lover, Christ, who has betrothed himself to her (col. 0145C). Similarly, in Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate*, Agnes asserts

¹⁶⁷ Lapidge, 'Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', pp. 352-53.

¹⁶⁸ Lapidge, 'Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', p. 363.

¹⁶⁹ Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁰ *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by E. van K. Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

¹⁷¹ Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 58.

her status as *sponsa Christi*.¹⁷² Bede, in his *Martyrologium* (written between AD 725 and 731; the ‘first “narrative” martyrology in the West’),¹⁷³ dedicates a three-line litany to Agnes, but does not develop her legend.¹⁷⁴ Ælfric knew both Aldhelm’s *De Virginitate* and Bede’s *Martyrology*.¹⁷⁵ Agnes’s account in the ninth century Old English *Martyrology* does not include her speech at all. However, the Old English *Martyrology* does recount Agnes’s appearance to her parents after her death; Agnes says ‘ic eom to Criste on heofonum geþeoded þone ic ær on eorðan lufade’ (‘I am joined to Christ in heaven, whom I loved on earth before’; 21 Jan, 28.9–10).¹⁷⁶ Agnes’s relationship with Christ is otherwise disregarded in this version.

The Anglo-Saxon accounts of Agnes’s *passio* in Aldhelm and the anonymous *Martyrology* do acknowledge the *sponsa Christi* motif but their references to the motif are conspicuously brief when compared to the *Gesta sanctae Agnetis*: in the *Gesta*, Agnes’s speech and her role as *sponsa Christi* are developed at length. In Ælfric’s *Life of St Agnes*, Agnes’s speech is carefully reproduced from his source, the *Gesta*. Ælfric’s *Life of St Agnes* is thus anomalous in an Anglo-Saxon context in its concentration on Agnes as *sponsa Christi*: he is not following established Anglo-Saxon hagiographic tradition in reproducing Agnes’s speech verbatim. It must be acknowledged that Ælfric’s account of Agnes’s rejection speech is closely modelled on the *Gesta* as he found it in the Cotton-Corpus legendary. However, Ælfric’s choice to reproduce his Latin source almost word for word,

¹⁷² R. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera Omnia*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi, XV (Berlin, 1919); *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), pp. 102–70.

¹⁷³ Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 23.

¹⁷⁴ *Édition Pratique des martyrologes de Bède, de l’anonyme Lyonnais et Florus*, ed. by Jacques Dubois and Geneviève Renaud (Paris: Editions du centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1976), p. 18. Bede knew Aldhelm’s *De Virginitate*, prose and poetic (Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, p. 13) but chooses not to reproduce Agnes’s legend in his *Martyrologium*.

¹⁷⁵ *Fontes*.

¹⁷⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of the Old English *Martyrology* are from George Herzfeld’s edition, *An Old English Martyrology*, EETS OS 116 (Oxford: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1900; repr. 1973); all further references to the *Martyrology* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

when coupled with his treatment of similar themes in some of his other *Lives*,¹⁷⁷ is indicative of his new conception of marriage and contributes to his overall purpose of establishing the new moral marriage for devout, noble Anglo-Saxon couples.

3.3.2 Ælfric's Ideal Marriage

As Hugh Magennis rightly states:

Ælfric is generally not drawn to the *sponsa Christi* motif in his saints' lives. He dutifully passes on from his sources some occurrences of the figure but shows little inclination to develop it further or, with one important exception, to treat it at length.¹⁷⁸

The 'one important exception' is the *Life of St Agnes*, including an *alia sententia* on St Constance. Although it is true that, as Magennis also observes, Ælfric's use of the *sponsa Christi* motif in the *Life of St Agnes* is 'unique among Ælfric's writings, and anyway is throughout closely based on its source',¹⁷⁹ it is also significant that Ælfric chose to include this motif when, as has been noted above, he condenses his sources and omits motifs or episodes that confuse, or are peripheral to, his main argument.¹⁸⁰ That is, it is noteworthy that Ælfric *chooses* to retain the motif in his *Life of St Agnes* and to translate it from his source, almost in full, rather than omitting or radically condensing it,¹⁸¹ as he does in other places, especially since he is 'not drawn' to the motif in general.

Ælfric does employ the *sponsa Christi* motif, albeit fleetingly, in other *Lives*. In his *Life of St Eugenia* (ÆLS.2 [*Eugenia*]: pp. 24-51), Ælfric notes of Basilla that 'heo hæfde gecoren

¹⁷⁷ As will be discussed in Chapter 4, see below, pp. 314-69.

¹⁷⁸ Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery', pp. 3-4. Magennis notes that most Anglo-Saxon authors are reticent to use, or at least to develop, the *sponsa Christi* motif, with the possible exception of the anonymous author of the Old English *Life of St Margaret* (p. 5). It should be noted, however, that some post-Conquest Latin saints' lives of indigenous, Anglo-Saxon saints do independently employ the motif, such as Goscelin's *Life of St Mildrith*; the *Life of St Eanswytha*, and the *Life of St Cuthburga* (see Phillip Pulsiano, 'Blessed Bodies: The Vitae of Anglo-Saxon Female Saints', *Parergon*, NS 16 [1999], 1-42 [pp. 23-34]).

¹⁷⁹ Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery', p. 4. See also Morrison, 'Figure of "Christus Sponsus"', p. 6.

¹⁸⁰ See discussion above, pp. 255-57.

¹⁸¹ As Denomy notes, Ælfric 'translates certain phrases of the Latin word for word [...] Ælfric has taken very few liberties with the legend as he found it' (*Lives of Saint Agnes*, pp. 135-36).

crist hyre to bryd-guman' ('she had chosen Christ as her bridegroom'; 352) and 'þa nolde basilla brydguman geceosan nænne butan crist þe heo gecoren hæfde' ('then Basilla would choose none as her bridegroom except Christ, whom she had chosen'; 365-66).¹⁸² Ælfric makes reference to the motif in his legend of St Basil (*ÆLS.3 [Basil]*: pp. 50-91); when a certain thane's daughter becomes inflamed by lust and desires an earthly husband, the thane says, 'Ic wolde mid clænnysse criste þe be-weddian to engla gefærredena to frofre minre sawle' ('I wished to betroth you with chastity to Christ, to the fellowship of angels, for the comfort of my soul'; 394-95).¹⁸³ This example, however, does not fit the usual pattern of the developed motif of the willing bride of Christ. Finally, it is used in passing in *The Lives of St Chrysanthus and Daria* (*ÆLS.35 [Chrysanthus]*: pp. 378-99). Chrysanthus promises to Daria that 'þu mihtest habban þone hælend to brydguman gif þu hine lufodest' ('you would have the Saviour as a bridegroom if you were to love Him'; 95-96).¹⁸⁴ Again, this brief reference does not follow the usual pattern expected in the developed motif since it is Chrysanthus, rather than Daria, who wishes her to become a

¹⁸² Ælfric dramatically abbreviates his Latin source here, as printed in A. Fàbrega Grau, 'Eugeniae et Comitum', in *Pasionario Hispanico*, Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra: Serie Litùrgica, vol. VI, Tom. II (Madrid and Barcelona, 1955), 83-98 (see Chapters 36-37, pp. 95-96). Fàbrega Grau's edition is the closest in print of the Cotton-Corpus version which was Ælfric's source. See Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', pp. 195-96; Gopa Roy, 'Female Saints in Male Disguises – The Old English Lives of St Eugenia and St Euphrosyne: a Bibliographical Guide', *Medieval Sermon Studies*, Newsletter 31 (1993), 47-53 (pp. 48-49).

¹⁸³ It is difficult to ascertain to what extent Ælfric was translating this motif from his source since 'this important *vita* has not been published in full in its original form' and I was unable to access the manuscripts directly (London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero E. i; Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 221 [formerly Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fell 4]) (Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', pp. 104-5).

¹⁸⁴ Ælfric's translation is a simplification of his Latin source: 'Erunt de te proximi angeli laudantes, archangeli paranimphi, apostolic amici, martyres, Christus sponsus qui tibi thalamum in celo construit aeternis margaretis instructum, tradat tibi possessiones paradise, dotem tibi sempiternam tribuat, constituat tibi incomparabiles reditus, et flores in te gratissime renovet juvenis' (I.8). Ælfric instead has 'þu mihtest habban þone hælend to brydguman gif þu hine lufodest . and heolde þe clænlice . on ungewemmedum mægðhade . and þu wurde swa wlitig wiþ-innan on mode . swa swa þu wið-utan eart' (95-98), p. 240. In his 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', Upchurch has transcribed the Corpus Christi version (Cambridge, Corpus Christ College, MS 9, pp. 379-89) of this *passio* (pp. 233-53). Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of this *passio* are taken from Upchurch's transcription, since it represents the closest approximation of Ælfric's actual source (the Cotton-Corpus legendary) in print, although Whatley notes that 'Hereford, Cathedral Library P.VII.6 [is] a slightly more faithful witness to Ælfric's source than either the printed texts or the copy in the Cambridge manuscript' ('Acta Sanctorum', p. 140). All further references to the Latin source for Ælfric's *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

sponsa Christi.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Ælfric does not always translate the *sponsa Christi* motif from his source: for example, Bede, Ælfric's source for his *Life of St Æthelthryth* (*ÆLS.20* [*Æthelthryth*]: pp. 432-40), specifically designates Æthelthryth as *sponsæ Christi*,¹⁸⁶ Ælfric has no corresponding reference to Æthelthryth as Christ's spouse.

Despite the brevity of the three examples of Basilla, the thane's daughter and Daria as *sponsae Christi*, the character of the spiritual bridal role is developed to some extent. Basilla asserts two responsibilities of a *sponsa Christi*: fidelity and virginity. Since she had chosen Christ as her bridegroom (352), 'þone hæðenan wogere *forþi* habban nolde' ('[she] would not *therefore* accept the heathen suitor'; 353). Ælfric's emphasis on the causal link between Basilla being Christ's bride and, with the conjunction *forþi*, her being unwilling to accept her heathen suitor, constructs a requirement of a *sponsa Christi* to be loyal and truthful to her bridegroom, Christ. Similarly, there is a causal relationship established between Ælfric's assertion that Basilla had chosen Christ as her bridegroom (365-66) and his statement, which follows immediately, 'and wearð *þa* gemartyrod for hyre mægðhade' ('and [she] was *thereupon* martyred on account of her virginity'; 367): as a direct result of Basilla's choice of bridegroom, she is martyred *on account of* her virginity. That is, her virginity is conflated with her bridegroom: inseparably, they account for her martyrdom.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ In the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* (*ÆLS.4* [*Julian*]: pp. 90-115), Basilissa enters into chaste marriage with Julian, and thus attains 'ece lif and ðone hælend to bryd-guman' ('everlasting life and the Saviour as her bridegroom'; 48). This example is brief but complex and is discussed below, Chapter 4, p. 333. Although an analysis of it lies outside the remit of this chapter, Ælfric is concerned to develop the *ecclesia sponsa Christi* motif (the church as Bride of Christ), and he does so in both *CHI* and *CHII*. For some select examples, see *CHI.37* (*Dominica XXI. post Pentecosten*); *CHII.1* (*De Natale Domini*), *CHII.4* (*Dominica II post Aepiphania Domini*), *CHII.39* (*In Natale Sanctorum Virginum*). See also *Homily for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Assmann §3) and Morrison, 'Figure of "Christus Sponsus"', pp. 5-7: Morrison says that 'the figure of "Christus Sponsus" was evidently well-known to Anglo-Latin writers of the eighth century. For Bede, in his theological works, Christ was primarily the Bridegroom of his church, an association explicitly presented in the "Pauline Epistles" and one that stands at the heart of Augustine's thought' (p. 6). Ælfric appears to have inherited a similar interest in the motif.

¹⁸⁶ *HE*, Book IV; XIX (p. 394). In his elegiac hymn to Æthelthryth, Bede emphasises her as role as *sponsa Christi* (Book IV; XX [p. 400]).

¹⁸⁷ As Ambrose says, 'non enim ideo laudabilis virginitas, quia et in martyribus reperitur, sed quia ipsa martyres faciat' ('virginity is not praiseworthy because it is found in martyrs, but because itself makes martyrs'; *De Virginitate*, I:III.10, col. 0192D).

This assertion of virginal requirement finds support in the thane's comment in *The Life of St Basil* that he must wed his daughter to Christ 'mid clænnysse' ('with chastity'; 393). Likewise, Chrysanthus reinforces the requirement for virginity. He stipulates two conditions which will allow Daria to become a *sponsa Christi*: firstly, she must love Christ ('hine lufodest'; 96) and secondly, she must 'heolde þe cleānlīce on ungewemmedum mægðhade' ('preserve [her]self purely in undefiled virginity'; 96-97). The *sponsa Christi*, then, is loyal, loving and virginal.

It would be reasonable to expect that Ælfric would develop the character of the *sponsa Christi* more fully in *The Life of St Agnes*, where he engages with the motif at length, than he does in the examples cited above, where he refers to the motif in passing only. Ælfric gives Agnes a thirty-eight line exposition on the *sponsa Christi* motif (25-62);¹⁸⁸ her speech is framed ostensibly as an elaborate rejection of her earthly suitor but is in fact a didactic exploration of the relationship between Agnes and Christ as bride and bridegroom. However, an analysis of Agnes's speech shows that of the thirty-eight lines, only seven actually touch upon her role as *sponsa Christi*, and indeed, that her role is only somewhat more developed than that of Basilla and Daria.

Agnes's speech proceeds:

Gewit ðu fram me synne ontendnys leahtras foda . and deaðes bigleafa gewit fram me .
 Ic hæbbe oðerne lufiend . þinne ungelican . on æðelborennysse seðe me bead bæteran
 frætegunga . and his geleafan hring me let to wedde . and me gefrætewode . mid un-
 asmeagendlicra wurðfulnysse . He befeng minne swiðran . and eac minne swuran . mid
 deorwurðum stanum . and mid scinendum gimum . He gesette his tacn . on minum
 nebbe . þæt ic nænne oðerne ofer hine ne lufige . He geglængde me mid orle . of golde
 awefen . and mid ormettum mynum me gefretewode . He æt-eowde me eac . his
 ænlican hordas . ða he me gehet . gif ic him gelæste . Ne mæg ic him to teonan oðerne
 geceosan . and hine forlætan . þe me mid lufe beweddode . His ansyn is wlitigre . and

¹⁸⁸ In so doing, Ælfric does not abbreviate or reduce his Latin source substantially. As noted above, Ælfric's source is the anonymous pseudo-Ambrosian *Passio S. Agnetis* (or *Gesta sanctae Agnetis*) (see *Fontes*). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to this source are taken from Migne's edition, Auctor incertus (Ambrosius Mediolanensis?), *Epistolae ex Ambrosianarum Numero Segregatae, Epistola 1*, in *PL*, vol. 17; all further references to Ælfric's Latin source for his *Life of St Agnes* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

his lufu wynsumre . his bryd-bedd me is gearo . nu iu mid dreamum . His mædenu me singað . mid geswegum stemmum . Of his muðe ic under-feng meoluc . and hunig . nu iu ic eom beclypt . mid his clænum earmum . his fægera lichama is minum gerferlæht . and his blod ge-glende mine eah-hringas . His modor is mæden . and his mihtiga fæder wifes ne breac . and him a bugað englas . His wlites wuldriað . þa wynsumun tunglan . sunne . and mona . þe middan-eard onlihtað . Þurh his spæc geedcuciað eac ða deadan . and þurh his hrepunge beoð gestrangode þa unstrangan seocan . His speda ne ateoriað . ne his welan ne waniað . Þam anum ic healed minne truwan æfre . þam ic me befæste mid ealre estfulnysse . Þonne ic hine lufige . ic beo eallunga clæne . þonne Ic hine hreppa . ic beo unwemme . ðonne Ic hine under-fo . ic beo mæden forð . and þær bærn ne ateoriað . on ðam bryd-lace . Þær is eacnung buton sare . and singallic wæstmbærnyss.

‘Depart from me, you incitement of sin, food of vices, death’s sustenance: depart from me! I have another lover, dissimilar to you in [His] innate nobility, who has offered me better adornments, and has given me His ring me as a promise of His faith, and has adorned me with unfathomable magnificence. He has encircled my right hand and also my neck with precious stones and with shining jewels. He has set his token on my face so that I should love no other besides Him. He has adorned me with a veil woven of gold, and ornamented me with immeasurable jewels; He has also showed me His unmatched treasures, which He has promised me if I follow Him: I am not able to choose another to shame Him and abandon Him who has betrothed me through love. His countenance is more beautiful and His love more joyous [than yours]. His marriage bed is prepared with joys for me already now, His maidens sing to me with harmonious voices. From his mouth I have received milk and honey; I am now already embraced with His chaste arms; His beautiful body is united to mine and His blood has decorated my eyes. His mother is a virgin, and His mighty Father violated no woman, and angels always bow down to Him. The winsome constellations praise His splendour, the sun and moon, which illuminate the earth. Moreover, by His word the dead are restored to life and by His touch the weak sick are strengthened. His power is never lacking, His prosperity never wanes. I always preserve my pledge to the one alone to whom I have entrusted myself with all my devotion. When I love Him, I am wholly pure; when I touch Him, I am undefiled; when I receive Him, I am still a virgin, and there, in that marriage, no child is lacking. There is childbearing without suffering and perpetual fertility.’ (25-62)

Agnes first mentions her role as *sponsa Christi* nine lines into her monologue, when she states that ‘ic nænne oðerne ofer hine ne lufige’ (‘I should love no other besides Him [Christ]’; 35).¹⁸⁹ Her statement encompasses two of the three principles encountered in the Basilla and Daria examples: Agnes’s first loyalty must be to Christ (she should love no other) and, explicit in the statement, she must love Christ. That is, as *sponsa Christi* she

¹⁸⁹ In these lines, Ælfric follows his Latin source, which has ‘ut nullum praeter ipsum amatorem admittam’ (col. 0736A).

must be loving and loyal to Christ. The aspect of fidelity is reinforced when Agnes articulates the condition under which Christ will give her incomparable treasures. Christ will fulfil his promise of gifts ‘gif ic him gelæste: ne mæg ic him to teonan oðerne geceosan and hine forlætan’ (‘if I follow Him: I am not able to choose another to shame Him and abandon Him’; 39-41).¹⁹⁰ As *sponsa Christi* Agnes must be faithful to Christ both in terms of fidelity (she may not have another lover) and also in terms of her obedient company. *Gelæstan* has the connotations of ‘to follow’ or ‘to serve’, and Agnes’s loyalty to Christ is made manifest when she follows or serves Him.¹⁹¹ Yet *gelæstan* also connotes ‘to accompany’, and thus an aspect of Agnes’s bridal fidelity is that she accompanies, or is companion to, Christ; she is therefore not able to abandon (*forlætan*; 41) Him either physically or spiritually. Her final comment on her role as *sponsa Christi* appears in the closing section of her speech. She says:

þam anum ic heald minne truwan æfre . þam ic me befæst mid ealre estfulnysse .
 þonne ic hine lufige . ic beo eallunga clæne . þonne Ic hine hreppe . ic beo unwemme .
 ðonne Ic hine under-fó . ic beo mæden forð .

‘I always preserve my pledge to the one alone to whom I have entrusted myself with all my devotion. When I love Him, I am wholly pure; when I touch Him, I am undefiled; when I receive Him, I am still a virgin.’ (56-60)¹⁹²

The first sentence emphasises again Agnes’s need as *sponsa Christi* to be loyal to Christ. She always (*æfre*; 56) keeps her promise to Christ; she totally entrusts or commits (*befæst*; 57) herself to Him; and her faithfulness to Him is all-encompassing since she makes her pledge with all (*ealre*; 57) devotion. Her fidelity, then, is embodied in her utter devotion to Christ, physically, spiritually and emotionally. Agnes draws attention to the loving aspect of her relationship with Christ when she emphasises that she loves (*lufige*; 58) Him

¹⁹⁰ My punctuation. Although the sense remains the same, the Latin has the slightly expanded, ‘quos mihi se daturum repromisit, si in ejus perseveraero amore. Non ergo potero ad contumeliam prioris amatoris vel aspicere alium et illum relinquere’ (col. 0736B).

¹⁹¹ Ælfric’s focus on Agnes’s need to follow or accompany Christ (*gelæstan*) is an innovation on his Latin source, which instead focuses on the preservation of their love.

¹⁹² This statement closely follows Ælfric’s Latin source: ‘Ipsi soli servo fidem meam, ipsi me tota devotione committo. Quem cum amavero, casta sum: cum tetigero, munda sum: cum accepero, virgo sum. Nec deerunt post nuptias filii, ubi partus sine dolore succedit, et fecunditas quotidiana cumulatur’ (col. 0736C).

and appeals to the tactile or physical nature of their union in her erotic language of touching and receiving Christ: she loves Him emotionally and physically.¹⁹³ The notion of chastity, disregarded until this final sentence, gains particular emphasis here with the repetition of ‘þonne [...] ic beo’ (‘when [...] I am’) and *clæne*, *unwemme*, and *mæden*, which each have connotations of virginal purity. The effect of this accumulation of virginal imagery is not merely an emphatic statement of Agnes’s virginal state; when coupled with her assertion of complete devotion and fidelity, and the totality of her love for and loving of Christ, her statement is a concluding assertion of the role as *sponsa Christi* as absolute and all-encompassing. Nevertheless, despite her long soliloquy in which she reveals a nuanced understanding of the *sponsa Christi* role, Agnes does not add to the basic tripartite understanding of the *sponsa Christi* as loving, loyal and chaste as outlined in the shorter Basilla and Daria accounts.

In all of his references to the *sponsa Christi* motif, Ælfric adduces a three-fold concept of the concrete ways in which these women are brides to Christ: they love Christ absolutely, their loyalty for Him is unwavering and complete, and they are physically chaste. What is striking, then, about the three brief examples of Basilla, the thane’s daughter and Daria is that Christ’s complementary role as bridegroom, implicit though it must be, is lacking. Indeed, Christ himself is totally absent in these examples and they focus entirely on the woman as bride. In the *Life of St Eugenia*, Basilla actively chooses Christ as her bridegroom but Christ Himself plays no part in their betrothal relationship. We do not glimpse Christ as bridegroom in the thane’s daughter episode, since the betrothal with Christ is done ‘to frofre minre sawle’ (‘for the comfort of my soul’; 395), where the *minre* refers to the thane rather than to his daughter-bride, so that Christ’s action is not

¹⁹³ Since the *alia sententia* material concerning Constance, also in the *Life of St Agnes*, and the main *passio* concerning Agnes ‘were clearly written as a pair’ they may be considered together (Hill, ‘Dissemination of *ÆLS*’, p. 240). In the *alia sententia* on Constance, Constance refers to the *sponsa Christi* motif when she is praying for the salvation of her earthly suitor’s daughters, Attica and Arthemina. Constance prays ‘þæt hi þe anne lufian and eorðlice ðing ne gewilnion and mid beornendre lufe to þinum brydbedde becumen’ (‘that they love you alone and don’t wish for any earthly thing and come with burning love to your marriage-bed’; 331-32). The erotic language used by Agnes of her union with Christ is paralleled, then, by Constance.

explicitly related to His role as bridegroom. Equally, Chrysanthus's exhortation to Daria to become a *sponsa Christi* is replete with her responsibilities and duties as Christ's bride; Christ himself, indeed any explanation of his role as bridegroom, is absent and the passage betrays a one-sided relationship.

The *Life of St Agnes* marks a deviation from Ælfric's concentration solely on the bride as found in examples of Basilla, the thane's daughter and Daria. What is significant in the *Life of St Agnes* is that Ælfric is equally, if not more, concerned with the *Christus Sponsus* motif as with the *sponsa Christi* motif. In the *Life of St Agnes*, Christ is a present and active partner in the betrothal relationship,¹⁹⁴ and in Agnes's thirty-eight line speech, Christ's role as bridegroom is as prominent as her role as Christ's bride. This shift of emphasis is evident also in Ælfric's source, which he follows very closely: Ælfric barely condenses the speech, removing only superfluous repetition of the preciousness of Christ's gifts. Perhaps it is the concentration on and extended attention given to Christ (as well as Agnes) in the Pseudo-Ambrose account that appeals to Ælfric and prompts him to translate the episode almost verbatim, rather than condensing or omitting the motif, as is his normal tendency.¹⁹⁵ In the *Life of St Agnes*, Ælfric is able to explore a *full* relationship between

¹⁹⁴ In this aspect, the Constance *alia sententia* is more closely aligned with the brief examples in Ælfric's other *Lives* than his treatment of the motif in the *Life of St Agnes*. Although Constance prays that Christ will take an active role in his relationship with Attica and Arthemias, and indeed she articulates what that role might be (see the discussion below), since her prayer is for Christ's future action, his presence and activity as bridegroom remains implicit rather than explicit.

¹⁹⁵ Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery', pp. 4-5. Referring to the later versions of the *Gesta sanctae Agnetis*, of which Ælfric's *Life* is one, Thompson says: 'the tendency to preserve complete phrases in their identical earlier form, when the language is Latin, or in a very close translation in the case of the vernacular, demonstrates the regulatory strength of the habitus'. Nevertheless, Thompson also acknowledges that with translation comes interpretation and that such necessary 'shifts [in meaning] may reveal conscious agency but are sometimes more aptly characterized as the "*intentionless invention* of regulated improvisation" by means of which the practice generated by the habitus transforms the past even as it carries that very past along. Thus the textual practice manifested in [...later] versions of the Agnes legend involves authorial decisions even as it intentionally or unconsciously adjusts practice to the objective and external constraints of the social world' (Thompson, 'Legend of St. Agnes', p. 369. Thompson, here, uses *habitus* as defined by Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by R. Nice [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], see especially p. 79).

Christ and Agnes, giving attention to both the bride and the bridegroom, as well as to the fulfilled relationship in which they share.

3.3.2.I *Christ's Courting: Agnes's Speech, Phase One, Lines 25-42*

Ælfric constructs Agnes's *sponsa Christi/Christus Sponsus* speech in two distinct phases, lines 25-42 and lines 43-62. In the first phase, Agnes's role as bride takes a secondary place to Christ's role as bridegroom: by emphasising Christ's role over Agnes's, Ælfric brings immediate attention to the fact that, unlike in his other *sponsa Christi* references, in the *Life of St Agnes*, Christ is a present and active bridegroom to his *sponsa*. Agnes introduces Christ not as her suitor or her bridegroom, but as her lover (*lufiend*; 27),¹⁹⁶ implying Christ's actual and physical presence in their relationship. Lines 28 to 34 are dedicated to Christ's character and role as Agnes's lover; each action described is an action performed by Christ for Agnes and it is not until line 35 that Agnes addresses her own reciprocal action performed for Christ (that she should love no other besides Christ). Christ, then, is characterised by his innate nobility (*æðelborennysse*; 28)¹⁹⁷ and his role is to shower Agnes with gifts: Christ has 'me bead [...] frætgunga' ('offered me adornments'; 29), 'his [...] hring me let' ('[has]given me His ring'; 30), 'me gefrætewode mid unasmeagendlicra wurðfulnysse' ('adorned me with unfathomable magnificence'; 31), 'befeng [...] mid deorwurðum stanum and mid scinendum gimum' ('encircled [me] with precious stones and with shining jewels'; 32-33) and 'gesette his tacn' ('set his token [upon me]'; 34). Each clause uses a different, if often related, verb to describe Christ's action and the effect of this accumulation of verbs is to construct Christ's activity as Agnes's lover.¹⁹⁸ In contrast, Agnes's action ('þæt ic nænne oðerne ofer hine lufige'; 35) is less emphasised when compared to Christ's active role because it is cast in the subjunctive

¹⁹⁶ The Latin has *amatore* (col. 0736A).

¹⁹⁷ Ælfric's 'þinne ungelican on æðelborennysse' contracts the Latin 'longe te nobilior et genere et dignitate' (col. 0736A).

¹⁹⁸ The Latin source has a similar accumulation of verbs.

mood.¹⁹⁹ The subjunctive transfers Agnes's action from the concrete reality of the present or past (to which Christ's actions are aligned) to an action that has the future potential of being, but is not actually now, real. The effect of this contrast is that Christ's behaviour and role as bridegroom (or lover) is foregrounded through concrete and real action; Agnes's role as Christ's bride (or lover) is secondary, since her action is abstracted through the use of the subjunctive. Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes*, then, following his source, constructs a role-reversal in terms of the usual *sponsa Christi* motif: it is Christ who is the pre-eminent active and present partner rather than Agnes.

This pattern is continued in lines 36 to 39, which maintain the emphasis on Christ as gift-giver. Christ has 'geglængde me mid orle of golde' ('adorned me with a veil of gold'; 36), 'mid ormettum mynum me gefretewode' ('ornamented me with immeasurable jewels'; 37) and 'æt-cowde me [...] his ænlican hordas' ('showed me His unmatched treasures'; 38). In return for these gifts, Agnes must follow Christ, and not forsake Him for another (lines 39-41). Again, however, Agnes's actions are located not in the reality of actions completed (as Christ's actions are), but in the more abstract realm of potential or future action.²⁰⁰ Thus, Christ has 'me gehet' ('promised me'; 39, preterite)²⁰¹ his unmatched treasures 'gif ic him gelæste' ('if I follow Him'; 39).²⁰² The conditional *if* implies that Agnes's actions are ones which have the potential to be fulfilled, but which are not fulfilled presently.²⁰³ Her statement that she 'ne mæg' ('is not able', 'may not'; 40) forsake

¹⁹⁹ The verb *admittam* in the Latin is also subjunctive (col. 0736A).

²⁰⁰ 'In general terms, we can agree that the "indicative" is used to present something as a fact, as certain, as true, or as a result which has followed or will follow and that when the "subjunctive" is found, some mental attitude to what is being said is usually implied – condition, desire, obligation, supposition, perplexity, doubt, certainty, or unreality'. However, the subjunctive does not 'always imply uncertainty, doubt or the like', and my interpretation here is based on the contrast made between the indicative and the subjunctive. (Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax: Concord, the Parts of Speech, and the Sentence*, 1 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1985], §877, p. 370.)

²⁰¹ The Latin has *repromisit* (perfect, indicative, active; col. 0736B).

²⁰² The Latin has the conditional particle, *si* (col. 0736B).

²⁰³ *Gelæste* can be read as another subjunctive, ('if I were to follow Him') and thus may be an example of the idiom 'gif + present subjunctive expressing a possible wish for the future' (Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*, §1676, p. 689). The Latin *perseveravero* is future perfect, and thus the Old English has a similar sense to the Latin source.

Christ or dishonour Him with another lover is an extrapolation of what it is to follow Christ: if Agnes follows Christ, then she is not able to forsake or dishonour Him.

In the first phase of Agnes's speech, Ælfric is particularly concerned to replicate his source's emphasis on Christ's role as bridegroom in order to stress Christ's participation in His relationship with Agnes. In Ælfric's version, however, Christ's presence in that relationship is further emphasised in the penultimate statement of this phase that Christ is He 'who me mid lufe beweddode' ('who has betrothed me [Agnes] through love'; 41). It is Christ who is the active agent in their betrothal, and it is on Christ's love for Agnes that Ælfric dwells. Importantly, this clause represents Ælfric's first substantial deviation from his Latin source, which has 'cum quo sum charitate devincta' ('with whom I am bound by love'; col. 0736B). The agent of the action (betrothal) in Ælfric's statement is clearly aligned with Christ, and Ælfric's reworking emphasises that Christ has actively betrothed himself to Agnes; this alignment is not present in the Latin, in which Christ's presence and activity is understated. Ælfric's deviation here indicates that he put especial emphasis and importance on Christ's active role in His betrothal to Agnes. This is not to say that Agnes's role in the betrothal relationship is disregarded by Ælfric, or indeed unimportant to him. As analysed above, Agnes's statements about her role as *sponsa Christi* present a nuanced understanding of the three requirements of Christ's brides, love, loyalty and virginity. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that Ælfric was concerned to make Christ an active and present partner in the bride-bridegroom relationship, and thus gave Christ's actions and role primacy over Agnes's in this first phase of her speech to mark this concern.

Ælfric elsewhere provides an allegorical model to understand this first phase, lines 25-42, so that Christ's giving of treasures should be recognised as having heavenly or spiritual content. For example, in his *CHII.40 (In Dedicatione Ecclesiae)*, Ælfric makes explicit the spiritual counterpart inherent in the metaphor of worldly gifts:

Ðurh þæt gold we understandað geleafan and god inghyd ; þurh þæt seolfor, rihtlice spræce and getingnysse on Godes lare ; ðurh þa deorwurðan gymstanas, halige mihta.

Through the gold we understand faith and good intention; through the silver, righteous speech and eloquence in God's teaching; through the precious jewels, holy virtues. (239-42)²⁰⁴

That is, the worldly images of gold, silver and jewels signify spiritual attributes. In the *Life of St Cecilia* (*ÆLS XXXIV [Cecilia]*: pp. 356-77), Cecilia converts four hundred heathens using a similar allegory: she analogizes the glory of redemption with gold, a *wuldor-ful* ('glorious') house and a *wurðfulne gym* ('magnificent gem'; 296-99). In the *Life of St Agnes*, then, Christ's gifts of jewels and gems to Agnes are the gifts of virtue and redemption through virtue; his gift of a golden robe is the gift of faithfulness.²⁰⁵ The physical description of Christ's gifts to Agnes is, in Augustinian terms, the worldly shell which conceals the truth and reality of His spiritual gifts.

Understood in these terms, the *Life of St Agnes* creates a subtle relationship between Agnes and Christ, a relationship based on an intimate union of reciprocity. One of Christ's roles as bridegroom is to bestow on Agnes innumerable gifts, allegorically embodied by earthly wealth, but which actually provide the cornerstones of Agnes's spiritual person: they are the virtue and faith through which she may be redeemed. As in Constance's prayer to Christ to 'geopena heora heortan earan to þære halwendan lare' ('open their [Attica's and Arthemias] hearts' ears to Your healing doctrine'; 330), Christ's gifts to Agnes are the physical embodiment of the fulfilment of that prayer for Agnes. Since 'Cristes ðenung is ure hæþ. and folca alysednys' ('Christ's ministry is our salvation and the redemption of humankind'; *In Dedicatione Ecclesiae*, 206), His marital gifts to Agnes of virtue and faith are emblematic of the fulfilment of His service to her. For her part, Agnes as Christ's bride returns to Christ those very gifts of virtue (as embodied in her chastity), faith and loyalty. The basis of her life as *sponsa Christi* – chastity and

²⁰⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, all Old English quotations of *CHII* are taken from Godden's edition, *CHII*; all further references to *CHII* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

²⁰⁵ See Magennis, 'No Sex Please', pp. 6-7.

faithfulness – are gifts that Christ in His role as *Sponsus* presents to Agnes. In other words, the bride-bridegroom relationship has its foundation in reciprocal giving: Christ, through love, gives Agnes the gifts which will allow her to give herself absolutely to loving Him, a love which is made manifest by her dedication of those gifts back to Christ. It is an almost symbiotic relationship, since the intimate association between Agnes and Christ results in this mutual support. Christ gives Agnes the gifts of virtue and faithfulness; as His bride, Agnes dedicates that virtue and faithfulness to Christ with a circularity that embodies the reciprocity of their relationship.

It is possible to read Agnes typologically as a *figura* of ecclesia, consistent with Ælfric's interest in the *ecclesia sponsa Christi* motif.²⁰⁶ As has already been noted, the imagery in Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes* corresponds with that in his *In Dedicatione Ecclesiae*. In this homily Ælfric writes of Sheba, who, allegorically speaking, 'hæfde getacnunge þære halgan gelaðunge ealles cristenes folces' ('was a manifestation of the holy church of all Christian people'; 175–76). Agnes is comparable to Sheba as a 'manifestation of the holy church' since both are linked by the imagery of the golden cloak: as an allegorical church, Sheba 'stent æt ðinre swyðran. on ofergylдум gyrlan' ('stands at Your [God's] right, in dress adorned with gold'; 190); similarly, Christ adorns Agnes as his church-bride, 'mid orle of golde' ('with a veil of gold'; 36). Morrison argues for such a typological interpretation of Agnes's role as bride,²⁰⁷ but Ælfric underplays the possibility of interpreting her typologically: he draws no explicit allegory, nor does he explicitly suggest Agnes's role as church, as he does in the example of Sheba. The two interpretations of Agnes as a literal *sponsa Christi* and Agnes as a *figura* of ecclesia are not, however, mutually exclusive: the latter typological reading can exist simultaneously with a more literal reading of Agnes's behaviour as that of a bride of Christ and it is possible that Ælfric intended both meanings to be simultaneously present in the text.

²⁰⁶ See above, p. 276, n. 185.

²⁰⁷ 'The individual saint functions not so much as one enjoying an intimate relationship with Christ, but as a representative of the Church.' (Morrison, 'Figure of "Christus Sponsus"', pp. 9–10.)

Christ's allegorical gifts to Agnes are revealed, and thus should be read, within the context of the wooing of Agnes by her earthly suitor. Because the allegorical meaning of heavenly gifts of salvation is always implied in Christ's gift-giving, it is possible to understand His actions as an example of 'generic contrast' with the earthly suitor, as argued by Margaret Bridges in her monograph on the subject.²⁰⁸ Bridges states that we would usually expect to find in virgin-martyr *passiones* of the type of the *Life of St Agnes* 'the strength of Christ's champion [Agnes...] pitted against the diametrically opposed impotence of the pagan idol-worshippers [the suitor]'.²⁰⁹ In some ways this opposition is borne out in Ælfric's *Life*: 'Agnes's martyrdom conforms carefully to the pattern of binary opposition typical of the *passio*: a diametrical opposition between Christian protagonist and pagan enemies, allowing for lengthy exposition of Christian doctrine'.²¹⁰ However, Agnes's speech pits Christ against her earthly suitor: Agnes may verbally battle her suitor, but, with Ælfric's emphasis on Christ's role as bridegroom, it is Christ's actions that are ultimately pitted against the suitor's. The effect of this shift of combatant is subtle but distinct: since Christ's role as *Sponsus* is given primacy, Ælfric's concern with the role of the bridegroom, or suitor, is foregrounded because it is this role which is explicitly contrasted.

Agnes's earthly suitor, like Christ, participates in gift-giving and Ælfric's account of the suitor's gift-giving reads similarly to his account of Christ's gift-giving:

Ða budon ða magas þam mædene sona deorwurðe gyrlan . and deorwurðan beheton . ac seo eadige agnes. þæt eall forseah . and þæra maðma ne rohte . þe ma þe reocendes meoxes . Ða brohte se cniht to ðam clænan mædene . deorwurða gimmas . and woruldlice glencga . and behet hire welan gif heo wolde hine.

Then at once the [suitor's] kinsmen offered the maiden apparel of great value and promised her precious [things] but the blessed Agnes disdained all of that and cared no more for those treasures than for reeking dung. Then the youth brought to the chaste

²⁰⁸ Bridges, *Generic Contrast*.

²⁰⁹ Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, p. 14; my emphasis.

²¹⁰ Thompson, 'Legend of St. Agnes', p. 366.

maiden precious jewels and worldly ornaments and promised her wealth if she would [accept] him. (17-24)²¹¹

The parallels between the suitor's actions and Christ's are immediately obvious. The suitor offers precious apparel; Christ offers a golden robe. The suitor offers precious jewels; so too does Christ. The suitor offers ornaments; Christ offers adornments and treasures. The suitor promises riches if Agnes accepts his suit; Christ offers unmatched treasures should Agnes follow Him. This comparative effect is not as evident in the Latin, in which only *ornamentum* and *lapis pretiosus* are directly paralleled. Ælfric's changes to his source in these lines draw attention to his emphasis on the parallels between the suitor's and Christ's gifts to Agnes. The effect of this 'verbal parallelism', as Bridges calls it, sets Christ in 'diametrical contrast' to the suitor.²¹² The behaviour of Christ and the suitor are identical and yet as characters they are polarised.

The polarisation of Christ and the suitor in the *Life of St Agnes* is comparable to the parallels discussed by Bridges between the description of the suitor's love and Christ's love for Juliana in Cynewulf's poetic *Juliana*: 'verbal parallelism between *Cristes lufan* (31) and *beornes lufan* (41) sets up a diametrical contrast between a desirable and an undesirable object of love, which the Saint respectively *hogde georne* (29) / and *wiðhogde* (42)'.²¹³ Similarly in the *Life of St Agnes*, then, the verbal parallelism sets up a diametrical contrast between a desirable and an undesirable way of being a suitor/bridegroom. The suitor's method of courting Agnes is through proffering earthly goods: that they are earthly and have no spiritual quality is made explicit since they are described as *woruldlic* ('worldly', 'earthly', 'temporal'; 22), an interpolation of Ælfric's that is not present in the Latin. That Agnes sets her mind against (*wiðhogian*) them, as Juliana does against her suitor's love, is

²¹¹ Ælfric's translation shortens but captures the sense of his Latin source, 'Denique detulerant secum pretiosissima ornamenta, quae a beata Agne veluti quaedam stercora sunt recusata. Unde factum est ut juvenis majori perurgeretur amoris stimulo, et putans eam juvenis meliora velle accipere ornamenta, omnem lapidem pretiosum secum defert, et gloriam: et per se ipsum, et per amicos, et per notos, et affines, coepit aures virginis appellare, divitias, domos, possessiones, familias, atque omnes hujus mundi delicias repromittere, si consensum suum ejus conjugio non negasset' (col. 0735C).

²¹² Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, p. 113.

²¹³ Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, pp. 113-14.

unmistakable since Agnes despises the suitor's worldly gifts as reeking dung.²¹⁴ The audience is explicitly directed to compare unfavourably Agnes's suitor's worldly treasures with Christ's allegorical ones, since, in Agnes's description of Christ's gifts, she uses comparatives (for example, *bætera*; 29) and emphasises Christ's superlative suit with the repetition of the inconceivability and incomparability of Christ's wealth (for example, *un-asmeagendlic*, *ormæte*, *ænlic*; 31, 37, 38).²¹⁵ In other words, the verbal parallelism coupled with Agnes's judgments condemns her earthly suitor's worldly gifts and suit, and idealizes Christ's spiritual offerings. The suitor's method of courting Agnes and of being her suitor is a physical one; it is contrasted with Christ's spiritual method, with the effect that Christ's spiritual betrothal offerings are idealized against the example of the suitor's physicality. In the *Life of St Agnes*, temporal betrothal gifts are no match for the spiritual intimacy of the union which Christ offers Agnes.

Agnes's conclusion to the first phase of her speech further emphasises this comparative contrast between Christ's spirituality and the suitor's physicality. In line 42 Agnes states that 'his ansyn is wlitigre and his lufu wynsumre' ('His [Christ's] countenance is more beautiful and His love more joyous [than yours]'; 42).²¹⁶ *Ansyn* (42) is, literally, Christ's physical countenance or face, referring to the physical aspect of His face. Allegorically, however, *ansyn* refers to the abstract face of God manifested by his grace, favour and mercy.²¹⁷ Just as Christ's gifts are not physical but spiritual ones, so too, the description of His countenance does not refer to His physicality but rather to His grace. The first phase

²¹⁴ Ælfric here also strengthens the Latin, which has only *stercus* (col. 0735C); cf. Ælfric's *reocende meox* (20).

²¹⁵ The Latin source also uses comparatives, such as *melior*. Ælfric similarly follows his source in highlighting the incomparability of Christ's gifts: the Latin uses *inaestimabilis* (twice), *immensus*, and *incomparabilis* (col. 0736A).

²¹⁶ Here Ælfric abbreviates his Latin source which has 'cujus est generositas celsior, possibilitas fortior, aspectus pulchrior, amor suavior, et omni gratia elegantior' (col. 0736B).

²¹⁷ See *DOE*, s. v, 'ansyn', 1.a and 1.b.ii. The Latin *aspectus* does not have such associations, which is an innovation of Ælfric's (see Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrew's Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1879; repr. 1962] and J. F. Niermeyer and C. Van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus: Lexique Latin Médiéval-Français/Anglais* [Leiden: Brill, 1976] [henceforth Niermeyer], s. v, 'aspectus').

of Agnes's speech thereby polarizes Christ from the suitor, and, by extension, polarizes spirituality from physicality.

3.3.2.2 Marital Bliss: Agnes's Speech, Phase Two, Lines 43-62

Andreas Fischer has discussed at length the semantics of marriage, specifically marriages between Christ and saints, in Old English hagiography. His conclusion is thus:

In keeping with the Bible (above all Mt 1,18, Lk 1,27 and Lk 2,5) Mary is without exception said to be *Iosepe beweddod*, i.e. engaged to be married but still a virgin. This situation is mirrored in many saints' lives [...] Virginity is a prerequisite of sainthood, and [...], strictly speaking, a woman remains *beweddod* [engaged] as long as the marriage is not consummated, the boundary between engagement (as a state) and marriage being the *bryðniht* at the end of the whole wedding ceremony [...] The relationship of a female saint to Christ is often described in terms of an 'engagement' during her life on earth, to be followed after her death by a heavenly 'marriage', which is sometimes seen in an openly physical way.²¹⁸

In other words, Fischer contends that the *sponsa Christi* is engaged, *beweddod*, to Christ whilst she lives; after her martyrdom she enters into a marital (as distinct from a betrothal/engagement) relationship with Christ. It is consummation – physical union – on the 'wedding night [...] which concluded the [wedding] ceremony and which – from a legal point of view – marked the beginning of the state of marriage';²¹⁹ a *sponsa Christi* began her *marriage* with Christ, then, when she achieved physical union with Him through death.

To support his assertions, Fischer cites the *Life of St Agnes*, lines 40-43 and 58-62. Certainly, his proposition is supported in line 41, when Agnes states that Christ 'me mid lufe beweddode' ('has *betrothed* me through love'; 41). However, according to Fischer's demarcation, the beginning of the second phase of Agnes's speech (43), is marked by an extraordinary semantic shift. Agnes begins her second phase by asserting that 'His *bryd-*

²¹⁸ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 27.

²¹⁹ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 21.

bedd me is gearo nu iu mid dreamum' ('His [Christ's] *marriage bed* is prepared with joys for me already now'; 43).²²⁰ Ælfric utilises the noun *brydbed* eight times throughout his works. Three of these usages explicitly correspond to the Latin *thalamus* ('marriage-bed', 'bridal-bed')²²¹ from Psalm 18.6 (*ÆCHI.14 [Annunciatio X. Mariæ]; ÆCHII.1 [De Natale Domini]; Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* [Assmann, §3]). The other five usages are found in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, two in the *Life of St Agnes* and three in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*. In the latter text, Ælfric's understanding of *brydbed* is made clear. In lines 28–29 Ælfric tells us that 'þa wurdon gegearcode þa gyftu æfter gewunan and hi butu coman on anum bedde to-somne' ('then the wedding was prepared, according to custom, and they both [Julian and Basilissa] came into one bed together'). Julian's behaviour confirms that this *bedde* is intended for the consummation of his marriage to Basilissa since he 'georne ge-bæd to ðam hælende criste þæt he hine geheolde wið ealla ontendnysse and yfele costnunga' ('zealously prayed to the Saviour Christ that He preserve him against all passion and evil temptation'; 29–31). As Christ has promised to Julian in line 19 to reveal himself in Julian's marriage bed ('on eowrum bryd-bedde ic beo eow æt-eowed' ['in your marriage bed I will be revealed to you']), He appears in that marriage bed (*þæt bryd-bed*; 32), manifested firstly as fragrance (*bræð*; 32) and then visibly (53), acting to repress any physical, sexual desire between the couple. Ælfric's use of *brydbed* in this text clearly indicates that the *brydbed* is the marriage bed in which the consummation of the marital union occurs.

Returning to the *Life of St Agnes*, Agnes's statement that 'His *bryd-bedd* me is gearo nu iu mid dreamum' ('His [Christ's] *marriage bed* is prepared with joys for me already now'; 43) is striking because it alludes to her *marital* relationship with Christ: Agnes has moved beyond Fischer's usual and expected limits of an engagement with Christ by referring to

²²⁰ My emphasis. The Latin source has 'a quo mihi jam *thalamus* collocatus est' (col. 0736B; my emphasis).

²²¹ As listed in Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*; *thalamus* is not listed in Niermeyer.

ultimate culmination of that engagement – their marital union.²²² It is possible that Ælfric intended Agnes's use of *brydbed* to signify the consummation or union she could expect with Christ on her death, in agreement with Fischer's contention.²²³ In that sense, Christ has prepared her marriage bed in anticipation of her martyrdom; the *brydbed* is prepared (*gearo*; 42) for its *future* use. Further, the construction of Agnes's statement in the present tense, coupled with its deployment of the adverbial *iu* ('formerly', 'of old', 'before') and *nu* ('now') may emphasise such preparation since it creates a sense of the perpetual present in which Christ foresees his union with Agnes at her death.²²⁴ However, an analysis of the context in which the use of *bryd-bed* occurs adds weight to the argument that Agnes and Christ are actually *married* in this phase of the text, rather than simply betrothed and awaiting the ultimate union.

His bryd-bedd me is gearo . nu iu mid dreamum . His mædenu me singað . mid
geswegum stemnum . Of his muðe ic under-feng meoluc . and hunig . nu iu ic eom
beclypt . mid his clænum earmum . his fægera lichama is minum geferylæht . and his
blod ge-glende mine eah-hringas.

His marriage bed is prepared with joys for me already now. His maidens sing to me
with harmonious voices. From his mouth I have received milk and honey; I am now
already embraced with His chaste arms; His beautiful body is united to mine and His
blood has decorated my eyes. (42-48)

Agnes asserts that Christ has prepared her *bryd-bedd* a long time ago (*iu*) and that it is ready for her in the immediate present, now (*nu*). That preparation is fulfilled in line 46: 'nu iu eom beclypt mid his clænum earmum' ('I am now already embraced with His chaste arms'; 46).²²⁵ This action implies Agnes's marital union with Christ since it describes

²²² This change is evident also in the source, which, as noted, uses *thalamus*; considering Ælfric's tendency to translate *thalamus* as *brydbed*, it is not unexpected to see the term used by him here although it is striking that he chooses to maintain the marital sense.

²²³ It is with this sense that Ælfric uses *brydbed* in the *alia sententia* at the end of the *Life of St Agnes*, in which Constance prays for Attica's and Arthemisia's ultimate union with Christ in his *brydbedd* (332). It is clear that Constance is not referring to the girls' immediate marriage to Christ, but rather their future union with Him, presumably after death. See above, p. 280, n. 194.

²²⁴ The meaning of *iu* (*geo*) in this clause is difficult to translate but its sense of 'formerly', 'of old', 'before' (BT) is well captured in Donovan's translation, 'His bridal bed is now already prepared for me with delights' (Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives*, p. 47) on which I have based my translation. In the Latin, the dual emphasis of *nu iu* is not as evident, since the Latin only uses *iam* (col. 0736B).

²²⁵ The Latin has 'jam amplexibus ejus castis astricta sum' (col. 0736B).

Christ embracing Agnes, a union that is made explicit in line 47 in which Christ is *geferlæht* ('united') with Agnes. In addition, Agnes's repetition in line 46 of the 'nu iu' construction grammatically connects the action in that line with the *bryd-bedd* of line 42: Christ and Agnes's marriage bed is prepared *already now* and in it she is *already now* embraced by Him and united to Him. In a rare deviation from his source, Ælfric adds the caveat *mid dreamum* ('with joys'; 43). The marriage and the union of which Ælfric conceives are characterised by joy: rather than the Ambrosian or Jeromian conception of marriage as a burden, Ælfric here constructs it as a joyful coming together.

The language utilised in this second phase of Agnes's speech indicates that Ælfric, following his source, has semantically changed, albeit subtly, the relationship between Agnes and Christ from a betrothal to a marital union. This shift is significant because, according to Fischer's theory, it marks a deviation from the normal semantic pattern expected in Old English virgin-martyr *passiones* in which the *sponsa Christi* motif is employed. Agnes's speech is unique in that it establishes Christ and Agnes as married rather than betrothed. In the *Life of St Agnes*, Ælfric has a context in which he can explore marriage and the ideal marital union: his insistence upon Christ's presence and activity in Phase One of Agnes's speech, and his creation of Christ as husband in Phase Two, provides Ælfric with a powerful, indeed the ultimate, model within which he can assert his ideal for 'true' marriage. Unlike other *passiones*, Christ does not just engage in the precursor to marriage; in the *Life of St Agnes*, He actively participates in marriage itself.

Agnes's description of Christ's marital loving in lines 42-48 further extends the imagery that their reciprocal gift-giving (Phase One) has already evoked of an intimate and reciprocally supportive marital union. In the first phase of Agnes's account, Christ provides Agnes's spiritual sustenance: his gifts of virtue and faith are symbols of her redemption and spiritual satisfaction. In these lines 43-48, Christ ostensibly provides for Agnes's physical sustenance. On a literal level, he feeds and sustains her by providing her

with milk and honey, seemingly satisfying her biological need for food. The intimacy of this act of sustaining is emphasised since Agnes receives her sustenance directly from Christ's mouth: he alone, actively and directly, sustains her. However, typologically, Christ's offering of milk and honey nourishes Agnes's spiritual and emotional self. Walker Bynum explains the intimacy of Christ's sustenance, since it is simultaneously conceived of as a physical and a spiritual sustenance:

insistently Christ's humanity was thought of as flesh, as food (*corpus, caro, carnis*), eaten [...] Moreover, the incorporation of self into Christ or of Christ into self was so much a matter of flesh swallowing flesh that women [...] received and digested Christ's physicality.²²⁶

Although Walker Bynum is referring to a much later period of female piety, it is possible to understand the imagery in the *Life of St Agnes* as a predecessor to the later medieval imagery of women eating Christ's flesh: 'simply to eat Christ is enough: it is to achieve union'.²²⁷ Agnes may not eat Christ, but she eats from Christ's mouth.²²⁸ In other words, the union that is achieved between Agnes and Christ results from Christ's sustenance and is emphasised here. Similarly to Christ's allegorical gift-giving in Phase One, however, the physicality of this action of nourishment masks the spiritual truth of it: 'with its connotations of mutual tenderness, frank trust, and total intimacy, the [...] metaphor

²²⁶ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone, 1992), p. 130.

²²⁷ Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 126.

²²⁸ It is also possible to see Christ's washing of Agnes with his blood (line 48) as similarly 'looking forward' to the veneration of the Wounds of Christ, such as the cult of the Sacred Heart (as was practiced, for example, at the convent of Helfta in the thirteenth century). The Sacred Heart was imagined as bleeding, and a symbol of the humanity of Christ; touching it was a symbol of union with Christ in His compassion. The Helfta nuns (especially the visionaries, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Mechthild of Hackeborn and Gertrude the Great) drew 'spiritual nourishment from the Sacred Heart' (see Rosalynn Voaden, 'All Girls Together: Community, Gender and Vision at Helfta', in *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. by Dianne Watt [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], pp. 72-91 [pp. 72-75]). Agnes is united to Christ and spiritually nourished by his blood, perhaps anticipating Mechthild of Magdeburg's (d. c. AD 1282) vision that Christ 'lays her in his glowing [sacred] heart so that the high prince and the little maidservant are made one like water and wine' ('The Flowing Light of the Godhead', in *The Writings of Medieval Women: An Anthology*, trans. by Marcelle Thiébaux, 2nd edn [New York and London: Garland, 1994], pp. 394-404).

sheds light on the new awareness of God's being imparted to the soul'²²⁹ and thus Agnes's receiving of Christ's milk and honey is a spiritual, rather than a physical, nourishment. Ælfric's reference to milk and honey is simultaneously a typological reference to Christ's dual purpose of life generation and redemption, recalling as it does the redemption and salvation of the Israelites.²³⁰ This typological allusion recalls Christ's redemption of Agnes in Phase One and the reciprocity and spiritual sustenance that her redemption implies. Thus, that Christ's role as husband is life-giving, maintains the emphasis on the symbiosis of the married couple: spiritual support and nourishment are some ideals of the marital relationship which Ælfric promotes here.

Perhaps the most striking imagery in this passage, however, is that of Christ totally surrounding Agnes, indeed almost subsuming her into Himself: she is embraced with His arms, united to His body and washed by His blood.²³¹ The cumulative effect of these three images of connection is the vision of marriage as the fusion of two into one: Agnes and Christ are one body, united and sustained by love. It is possible to see in these statements Ælfric's ultimate ratification of Christ's proclamation that husband shall 'adherebit ad uxorem suam et erunt duo in carne una itaque iam non sunt duo sed una caro' ('cleave to his wife. And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh'; Mark 10:7-8): Christ, as the perfect husband, exemplifies His own doctrine.

The 'erotically suggestive'²³² description of Christ loving Agnes in lines 43-48 is paralleled by Agnes's description of her loving Christ in lines 56-60. Unlike the construction of the

²²⁹ John Bugge, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal*, Archives Internationales D'Histoire des Idées, Series Minor 17 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 76.

²³⁰ André LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. by David Pellauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 19.

²³¹ Ælfric follows his source in his construction of this union: 'jam amplexibus ejus castis astricta sum, jam corpus ejus corpori meo sociatum est, et sanguis ejus ornavit genas meas' (col. 0736B).

²³² Leslie Donovan, 'The Gendered Body as Spiritual Problem and Spiritual Answer in the Lives of Women Saints', in Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives*, pp. 121-34 (p. 126).

first phase of her speech, this second phase re-asserts Agnes's role as an active, present and totally complementary partner in her relationship with Christ. It is thus Agnes's lines (58-60) which explicate the erotic suggestion of Christ's loving behaviour (43-48). In Agnes's lines, the erotic is revealed as non-erotic and the physical is presented as spiritual. She says:

Ʒonne ic hine lufige . ic beo eallunga clæne . Ʒonne Ic hine hreppe . ic beo unwemme .
 ðonne Ic hine under-fō . ic beo mæden forð .

'When I love Him, I am wholly pure; when I touch Him, I am undefiled; when I receive Him, I am still a virgin.' (58-60)²³³

The physical union to which lines 43-48 refer is revealed here in its 'true' spiritual form: Agnes's and Christ's marital loving is not physical or bodily but rather a union achieved in spirit with love. Once again, Ælfric makes clear that Christ's and Agnes's 'true' marriage is exemplified by an absolute lack of corporeality and physicality: this inviolable epitome of 'true' marriage occurs solely on an incorporeal and supernal plane. The shift from the *gif ic* ('if I') construction describing Agnes's actions in Phase One to *Ʒonne ic* ('when I') construction in Phase Two indicates Agnes's emergence as Christ's wife: she reciprocates His actions, emphasised as concrete and actual, with similarly concrete and actual actions, and she complements Him by elucidating the spiritual truth of His ostensibly physical actions. Her declaration of love for Christ, which is balanced with Christ's love for her, functions as an 'insistence on the reciprocity of their idyllic model of love [and] suggests a marriage based on emotional egalitarianism';²³⁴ Agnes and Christ, then, embody an ideal of marriage which resides in the spiritual, rather than the physical, domain, and which is grounded in reciprocity and complementarity.

Magennis's argument that 'Agnes's utterance takes the form of a public statement of defiance rather than a private expression of love'²³⁵ seems inappropriate in this loving

²³³ As noted above, this construction is a close translation of the Latin, 'quem cum amavero, casta sum: cum tetigero, munda sum: cum accepero, virgo sum' (col. 0736C).

²³⁴ Donovan, 'Spiritual Problem and Spiritual Answer', p. 127.

²³⁵ Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery', p. 5

context: although Agnes's statement is said publicly (or at least to her earthly suitor), her actual utterance here is absolutely centred on, and indeed motivated by, Christ: the speech does appropriate the tone of a 'private' sentiment since Agnes makes her inner feelings manifest verbally. Magennis also contends that 'there is curiously little sense of affection evident in Agnes's words, her tone being hymnal rather than intimate'.²³⁶ Subjective though such judgements must be, this distinction also seems misguided, firstly because the verbs *lufian*, *breppan* and *under-fon* suggest a high degree of intimacy, and secondly because there is no justification for assuming that hymnal and intimate need be mutually exclusive: Agnes's speech does worship Christ (especially lines 49-55 which are doctrinal in content)²³⁷ but it simultaneously asserts the intimacy of a loving union beyond such devotions.

The final two lines of Agnes's speech confirm that she and Christ participate in an intimate and loving marriage. Lines 61-62 deviate from the previous lines as they are not about Agnes's love for Christ, nor His for her: they address the fecundity of their marriage *together*. That is, these lines refer to them as a *married couple*, not as individuals:

And þær bærn ne ateoriað . on ðam bryd-lace . Þær is eacnung buton sare . and singallic
wæstmbærnyss .

'And there, in that marriage, no child is lacking. There is childbearing without suffering and perpetual fertility.' (61-62)²³⁸

In these ultimate lines of her speech, Agnes reiterates the marital union which she enjoys with Christ with her use of *brydlac* ('marriage'; 61).²³⁹ Ælfric's use of a term which again

²³⁶ Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery', p. 5

²³⁷ Lines 49-55 recall Mary's virginity, God's creation of the world, salvation for humankind, Christ's miracles and His redemptive power.

²³⁸ Again, Ælfric here closely follows his Latin source: 'nec deerunt post nuptias filii, ubi partus sine dolore succedit, et fecunditas quotidiana cumulatur' (col. 0736B).

²³⁹ Fischer states that Ælfric only uses *brydlac* once and that this use is a 'semantically doubtful case' (Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 139 and p. 143). In fact, Ælfric uses the term on three occasions, once in the plural and twice in the singular. There is consensus across all dictionaries and in Fischer that in the plural *brydlac* denotes the marriage ceremony itself (the wedding). Of the five usages of *brydlac* across the complete extant Old English corpus, three are in the plural and all take this meaning unproblematically since they prohibit priests from providing a blessing at the *brydlacum* (marriage

suggests Agnes's marriage to Christ indicates the rectitude of interpreting Agnes's speech as an intimate statement of love (at least in part): she is not simply a *sponsa Christi* betrothed to a remote Christ, rather, she is Christ's wife, loved by Him and loving Him.²⁴⁰ The reference in these lines to the fecundity of Christ's marriage with Agnes suggests intimacy by recalling the union between them, to which Agnes has repeatedly referred: *under-fon* ('receive'; 45, 59), *beclyppan* ('embrace'; 46), *geferlæcan* ('unite'; 47), *lufian* ('love'; 57), *breppan* ('touch'; 58).

These final lines emphasise Ælfric's ideal of 'true' marriage as simultaneously chaste and fecund. As has been noted, the union which Agnes achieves with Christ is not physical but spiritual. Yet Ælfric does not conceive such an unphysical marriage as a barren one; rather, 'the saint's reproductive potential translates into spiritual ripeness and her ability to give birth to new and renewed believers in Christianity'.²⁴¹ It is possible to see in Agnes's and Christ's union a spiritual fecundity, as characterised by Ambrose:

Non uteri onus notum, non dolor partus; et tamen numerosior soboles piaie mentis,
quae omnes pro liberis habet: fecunda successoribus, sterilis orbitatibus, nescit funera,
novit haeredes. Sic sancta Ecclesia [...] fecunda partu, virgo est castitate, mater est prole.
Parturit itaque nos virgo non viro plena, sed spiritu.

ceremonies) in the case of second marriages (In the *Institutes of Polity* 2.1.1; in Ælfric's Letter to Wulfsgie, and in Anonymous Homilies, 'Sermo bone praedicationis'). However, there is more contention regarding the use of *brydlac* in the singular. Ælfric alone uses the singular, once in the *Life of St Agnes* and once in the *Life of St Cecilia*. In the latter text, the singular appears to function as the plural: 'Hit gewearð swa þeah þæt se wurðfulla cniht þa *brydlac* geforþode and gefette þæt mæden' ('Nevertheless, it took place that the honourable youth carried out the *marriage ceremony* and married the maiden'; 20-21). In the *Life of St Agnes*, however, *brydlac* cannot mean 'marriage ceremony': 'and þær bærn ne ateoriað on ðam bryd-lace' ('and there, in our *bryd-lace*, no child is lacking'). In the context of the fecundity of their union, the only viable interpretation for *brydlac* is one which indicates the marital union of Christ and Agnes, 'marriage to Christ', 'married state', 'wedlock' (*DOE*, s. v, 'brydlac', 2); Fischer also designates *brydlac* as a late West Saxon wedding, rather than engagement term, meaning 'wedding' 'marriage', a synonym of *gifta*, *brydgifta*, *brydealu*. Ælfric's source has *nuptias*.

²⁴⁰ This marital emphasis may be evident in the source as well, which uses *thalamus* (*brydbed*) and *nuptias* (*brydlac*). Lewis and Short define *thalamus* as both a 'marriage-bed', 'bridal-bed' and as 'marriage', 'wedlock' (II.A and II.B), and *nuptiae* as 'a marriage', 'wedding', 'nuptials' (I) (Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*). Neither *thalamus* or *nuptiae* has an entry in Niermeyer.

²⁴¹ Andrea Rossi-Reder, 'Embodying Christ, Embodying Nation: Ælfric's Accounts of Saints Agatha and Lucy', in *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillmore Calder*, ed. by Carol Pasternack and Lisa M. C. Weston, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 277 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), pp. 183-202 (p. 184).

You know nothing of the burden and pain of childbearing, but more are the offspring of a pious soul, which esteems all as its children, rich in successors, barren of all bereavements, which knows no deaths, but has many heirs. So the holy Church [...] fertile in bearing, is in chastity a virgin, yet a mother in offspring. She, a virgin, bears us her children, not by a human father, but by the Spirit. (*De Virginibus*; I:VI.30-31, col. 0197D)

Agnes's and Christ's children are the children of the church and their parenthood is characterised by Christian enlightenment. As Brown asserts,

the ideal 'fecundity' associated with the virgin state was no highflown metaphor: it was a perfectly real matter, as demonstrable as that of any male spiritual leader, for whom images of asexual procreation, and of virginal fertility, through spiritual guidance and scholarship, had long carried a very heavy charge of meaning.²⁴²

In this context, Ælfric utilises the noun *bearn* ('child') in line 61; as well as taking its most frequent meaning of 'offspring', 'descendant', 'child', *bearn* may also be taken figuratively to refer to a child of God or children of the church.²⁴³ The final lines of Agnes's speech, then, not only define the ideal fecundity of 'true' marriage, but emphasise again the incorporeality of that 'true' marriage: Christ and Agnes achieve a spiritual union in which all physicality is absent, and their children, although understood as real and physical, are nurtured by spiritual guidance.

The second phase of Agnes's speech is in accord with the first in terms of the ideals which Ælfric elucidates regarding 'true' marriage. 'True' marriage is spiritual and metaphysical; the marital relationship is characterised by symbiotic reciprocity and complementarity; that relationship is loving and intimate, a union of two souls in one; the marriage has its foundations in spiritual support and nourishment, and the offspring of such fecund spirituality are the children of God. The second phase deviates from the first, however, by establishing Agnes and Christ as married rather than betrothed, and by balancing Christ's active loving of Agnes with her own of Him, rather than giving prominence to Christ as in Phase One. Phase Two deviates also in the method by which

²⁴² Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 369.

²⁴³ See *DOE*, s. v, 'bearn', 1.F.3.a and 1.F.2 respectively.

Christ is contrasted to Agnes's earthly suitor. Such contrast is established not by verbal parallelism but rather by the total absence of direct contrast or parallelism. Phase Two includes no reference to the suitor at all, and his absence sets up an implicit contrast between Christ and the suitor.

In Phase One, the suitor's concern to furnish Agnes with *woruldlic* ('worldly') gifts (22), in contrast to Christ's spiritual ones, establishes the suitor functioning in the temporal dimension of the bodily and the physical. The total absence of the carnal suitor in Phase Two suggests the inappropriateness of mentioning him in the context of Christ and Agnes's elevated, and discarnate, ideal marital relationship: the figure of the suitor is inconsonant with the ideals of 'true' marriage and is thus excluded from reference here. Ælfric makes clear in the first phase of Agnes's speech that the suitor's physicality sets him in complete contrast to Christ's spirituality; the narrative surrounding Agnes's speech confirms that the suitor is guilty of concupiscence: 'the coveting of "carnal things", desire for the "things of the world"'.²⁴⁴ The only motivation given for the suitor's interest in Agnes is provided in lines 13-14: 'heo was wlitig an ansyne and wlitigre on geleafan . Ða ða heo gewende of scole ða awogode hi sum cniht' ('she [Agnes] was beautiful in countenance, and more beautiful in faith. Then, when she returned from school, a youth wooed her'; 13-14). We soon learn that it is her beautiful countenance, rather than her beautiful faith, which interests the youth; since he is a 'hæðen-gilda' ('heathen worshiper'; 16) it is unlikely that Agnes's Christianity is what attracts him to her.²⁴⁵ Since there is no corresponding reference to the suitor's heathenism in the Latin source, Ælfric's deviation from and expansion of the Latin clarifies the carnality of the suitor's love for Agnes: it is Agnes's physical beauty which undoubtedly motivates his suit. Such carnality is further emphasised since the possibility that the suitor might *love* Agnes, rather than merely being physically infatuated with her, is not mentioned until line 93 and then only by the

²⁴⁴ *OED*, s. v, 'concupiscence'.

²⁴⁵ Ælfric slightly abbreviates his Latin source, which has 'pulchra facie, sed pulchrior fide, et elegantior castitate. Quae dum a scholis reverteretur, a praefecti Urbis filio adamatur' (Ælfric does not include a reference to Agnes's chastity).

sutor's father, who tells Agnes 'hu his sunu hí lufode' ('how his son loved her'). It is interesting that in this construction, Ælfric deviates from his Latin source, which initially tells us that the suitor fell in love with Agnes (*adamo*; col. 0735C), and he approaches Agnes to offer his love (*amor*; col. 0735C). Ælfric's careful choice of *awogian* allows no reference to the suitor's love for Agnes.²⁴⁶ The suitor's own silence on his love for Agnes in Ælfric's version is in contrast to Christ's loving motivation – Christ always acts *mid lufe* ('with love'; 41). Further still, once Agnes has finished her speech, 'he wearð þa gesicelod and siccetunga teah of niwel-licum breoste on bedde licgende' ('then he [the suitor] became sickened, and, lying on his bed, drew sighs from deep in his breast'; 65-66).²⁴⁷ The suitor's interest in Agnes is physical, and, reflecting this physicality, he is physically incapacitated by it.²⁴⁸

The suitor's corporeality makes him anathema to Christ and Agnes's marital relationship and thus Ælfric, following his source, purges direct mention of him from Phase Two of Agnes's speech. However, implicit contrast exists between the suitor as described by Agnes in Phase One, and Christ as praised by her in Phase Two. The carnal suitor is condemned as 'synne ontendnys leahtras foda and deaðes bigleafa' ('incitement of sin, food of vices, death's sustenance'; 25-26).²⁴⁹ The carnality of the relationship which the suitor offers Agnes is clearly sinful and death-bringing and the physical, sexual 'marriage [which the suitor offers] conjured up negative images; the Fathers warned of the trials of marriage for women [...] Marriage was a "bond" and a "servitude" in which wives were

²⁴⁶ *DOE*, s. v, 'awogian'.

²⁴⁷ Ælfric's treatment of the love-sick suitor echoes his source: 'Audiens insanissimus juvenis, amore carpitur caeco, et inter angustias animi et corporis anhelo cruciatur spiritu. Inter haec lecto prosternitur, et per alta suspiria amor a medicis aperitur' (col. 0736C). Ælfric has 'Se cniht wearð ge-ancsumod . and wið-innan ablend æfter þæs mædenes spræce . þe hine spearn mid wordum . He wearð þa gesicelod . and siccetunga teah . of niwel-licum breoste . on bedde licgende' (63-66).

²⁴⁸ The love-sickness trope is utilised in texts of the late Antiquity and early medieval periods, although it is most readily associated with the High Middle Ages and courtly literature; indeed, in that later period, it is often used to describe Christ's love-sickness for his *sponsa*, and a saintly bride's love-sickness for Christ. Symptoms paralleling Agnes's suitor's are common, especially the symptom of gasping, or shortness of breath. See Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 3-30 (esp. pp. 24-27, p. 40 and p. 151).

²⁴⁹ The Latin source has 'fomes peccati, nutrimentum facinoris, pabulum mortis' (col. 0736A).

subject to their husbands'.²⁵⁰ Christ, on the other hand, is praised by Agnes as redemptive and life-sustaining: 'þurh his spæc geedcuciað eac ða deadan and þurh his hrepunge beoð gestrangode þa unstrangan seocan' ('through his speech, the dead are restored to life and through his touch the un-strong sick are strengthened'; 53-54).²⁵¹ Whilst the suitor's offer of bodily marriage (Ælfric's 'carnal' marriage) brings death and suffering, 'true' marriage – the 'marriage of the soul to Christ, virtually the only true marriage available to the believer'²⁵² – is redemptive and empowering. Agnes's speech 'essentially dramatises a struggle for power between a threatening world, which is destructive and sexual, and an embracing spirituality, which is asexual'.²⁵³

Ultimately, through such diametrical contrasts (whether made by verbal parallelism or explicit polarising), Christ is intimately linked to the suitor in that He, too, is a suitor and woos Agnes, and He, too, offers her marriage. In the *Life of St Agnes* Christ contrasts with the undesirability of carnality as exemplified by the suitor. As Agnes's lover, Christ transcends the 'realities' of worldly courting (as illustrated by the suitor) and presents the virtuous, moral counterpart to the suitor's earthly version. Christ, then, functions as a model, and ideal, for the marital relationships of the *Life's* audience. Christ, as the model husband and the ideal for marital relations, is depicted in a particularly lifelike mode in the *Life of St Agnes*: He is pitted against the earthly suitor in a battle for Agnes's affections and is thus a credible and 'realistic' suitor. So realistic is Christ's suit that the suitor, and indeed his father, is convinced that Christ is a corporeal competitor for Agnes's hand, a human and physical rival vying for her.

We understand from the beginning, as the youth does not, that she is speaking of Christ, so her words carry a double meaning throughout [...] The youth is driven to the point of madness by the perfections of the lover with whom he thinks he is in competition.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Salisbury, *Independent Virgins*, p. 13 and p. 28.

²⁵¹ The Latin has the slightly different 'cujus odore reviviscunt mortui, cujus tactu confortantur infirmi' (col. 0736C).

²⁵² Bugge, *Virginitas*, p. 75.

²⁵³ Magennis, 'No Sex Please', p. 3.

²⁵⁴ Thompson, 'The Legend of St. Agnes', p. 367.

Christ as husband and bridegroom is so realistically believable that the suitor's father demands to know 'hwæt se bryd-guma wære þe agnes onwuldrode' ('who the bridegroom was whom Agnes praised'; 77). Although we understand, as the suitor does not, that the lover and husband of whom Agnes speaks is Christ, the effect of the realism of Christ's actions is that they appear as an attainable ideal for which good Christians can strive. Precisely because 'their marital interactions are patterned on secular relationships', Christ, as 'the idealized suitor, lover, and husband',²⁵⁵ recognisably appropriates all these guises and models them as achievable to the *Life's* audience.

Agnes, too, as *sponsa Christi*, imparts models of marital behaviour and morals: 'the audience is moved to consider the personal relationship of the saint to God and, by extension, to consider their own relationship to God'.²⁵⁶ Agnes's model functions on multiple levels. As a chaste virgin, Agnes

serves an instructive, even prophetic, role for the wider Christian community. By continually referring back to Christ (himself the 'herald of virginity') and the holiness of mother Church, the figure of the virgin embodies a holiness in which all Christians are called to participate on some level.²⁵⁷

As Bugge cogently argues, on a general level, Agnes's incorporeal union with Christ as *sponsa Christi* is a hopeful paradigm for redemption and resurrection in the post-lapsarian world.

Christian gnosis saw the *sponsa Christi* motif as the most serviceable means of expressing the present eschatological reality, for the redemptive action of Christ's coming meant for each individual soul the infusion of a new principle of vitality. The visitation of the Bridegroom to the bride, with its attendant connotations of passionate expectation, sexual awakening, and intimate union with the Lover, was an appropriate way of describing this spiritual state. But the metaphor of sexual union was apposite to the predicament of fallen man in a sense far more profound: [...] if it were through coition that sin and death entered the world, a version of sexual congress on the level of pure spirituality serves as its natural antithesis.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Donovan, 'Spiritual Problem and Spiritual Answer', p. 126.

²⁵⁶ Magennis, 'Listen Now All and Understand', pp. 40-41.

²⁵⁷ Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints', pp. 78-79.

²⁵⁸ Bugge, *Virginitas*, pp. 63-64. See also Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints', p. 79.

Morrison argues that, for this reason, ‘fundamentally, nuptial imagery is considered to be doctrinally effective because of its relevance to the concept of redemption, and [...] that process was predominantly corporate rather than individual’.²⁵⁹ Whilst this argument has merit it understates the subtlety of Ælfric’s *Life of St Agnes*, in which Ælfric has successfully combined the individual with the corporate. Agnes’s marriage to Christ allows her to function both as a model for redemption and also as model for ‘true’ marriage. Through Agnes, Ælfric displays a model of marital harmony based on love, loyalty and chastity. As a wife, she exemplifies Ælfric’s ideals of intimate and loving union with her husband by complementing Him and reciprocating His love and His spiritual gifts in a productive marriage which transcends physicality. Although ‘the idea of fervent personal love for God as a literary theme is usually associated with the high, rather than the early, Middle Ages’,²⁶⁰ Ælfric’s Agnes imparts a sense of her ‘fervent personal love’ for Christ and her belief in His reciprocated fervent love for her.

3.3.3 Conclusion

It is clear that in his *Life of St Agnes*, Ælfric follows his Latin source very closely. For the most part, he translates Agnes’s long speech, which extensively dwells on the *sponsa Christi* and *Sponsus Christus* motifs, faithfully despite his general reticence to engage with the *sponsa Christi* motif at length. Ælfric’s few deviations, however, are significant, since they strengthen his purpose of constructing and transmitting an ideal and full marital

²⁵⁹ Morrison, ‘Figure of “Christus Sponsus”’, p. 7. It is definitely not true that, as Morrison argues, ‘the prevailing emphasis on the collective body of the faithful, the absence of any references to an analogous human relationship on an intimate, personal level, ensure that whatever potential for emotional involvement the imagery possessed was effectively thwarted’ (p. 7), especially when considered in the context of the married saints. Nor does it indicate that ‘the individual saint, functions not so much as one enjoying an intimate relationship with Christ, but as representative of the Church (of which Mary is a type) in the unending struggle against heathenism, idolatry and the forces of the devil’ (p. 10), especially when considering the rather secondary nature of the suitor in this speech.

²⁶⁰ Magennis, ‘Listen Now All and Understand’, p. 38. Although Magennis is right in asserting that, in the version of the *Life of St Margaret* found in CCC 303, ‘the language of love [between Margaret and Christ] indeed appears more insistently than in any other Old English saint’s life’ (p. 39), this does not detract from the language of love of Agnes. The difference lies mainly in that after this speech, the *Life of St Agnes* leaves the motif for the most part alone, whereas it permeates Margaret’s life more thoroughly.

relationship to his Anglo-Saxon noble, devout lay audience. Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes* is thus not simply the translation of the *Gesta*, 'even when (or perhaps especially when) [...its] content appears to point in this direction'.²⁶¹ Rather, Ælfric manages to draw 'his audience into an ecclesiastically defined ideological structure'²⁶² which defines the tenets which he sees as fundamental to the perfect marriage, as idealised by Christ and Agnes: spiritual and emotional nourishment and intimacy resulting in a quasi-symbiotic relationship of reciprocal, mutual giving and love. This intimacy and symbiosis manifests a joyful love which is based on chastity and virtuousness, and life-giving redemption.

In this construction of marriage, the *Life of St Agnes* is a text before its time, since it incorporates the bases of the ideal marriage usually associated with texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Hollis notes that the figurative metaphor of the *sponsa Christi* was 'the dominant vehicle of devotional experience from the 12th century onwards [which] accompanies the establishment of the marriage union in place of kinship and comradeship bonds as the primary societal bond':²⁶³ Ælfric's deployment of the metaphor in his *Life* worked towards such an aim more than a century earlier. Rosemary Woolf further asserts that 'a personal and emotional relationship between God and man in the work of Redemption was new in the twelfth century';²⁶⁴ yet Agnes's *Life* captures such a relationship, prefiguring Peter Abelard's understanding that the 'Redemption lay in Christ's demonstration of His love to man, thereby winning man's love in return', as well as St Thomas Aquinas's that redemption should be understood in terms of 'satisfaction'.²⁶⁵

In the twelfth-century, there is 'a significant body of texts to suggest' that mutual love was 'the ultimate ideal' for marriage;²⁶⁶ Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes* anticipates by a century the

²⁶¹ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 27; see also Denomy, *Lives of Saint Agnes*, p. 136.

²⁶² Magennis, 'Warrior Saints and Warfare', p. 51.

²⁶³ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 82.

²⁶⁴ 'The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight', *Review of English Studies*, NS 13 (1962), 1-13 (p. 1).

²⁶⁵ Woolf, 'Christ the Lover-Knight', p. 2.

²⁶⁶ June Hall McCash, 'Mutual Love as a Medieval Ideal', in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context. Selected Papers from the 5th Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, Dalfsen, The Netherlands*,

sentiments that characterise the famed ideals of Hugh of St Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux that ‘sacramenti res est dilectio mutua animorum’ (‘the substance of the sacrament itself is the mutual love of souls’; ‘De sacramentis christianae’, XI.3, col. 0482C)²⁶⁷ and the ‘reciprocity of affection’.²⁶⁸ Similarly, it anticipates German and Dutch mysticism of the early thirteenth-century, in which women visionaries ‘expressed their piety in the erotic imagery of divine love and marriage’.²⁶⁹ Beatrijs of Nazareth’s (d. AD 1268) vision that ‘the soul [will] become one with her Bridegroom and become one spirit in troth that can never be parted, in everlasting Minne [Love]’²⁷⁰ closely echoes Agnes’s that ‘þam anum ic healde minne truwan æfre þam ic me befæst mid ealre estfulnysse’ (‘I always preserve my pledge to the one alone to whom I have entrusted myself with all my devotion’; 56-57), the one ‘who me mid lufe beweddode’ (‘who has betrothed me through love’; 41). Indeed, Woolf recognises the innovation of Ælfric’s *Life of St Agnes*:

in many of Ælfric’s ‘Lives’ there is *already* found a use of nuptial imagery: the martyr is often said to have chosen Christ as her *brydguma*, and in the Life of St Agnes, where Ælfric is following closely a sermon of St Ambrose, there occurs a long speech echoing the allegory of the Song of Songs. The lives of the virgin martyrs themselves became *exempla* in moral and doctrinal treatises in praise of virginity.²⁷¹

Ælfric’s *Life* signals the embryonic beginnings of the rhetoric of mutual love and nuptial imagery which would flourish in later centuries of the Middle Ages.

To Ælfric, marriage is not characterised, nor does it involve, the death-bringing physicality (that is, sexuality) that the earthly suitor offers Agnes, but rather it is

9-16 August 1986, ed. by Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), pp. 429-38 (p. 430).

²⁶⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations from *De sacramentis christianae* are taken from Migne’s edition, Hugo de St Victore, ‘De sacramentis christianae fidei’ in *PL*, vol. 176; all translations are taken from *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. by Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951). All further reference to *De sacramentis christianae* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

²⁶⁸ Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), p. 124.

²⁶⁹ Thiébaux, *Writings of Medieval Women*, p. 385.

²⁷⁰ ‘The Seven Manners of Holy Minne’, in *Writings of Medieval Women*, trans. by Thiébaux, pp. 404-10.

²⁷¹ Woolf, ‘Saints’ Lives’, p. 60; my emphasis.

characterised by redemption through non-physicality. As a discarnate union, marriage is fertile through a spiritual progeny. On the anonymous *Life of St Margaret*, Magennis states:

as elsewhere in Old English hagiography, nuptial imagery is drawn upon and provides an important element in the portrayal of the saint, but the erotic element in Margaret's relationship to God is not consciously explored [...] The emphasis in the [...] *Life of St. Margaret* is on fervency of feeling but not passion, on intimacy but not sexuality.²⁷²

Whilst this is undoubtedly true of both the *Life of St Margaret* and Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes*, in the latter case this emphasis can be read as deliberate, rather than unconscious. Ælfric's understanding of 'true' marriage creates a text which dwells on the emotional, not the physical, union of bride and bridegroom.

With such intentional stress placed on the incorporeal nature of 'true' marriage, we may witness Ælfric echoing Augustine's 'spiritualized, asexual reading' of marriage.²⁷³ In Augustine's writings on the marriage of Mary and Joseph he asserts that, although Mary and Joseph's marriage was celibate – incorporeal – they enjoyed marriage: Mary

eam Joseph conjugem non frustra appellatam, propter ordinem sexus et animorum confoederationem, quamvis ei non fuerit carne commixtus [...] et ne homines fideles Christi, id quod sibi conjuges carne miscentur, tam magnum in conjugio deputarent, ut sine hoc conjuges esse non crederent: sed potius discerent fidelia conjugia, multo familiarius se adhaerere membris Christi, quanto potuissent imitari parentes Christi?

was properly called the wife of Joseph, because being a woman she was in spiritual alliance with him, though there was no bodily connection [...] and believers in Christ are taught not to think carnal connection the chief thing in marriage, as if without this they could not be man and wife, but to imitate in Christian wedlock as closely as possible the parents of Christ, that so they may have the more intimate union with the members of Christ. (*Contra Faustas Manichean*; XXIII.8, col. 0471)²⁷⁴

²⁷² Magennis, 'Listen Now All and Understand', p. 39.

²⁷³ Elizabeth A. Clark, "Adam's Only Companion": Augustine and the Early Christian Debate on Marriage', in *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World*, ed. by Robert R. Edwards and Stephen Spector (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 15-31 (p. 18).

²⁷⁴ All Latin quotations of *Contra Faustas Manichean* are taken from Migne's edition, Augustinus Hipponensis, 'Contra Faustum Manichaeum', in *PL*, vol. 42; all translations are taken from Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichaeus', in *Augustine: The Anti-Manichaean Writings, The Anti-Donatist Writings*, ed. by Phillip Schaff, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 1, 4 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 155-345. *Contra Faustum* was known in the Anglo-Saxon

Not only is sexual intercourse not the ‘chief thing in marriage’ but a non-carnal marriage, mimicking that of Mary and Joseph, brings a husband and wife closer to Christ. Augustine insists that such a relationship should be ‘vocarique conjugium, non permixto corporis sexu, sed custodito mentis affectu’ (‘called one of wedlock, inasmuch as, although there is no connection between the sexes of the body, there is the keeping of the affections of the mind’; *De consensu Evangelistarum*, II.1.2, col. 1071) and in relation to Joseph ‘et virum Mariae recte intelligimus sine commixtione carnis, ipsa copulatione conjugii’ (‘we are to understand him to have been truly the husband of Mary, without the intercourse of the flesh indeed, but in virtue of the real union of marriage’; II.1.3, col. 1072).²⁷⁵

To Ælfric, as to Augustine, the ‘real union of marriage’ was a union of souls, a union perfectly embodied in Agnes’s marriage to Christ. Indeed, the peculiar structure of this *Life of St Agnes*, with its concentration not only the *sponsa Christi* motif but also on the *Sponsus Christus* motif and on Christ’s exemplary role within the motif, may have appealed specifically to Ælfric as a text which compellingly exemplified his assertion of ‘true’ spiritual marriage. In the first phase of Agnes’s speech, Christ’s role as suitor and bridegroom is intensified by the dual techniques of giving primacy to His activities and presence, and of pitting Him, rather than Agnes, against the earthly suitor. The importance of this accentuation is also twofold: it firstly becomes obvious that marriage and the marital relationship are at issue here since the antagonising of Christ against the suitor allows a instructive exploration of the virtues and vices of such a marital union;

world: it is quoted in Bede’s *Commentarius in Genesim* (Libri I et II), a text which Ælfric in turn knew (*Fontes*).

²⁷⁵ All Latin quotations of *De consensu Evangelistarum* are taken from Migne’s edition, Augustinus Hipponensis, ‘De Consensu Evangelistarum’, in *PL*, vol. 34; all translations taken from Augustine, ‘The Harmony of the Gospels’, in *Saint Augustin: Sermon On The Mount, Harmony Of The Gospels, Homilies On The Gospels*, ed. by Phillip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 1, 6 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 65-236. *De consensu Evangelistarum* was known in the Anglo-Saxon world: Bede utilises it in his *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, another text which Ælfric knew (*Fontes*).

secondly, the emphasis on Christ's actions allows Christ to supersede Agnes as a didactic model with which to teach good Christian living. It is perhaps for these reasons that Ælfric has translated the motif, almost word for word, in his *Life* when he elsewhere found the *sponsa Christi* motif less suitable.

The final question that must be addressed is whether the *Life of St Agnes* contains 'the standard anti-matrimonial features of the virgin-martyr legends'.²⁷⁶ Glasser states that, before the thirteenth-century,

anti-matrimonial attitudes are found in two different forms of saints' legends: the numerous legends of virgin martyrs and the smaller number of legends of married women. In the two types of legends the anti-matrimonial (and anti-sexual) attitudes of the hagiographers manifest themselves either in the saint's desire not to marry (and to avoid sexual relations), or if married, to break the marriage bond [...] Though there is much plainly anti-matrimonial sentiment in the virgin martyr legends, there is also a considerable amount of blatantly anti-sexual sentiment as well.²⁷⁷

In Ælfric anti-matrimonial sentiment must be separated from anti-sexual sentiment. In the *Life of St Agnes* it is clear that Agnes is not anti-matrimonial: her speech emphasises that she has *married* Christ as she is spiritually embraced by Him in His marriage bed (*brydbed*; 42) and bears His child (*bearn*; 61) in their marriage (*brydlac*; 61). Agnes, then, makes explicit her, and thus Ælfric's, pro-matrimonial stance. Marriage of the 'true' kind is not merely permissible but is a relationship to which 'ic me befæst mid ealre estfulnyse' ('I [Agnes] have entrusted myself with all my devotion'; 57). It is to be encouraged. If Ælfric is anti-matrimonial it is towards the 'carnal' marriage that the suitor offers, a marriage characterised by physicality and, by extension, sexuality. It is not marriage, then, to which Ælfric objects, but rather, the inappropriate physicality of 'carnal' marriage which

²⁷⁶ Glasser, 'Marriage in Hagiography', p. 8. Smith thinks similarly: 'Certainly there is room for examining how cultural expectations and estimations of marriage play out in these lives, but it would be a great error to give precedence to concerns for marriage over those of virginity when virginal chastity is in every way the goal of the saints in the texts. In these narratives, I believe that marriage is as much a conflict topos, establishing the saint's purity and commitment to God, as any sort of reference to marital realities or issues' ('Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints', p. 127). I believe that Smith's over-simplification lies in her uncritical bias towards virginity; there is no reason why (and indeed many reasons to justify the opposite) the concepts of virginity and marriage need be mutually exclusive.

²⁷⁷ Glasser, 'Marriage in Saints' Legends', p. 78 and p. 81.

tarnishes the reputation of the righteous and spiritual union that is 'true' marriage. Ælfric's employment of the *sponsa Christi* and *Christus Sponsus* motifs, rather than showing a disdain for marriage, instead 'raise[s] the repute of marriage' providing that it is modelled in the image of the 'true' marriage embodied by Agnes and Christ's union.²⁷⁸ For, who better than Christ, the ultimate role model and 'the source of all hagiographical imitation',²⁷⁹ to construct an ideal of marriage which can be lived out by Agnes and insistently by the married saints whose *passiones* Ælfric chooses to include in his *Lives of Saints* and who are the mortal models and translators of Christ's marital ideal? In the *Life of St Agnes*, Ælfric establishes the ultimate ideal of marriage with his emphasis on Christ's participation; as we shall see in the next chapter, Ælfric's married saints reflect his definition of 'true' marriage by living out His ideal.

²⁷⁸ Bugge, *Virginitas*, p. 78.

²⁷⁹ Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, p. 17.

Chapter 4

Ælfric's Married Saints: Redefining Marriage by Living the Ideal

Concordes animae casto sociantur amore
 [...]

 Nam pietatis amor simul est, et amoris honestas,
 Paxque Deo concors copula conjugii.
 Foederis hujus opus proprio Deus ore sacravit,
 Divinaque manu par hominum statuit.
 Quoque individuum magis assignaret amorem,
 Ex una fecit carne manere duos.

Souls harmonious are being joined in chaste love [...]. For a harmonious marriage-alliance is at once a holy-love, an honourable love, and peace with God. God with His own lips consecrated the course of this alliance, and with His own hand established the pairing of human persons. He made two abide in one flesh so that He might confer a love more indivisible. (Paulinus of Nola, 'Epithalamium Juliani et Iae', *Poem XXV*. 1, 13-18, col. 0633D)¹

In Chapter 3, I argued that Ælfric constructed a new ideal of marriage – 'true' marriage – in his *Lives of Saints*, exemplified by the marriage of Christ and Agnes in the *Life of St Agnes* (*ÆLS*.7 [*Agnes*]: pp. 170-93). Ælfric's 'true' marriage was characterised by a union of souls, rather than a union of bodies; indeed, 'true' marriage was *discarnate* and precluded any physical or bodily aspect. The spiritual union of 'true' marriage was encouraged and promoted by Ælfric; 'carnal' marriage, marriage that included sexual relations, was, to Ælfric, although not necessarily or fundamentally devoid of morality or goodness, a poor

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of Paulinus's *Poems* are taken from J. P. Migne's edition, Paulinus Nolanus, *Poemata*, in *PL*, vol. 61; all English translations are taken from Paulinus of Nola, *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, trans. by P. G. Walsh, Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, 40 (New York: Newman, 1975), Poem 25, pp. 245-53. All further references to the *Poems* throughout this thesis are given after quotations in the text.

reflection of such spiritual, 'true' marriage. Through his close exploration of Christ's and Agnes's marital relationship, Ælfric established the tenets of 'true' marriage as incorporeality, spiritual intimacy and fecundity, complementarity, reciprocal giving, and mutual love: marriage was the union of two souls into one, a union based on spiritual support and mutuality. Ælfric, then, had a dual understanding of marriage. On the one hand, he saw non-bodily, 'true' marriage as the ideal and the epitome of the institution. On the other, he recognised that marriage was socially understood to be constitutively sexual, as was indicated by the Old English vocabulary that intimately linked marriage to sexual activity;² to Ælfric, this bodily marriage was a lesser embodiment of his ideal. Ælfric, then, was 'noticeably conscious of the gulf that separated the mystic marriage ['true' marriage] from the human institution that figured it ['carnal' marriage]', and he sought to distinguish these two marriages and simultaneously to recommend the former.³

Ælfric's treatment of the St Agnes legend indicates that he was not anti-matrimonial *per se*. Certainly he was hostile to the physical marriage offered to Agnes by her earthly suitor, which was as 'reocende meox' ('reeking dung'; 20); however, Ælfric applauded the marriage of Agnes to Christ, in part because it exemplified the incorporeal and loving nature of 'true' marriage. What must be emphasised is that Agnes's and Christ's relationship was presented as an example of *marriage* and of Ælfric's pro-matrimonial stance: the language which Ælfric used of it designated their relationship as actual, marital and good, not as the remote promise of future marriage through martyrdom which was the usual depiction of the betrothal relationship within the *sponsa Christi* motif,⁴ nor as the carnal, sexual marriage that hagiographers condemned. McGlynn and Moll argue that:

² See discussion above, Chapter 2, pp. 220–22.

³ Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992; repr. 1998), p. 37.

⁴ See discussion above, Chapter 3, p. 290.

Chaste marriage was based on a perception of sex as an action that held a true Christian from the achievement of sanctity [and] this bias against sexual pleasure pervaded the early church and led to the exaltation of virginity, often at the expense of marriage,⁵

However, ‘Christian marriage was justified against claims of virginity (rather than apart from them). It is not clear how far Christian marriage is an alternative ideal and how far it is a derivative ideal’.⁶ To Ælfric, virginity and ‘true’ marriage were synonymous and thus an exaltation or justification of ‘true’ marriage necessarily implied an exaltation or justification of virginity. Although it is unlikely that Ælfric would have known the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*,⁷ his formulation of marriage bears close resemblance to Christ’s as found in the *Acts*: Christ specifically ‘dissuades a newly-married couple from intercourse, promising them “an untroubled life, free from grief and care” if they remain virginal. He counsels them [...] “to receive that marriage incorruptible and true”’.⁸ ‘True’ marriage for Ælfric was similarly ‘in carne corruptibili incorruptionis perpetuae meditatio’ (‘a practice, in corruptible flesh, of perpetual incorruption’; ‘De sancta virginitate’, §12, col. 0401).

In this chapter, an analysis of Ælfric’s presentation of married saints in his *Lives of Saints* – the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* (ÆLS.4 [Julian]: pp. 90-115), the *Life of St Cecilia* (ÆLS.34 [Cecilia]: pp. 356-77) and her husband, Valerian, and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria* (ÆLS.35 [Chrysanthus]: pp. 378-99) – will further illustrate his construction of ‘true’ marriage by demonstrating the ways in which these married saints endorse Christ’s spousal model. The resonances between the paradigmatic marital relationships represented in these *Lives* with the archetypal marriage of Christ to Agnes in the *Life of St*

⁵ Margaret McGlynn and Richard J. Moll, ‘Chaste Marriage in the Middle Ages: “It were to hire greet merite”’, in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern A. Bullough and James A. Brundage, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1696 (New York and London: Garland, 1996), pp. 103-22 (p. 104).

⁶ Mark D. Jordan, *The Ethics of Sex*, New Dimensions to Religious Ethics (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 71.

⁷ The *Acts of Thomas* are not listed in *Handlist*, ‘Index I: Authors and Texts’ and there is no manuscript evidence to suggest that the *Acts* were known in the Anglo-Saxon world (see *Handlist*, pp. 149-84). The *Acts* are not listed as a source in *Fontes*.

⁸ John Bugge, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal*, Archives Internationales D’Histoire des Idées, Series Minor 17 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 60.

Agnes confirms both Ælfric's new definition of marriage as a non-bodily and loving union, and his general interest in the institution. More importantly, these married saints' lives represent an example of 'the social implementation of [Ælfric's] marital theology'.⁹ The penultimate section of this chapter will address Ælfric's construction of the ideal, moral marriage in other *Lives of Saints*, such as the *Life of St Æthelthryth* (*ÆLS.20 [Æthelthryth]*: pp. 432-40) in which much has been made of the chaste marriage *exemplum* (120-35), with brief reference to Ælfric's other works, particularly his homilies. By such contextualisation, Ælfric's ultimate design for marriage in his *Lives of Saints* may be acknowledged and appreciated as a primary mode by which he attempted to 'incorporate the laity as fully as possible into [his and] the reformers' ideology of virginity'.¹⁰

4.1 Compatibility, Companionability, Chastity: Moral Marriage and Married Saints

4.1.1 The Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa

Ælfric begins his *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* by placing Julian in a setting which would have had social familiarity for his devout, noble, lay Anglo-Saxon audience:¹¹

Ivlianvs wæs gehaten . sum æðele godes ðegn . on egypta lande . on antiochan þære byrig . Se wæs ædel-boren of æwfestum magum . and on cristes lare ge-læred . fram geogoþe . Ða wolde his fæder . and his frynd ealle . þæt he wifian sceolde þa ða he eahtetyne gæra wæs.

Julian was the name of a certain noble servant of God, in the land of Egypt, in the city of Antioch. He was nobly-born of devout kin and instructed in Christ's law from youth. Then his father and all of his kin wished that he should take a wife when he was eighteen years old. (1-6)¹²

⁹ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Robert Kimmons Upchurch, 'The Hagiography of Chaste Marriage in Ælfric's "Lives of Saints"' (unpublished doctoral thesis, City University of New York, 2001), p. 4.

¹¹ On the subject of audiences, see discussion above, Chapter 3, pp. 265-67.

¹² Whatley notes that Julian and Basilissa are in fact from 'Antinoe in Egypt (not Antioch)' (E. Gordon Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-*

Although geographically remote, Julian's situation, as Ælfric describes it, is one which many Anglo-Saxons may have recognised: Julian's general description as 'æðel-boren of æwfestum magum and on cristes lare ge-læred fram geogoþe' ('nobly-born of devout kin and instructed in Christ's law from youth'; 3-4) would have applied equally to Æthelmær (d. c. AD 1014), the son of the devout Æthelweard (d. c. AD 998), to both of whom Ælfric dedicated his *Lives of Saints*,¹³ and whom Barbara Yorke describes as belonging 'to one of the leading families of the tenth century [...], ultimately of royal descent [, and...] naturally influenced by the new enthusiasm for the church and Christian learning'.¹⁴ Further, since, as Gies and Gies imply, marriage was parentally controlled and 'rationally planned', even in the late Anglo-Saxon period, and was both a social reality and obligation,¹⁵ it seems likely that Æthelmær or his contemporaries would have once faced similar parental and peer expectations to marry as Julian does. Marriage was a social norm in Anglo-Saxon England and there existed a socially latent expectation, if not obligation, to marry; although 'the obligations within the family were known by custom and are rarely expressly stated in our sources',¹⁶ nevertheless, marriage 'seems to have been a matter for the family rather than the individual'.¹⁷ Indeed, we may surmise that Æthelmær did marry, as he was survived by his son (Æthelweard) and his son-in-law (also Æthelweard), implying that he also fathered a daughter.¹⁸

Germain-des-Pres, and Acta Sanctorum, ed. by Frederick Biggs *et al.*, 1 [Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001], pp. 22-486 [p. 279]].

¹³ See Ælfric's Old English Preface to the *Lives of Saints* (*ÆLS* [Pref]: pp. 2-7; 35-41).

¹⁴ 'Æthelmær: the Foundation of the Abbey at Cerne and the Politics of the Tenth Century', in *The Cerne Abbey Millennium Lectures*, ed. by Katherine Barker (Cerne Abbas: The Cerne Abbey Millennium Committee, 1988), pp. 15-26 (p. 15). See also Ann Williams, Alfred P. Smyth and D. P. Kirby, *A Biographical Dictionary of Dark Age Britain: England, Scotland and Wales c. 500 – c. 1500* (London, Seaby, 1991; repr. 1991), p. 24 (for Æthelmær) and pp. 30-31 (for Æthelweard).

¹⁵ Frances and Joseph Gies, *Marriage and the Family in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 117.

¹⁶ Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society*, The Pelican History of England, 2nd rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991; first publ. 1952), p. 43.

¹⁷ Julie Coleman, 'Betrothal and Marriage: Invasion and Conquest', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 89-115 (p. 90).

¹⁸ Yorke, 'Æthelmær', p. 20.

Ælfric radically abbreviates his Latin source in his opening: he condenses two long paragraphs in the Latin into six Old English lines.¹⁹ Indeed, ‘the Old English translation is only about one-half the length of its Latin counterpart’.²⁰ In the Latin *Passio*, Julian is depicted as a zealous Christian, so devoted to his faith that his parents, desperate for him to have an heir and assuming that Julian will adopt an ascetic and celibate life, intervene by citing Pauline doctrine that recommends marriage and procreation (1.2-3). Ælfric’s changes to the opening have three striking consequences. Firstly, as noted, Julian’s situation is immediately recognisable since he is simply a good Christian who is faced with the prospect of marrying: such simplification might have allowed Ælfric’s Anglo-Saxon audience to relate to Julian’s context in a way that was not available in the usual

¹⁹ It is generally agreed that Ælfric’s source for most of his *Lives of Saints*, including the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, are the Latin texts closely related to the *Passiones* and *Vitae* found in London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero E. i and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 9 (the so-called Cotton-Corpus Legendary) (see Patrick H. Zettel, ‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in BL MS Cotton Nero E. i + CCCC MS 9 and Other Manuscripts’ [unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1979], pp. 201-8 [see esp. p. 202]). Upchurch devotes much of his chapter on the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* to examining Ælfric’s deviations from, and adherence to, the Cotton Nero *Passio* (‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, pp. 69-89, esp. pp. 69-77). Upchurch has transcribed the Cotton Nero version of the *Passio* in his ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, pp. 165-205; unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations of the *Passio* are taken from Upchurch’s transcription, since it represents the closest approximation of Ælfric’s actual source in print. Whatley notes that there is no critical edition of the *Passio* and that ‘the textual transmission of the legend and its relation to the Anglo-Saxon texts clearly require further study in the light of a more thorough survey of manuscript evidence’ (‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 281). Whilst I commend Whatley’s call for further source work, it is beyond the remit of this chapter to engage with this issue here. Thus I have followed Zettel’s suggestion that the Latin *Passio* in the Cotton-Corpus legendary was akin to Ælfric’s source (‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources’, pp. 201-08). I have also used Upchurch’s transcriptions of the *Life of St Cecilia* and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria* (both found in Cambridge, Corpus Christ College, MS 9, pp. 323-36 and pp. 379-89 respectively). Zettel notes that Hereford, Cathedral Library P.VII.6 contains ‘a few more precise parallels for the Old English translation’, but that CCCC, MS 9 corresponds to it ‘quite closely’ (‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources’, p. 257). I have compared Upchurch’s transcription of Cecilia’s *Passio* (pp. 206-32) against Hippolyte Delehaye’s edition in his *Étude sur le Légendier romain: les saints de novembre et de décembre* (Bruxelles: Société des Ballandistes, 1936), pp. 194-220; Whatley notes that there is no critical edition of the *Passio* (‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 126). Upchurch’s transcription of the Chrysanthus legend (pp. 233-53) represents the closest approximation of Ælfric’s actual source in print, although Whatley notes that ‘Hereford, Cathedral Library P.VII.6 [is] a slightly more faithful witness to Ælfric’s source than either the printed texts or the copy in the Cambridge manuscript’ (‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 140. See also Zettel, ‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources’, p. 259).

²⁰ Zettel, ‘Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources’, p. 202.

construction of the remote saint ‘unhindered by any “realistic” considerations’.²¹ Secondly, concomitant with such situational realism, Julian becomes less inimitably saintly: by minimising his references to Julian’s zealousness of faith and devotion to Christianity, Ælfric’s Julian is more realistically characterised than is usual in hagiographies.²² Julian is universalised in Ælfric’s opening account; he is undoubtedly a saint, but Ælfric’s changes to the Latin render him an accessible and relatable one. Finally, as Upchurch has noted, Ælfric removes any references to the procreative purpose of marriage. In the Latin *Passio*, Julian’s parents are anxious about Julian remaining heirless: they counsel him to marry because marriage is the vehicle for legitimate procreation, and their recommendation aligns marriage with procreation. Since Ælfric removes Julian’s parents’ advice, he removes such an alliance and thus ‘does not draw attention to the fact that spiritual marriage runs directly counter to the fulfilment of this social obligation’.²³ More importantly, his changes reinforce his belief that marriage was not constitutively sexual, and thus not physically procreative by definition.

Having thus established Julian’s character and situation, Ælfric then elucidates his response to his parents’ and friends’ desire for him to marry:

Ac iulianus cwæð þæt he cunnian wolde his drihtnes wyllan hu he wolde be him . He wærð þa ge-bysgod on his ge-bedum seofan niht . bæd þone ælmihtigan crist þæt he his clænnysse geheolde .

But Julian said that he wished to know his Lord’s will, what He wished concerning him. Then he was busied in his prayers for seven nights: asked the Almighty Christ that He would preserve his chastity. (7-10)

Two points are important to note of this passage. Firstly, in these lines Ælfric moves the authorisation of marriage from the parental and familial domain to the church’s domain.²⁴

²¹ Thomas D. Hill, ‘*Imago Dei*: Genre, Symbolism, and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography’, in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints’ Lives And Their Contexts*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, SUNY Series in Medieval Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 35-50 (p. 40).

²² Hill, ‘*Imago Dei*’, p. 40. See also discussion above, Chapter 3, pp. 262-63.

²³ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 71.

²⁴ The literal sense is similar in Ælfric’s Latin source, in which Julian asks to pray for a week to determine if he will marry, and then prays to Christ that his virginity will be preserved (1.3-4). However, since the Latin

One of the principles which ‘distinguished clerical and lay models’ of marriage, and which the church wished to impose on the secular institution of marriage in its attempted assertion of its jurisdiction over marriage,²⁵ albeit with little success in Anglo-Saxon England, ‘was notions of parental control [...]. The Church encouraged consensus between the partners but considered that the consent of parents was in principle unnecessary’.²⁶ ‘the consensus of the couple, as distinct from that of the parents, was an essential condition of entering a union, in contrast to the “arranged marriages” on which parents, especially in the nobility, often insisted’.²⁷ In these lines 7-10, Ælfric asserts that entering into marriage is a religious, rather than a parental or social, decision, since Julian does not accede to his parents’ wish until he knows Christ’s will in the matter: Julian’s parents’ and kin’s desire for him to marry is secondary to Christ’s desire. In other words, Ælfric subtly makes an ecclesiastical point here: marriage is not made at the parents’ discretion, but rather at Julian’s and Christ’s (and by necessary extension, His church’s). Indeed, Ælfric simultaneously asserts that Julian’s consent in his own marriage is imperative: Julian, with Christ’s help, actively makes the decision regarding his own marriage.

The second point which must be noted of lines 7-10 is that Julian assumes that marriage is sexual. Ælfric explicitly tells us that Julian’s seven nights of praying regarding his proposed marriage: ‘þa wolde his fæder and his frynd ealle þæt he wifian sceolde þa ða he eahtetyne gæra wæs ac iulianus cwæð þæt he cunnian wolde his drihtnes wyllan’ (‘then his father and all of his kin wished that he should take a wife when he was eighteen years old,

version is much longer than Ælfric’s, and dwells on Julian’s parents’ wish for him to procreate (and his reticence to do so), the tone of the Latin text is substantially different: firstly, Julian’s parents’ more forceful and extended argument for Julian to marry situates his marriage within the familial/parental domain; secondly, Julian’s concern for his virginity is given explicit motivation since his parents expect a child from his marriage.

²⁵ James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 137.

²⁶ Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 193.

²⁷ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 25.

but Julian said that he wished to know his Lord's will'; 5-8). That is, Julian prays to know Christ's will regarding his father's and kin's desire for him to take a wife (*wifian*). However, Ælfric's description of Julian's prayer dwells on the latter's assumption that marriage is a threat to chastity: Julian 'bæd þone ælmihtigan crist þæt he his clænnysse geheolde' ('asked the Almighty Christ that He would preserve his chastity'; 10). In Julian's mind, there is an undeniable association of marriage with sexual intercourse, since he here assumes that by marrying his chastity will be violated. The only words we hear of his prayer *vis-à-vis* marriage relate to his concern to preserve his chastity (*clænnes*). Interestingly, Julian, echoing Ælfric, is not anti-matrimonial *per se*: his prayer is not to *not* marry, but rather to remain chaste. Julian's prayer, then, draws attention to his assumption that marriage would involve sexual intercourse, an assumption likely to have been shared by Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon audience, and also emphasises that Julian is not anti-matrimonial, although he does wish to preserve his chastity: Ælfric includes no anti-matrimonial comment here.

After Julian prays for seven nights, Christ appears in a dream to him on the eighth:

And cwæð þæt he sceolde soðlice underfon mæden him to gemacan . þe hine ne moste ascyrian fram his clænan lufe þe he gecoren hæfde . Se hælend him cwæð to . Ic beo sylf mid þe . and on þe adwesce ealle ontendnysse . and þæt mæden ic ge-bige . eac to minre lufe . and on eowrum bryd-bedde . ic beo eow æt-eowed . and þurh eow me bið gehalgod manegra oðre clennysse and ic þe under-fo mid ðinum mædene to heofonum.

And said that he [Julian] should indeed take a maiden, a companion for himself, who would not separate him from his chaste love, which he had chosen. The Saviour said to him: 'I myself will be with you, and will extinguish all passion in you, and I will also bend that maiden to my love. And in your bridal-bed I will be revealed to you, and through you the chastity of many others shall be dedicated to me, and I will receive you, with your maiden, to heaven'. (13-21)

Here, Julian is instructed to marry, directly contradicting the assertion that hagiography during the late Anglo-Saxon period was characterised by 'anti-matrimonial propaganda [and...] attitudes';²⁸ further, Ælfric uses Christ's voice to instruct Julian: Julian's

²⁸ Marc D. Glasser, 'Marriage in Old and Middle English Saints' Legends' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 1978), p. 78.

instruction to marry a maiden ('underfon mæden'; 13)²⁹ comes directly from Christ. Ælfric's invocation of Christ, however, has a fuller purpose than simply charging Julian to marry; more importantly, Christ's response contains an explication of marriage and Ælfric appeals to this highest teacher to elucidate the nature of marriage both to Julian, and, by extension, to his Anglo-Saxon audience.

As has been noted, Julian's prayer to retain his chastity betrays his assumption that marriage is constitutively sexual, and this is a view that would have been shared by the Anglo-Saxon audience of Julian's *Life* who 'treated marriage as a union that was contracted, sealed, and symbolized by sexual relations between the parties [...and] considered sexual relations essential to the definition of marriage'.³⁰ Christ's answer to Julian's prayer refutes this assumption in a lesson that affirms Ælfric's definition of 'true' marriage. Christ asserts that Julian's maiden-wife will not, as Julian has assumed, 'hine [...] ascyrian fram his clænan lufe þe he gecoren hæfde' ('separate him from his chaste love, which he had chosen'; 14-15).³¹ Thus, Julian and his maiden can marry and remain pure. This statement directly counters Julian's mistaken assumption of the sexual aspect of marriage; Julian initially cannot differentiate marriage from the violation of his chastity through sexual relations but he learns through Christ's intervention the true meaning and image of marriage, divorced from sexuality. Christ's teaching corrects Julian's misapprehension. Magennis notes that Ælfric usually 'celebrates "achieved" sanctity, unchanging or unchangeable. He presents his saints as images from whose example his audience can benefit, but the saints themselves are not shown as learning or developing

²⁹ On the use of *onfon*, *underfon* and *fon* as indicating 'to marry' in verbal phrases see Andreas Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage in Old English* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986), pp. 130-32.

³⁰ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 135.

³¹ In this sentiment, Ælfric is following his Latin source: in the *Passio* Christ says 'accipes enim virginem, que non pollueno te a me separet, sed per te virgo perseveret' (1.4).

through experience’;³² unusually in this *Life*, Julian does learn through Christ’s teaching, and this lesson is one in which Ælfric wished his audience to share.

What is particularly striking in this passage is that Ælfric’s Julian is again universally characterised, since Christ acknowledges Julian’s human frailty (an unusual acknowledgement in a saint’s life) by assuring him that He will quench all desire *in him*: He will ‘on þe adwesce ealle ontendnysse’ (‘extinguish all passion in you [Julian]’; 17).³³ In other words, it is not just Julian’s wife who may be a threat to Julian’s chastity, but Julian himself. This acknowledgement of Julian’s potential lust is a further humanisation of his saintly character: since Christ Himself recognises the possibility of his temptation, Julian’s characterisation diverges from the usual construction of Ælfric’s virgins, who ‘are presented as asexual beings unaffected by carnality [...] whose minds are impervious to temptation’.³⁴ As Paul Szarmach notes, usually in hagiography ‘faith and chastity are moral equivalents [...]; the moral agents [the saints] are not capable of sexual activity’.³⁵ Whilst Julian never engages in sexual activity, the implication in these lines is that he is *capable* of sexual activity, requiring Christ’s intervention to maintain his asexuality. However, Julian’s faith in Christ is not questioned; indeed, his trust that Christ will work in him to extinguish all lust both asserts Julian’s absolute faith, as well as humanising him. Ælfric’s persistent humanisation of Julian in this marriage-sequence facilitates his audience’s more ready association with a conception of marriage that would have struck them as

³² Hugh Magennis, ‘St Mary of Egypt and Ælfric: Unlikely Bedfellows in Cotton Julius E.vii’, in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. by Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), pp. 99–112 (p. 103). See also his ‘Conversion in Old English Saints’ Lives’, in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon Themes*, ed. by Roberts and Nelson, pp. 287–310: ‘rather than process, the image of the saint familiar in Anglo-Saxon hagiography reflects stasis [...]. Others around them flounder and err, not recognizing the truth, or resisting it, but the saint remains constant and assured through every vicissitude, essentially unaffected by time or earthly experience’ (p. 287; see also p. 291).

³³ The Latin *Passio* has: ‘Adero tibi, ut omnes voluptates carnis et hostis libidinis conterantur’ (1.4).

³⁴ Magennis, ‘St Mary of Egypt and Ælfric’, p. 109.

³⁵ ‘Ælfric’s Women Saints: Eugenia’, in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 146–57 (p. 152).

challenging and which ‘ran against lay interests and customs’.³⁶ By constructing Julian as a realistic figure who is devout but faces a social expectation to marry, who assumes that to marry is to marry carnally, and who is potentially lustful, Ælfric simultaneously constructs his ‘true’ marriage not as the prerogative of an inimitable saint, but as the attainable expectation of Christ.

Ælfric’s definition of ‘true’ marriage encompassed more than just its non-bodily aspect; he was similarly concerned to define ‘true’ marriage as companionate, loving, and spiritually fecund. Christ in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, then, correspondingly establishes these aspects of marriage in his lesson to Julian. After instructing him to marry a maiden, Christ indicates that such a maiden will be ‘him to gemacan’ (‘a companion for him’; 14). Notably, this companionate aspect is lacking in the Latin source (1.4) and is an innovation of Ælfric’s, indicating his concern to establish the companionability of the ideal marriage. Whilst *gemæcca* can denote ‘wife’ or ‘husband’, its primary connotation is ‘companion’, and indeed, as was discussed in Chapter 2, these definitions are semantically connected.³⁷ What is interesting is that Ælfric chooses to deploy a word that semantically encompasses the companionate aspect of a spouse. With this choice he separates the marriage that Julian and Basilissa will share – ‘true’ marriage, based on companionship – from ‘carnal’ marriage, based on sexual relations. For descriptions of ‘true’ marriage, Ælfric uses terms which encompass the companionate, rather than the bodily, aspect of the marital relationship.

To illustrate Ælfric’s careful vocabulary, it is instructive to examine his use in his *Lives of Saints* of the common agent noun denoting a spouse: *gebedda*. As was noted in Chapter 2, *gebedda* denotes a ‘husband’ or a ‘wife’, and also a ‘bedfellow’; the sexual meaning semantically adjoins the spousal meaning.³⁸ Every occasion on which Ælfric uses *gebedda*

³⁶ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 190.

³⁷ See discussion above, Chapter 2, p. 227.

³⁸ See discussion above, Chapter 2, p. 220.

denotes ‘carnal’ marriage, which we can understand to be any marriage that does not conform to his definition of discarnate ‘true’ marriage. In the *Life of St Eugenia* (ÆLS.2 [Eugenia]: pp. 24–51), when Eugenia confronts her father, Philip, she says that he is her father ‘and þin *gebædda* Claudia gebær mé’ (‘and your *gebædda*, Claudia, bore me’; 236): Claudia and Philip physically procreate, and thus Claudia is a *gebædda*, a wife in a ‘carnal’ marriage. In the *Life of St Sebastian* (ÆLS.5 [Sebastian]: pp. 116–47), Sebastian restores the speech of the wife (Zoe) of a thane (Nicostratus); since she and her husband are heathens until Sebastian converts them, it is likely that they participate in ‘carnal’ marriage: she is termed *gebædda* twice (90; 342). The *Life of St Maur* (ÆLS.6 [Maur]: pp. 148–69) describes a noble, whose wife (*gebædda*; 132) has died leaving him one son, clearly indicating the once sexual nature of their marriage.

In the *Life of St Æthelthryth*, King Ecgfrith promises Bishop Wilfrid lands and money if the latter will convince the chaste Æthelthryth ‘his *gebæddan* þæt heo bruce his synscipes’ (‘his wife to have enjoyment of marriage [sexual relations] with him’; 23). In this case, although Æthelthryth and Ecgfrith have *not* had sexual intercourse, Ecgfrith would like to enjoy sexual relations with his wife and it is his indirect speech that the narrator is paraphrasing here; theirs is not ‘true’ marriage in the sense that Ecgfrith desires his wife carnally. *Gebædda* is used twice in Ælfric’s lengthy *Life of St Martin* (ÆLS.31 [Martin]: pp. 218–313), once of the emperor Valentinian’s ‘manful *ge-bædda*’ (‘wicked wife’; 652) and once of a certain wife (*gebædda*; 1071) of a soldier of the world (*woruld-cempa*; 1066) who have both been consecrated by Martin as a cloistered woman and a monk respectively. Ælfric’s moral condemnation of Valentinian’s wife as *manful* puts her outside any construction of ‘true’ marriage; Ælfric implicitly aligns the soldier and his wife with bodily marriage since even when he is a monk, the former soldier desires his wife and Martin counsels that he should not return ‘to his *earrum leahtrum*’ (‘to his previous sins’; 1082). Finally, similarly to the *Life of St Æthelthryth*, in the *Life of St Thomas* (ÆLS.36 [Thomas]: pp. 398–425) a newly converted Migdonia ‘leng nolde cuman to hire weres

bedde' ('would no longer come to her husband's bed'; 272-73) though her husband wishes her to be again his *gebedda* (303). This is perhaps the clearest example to show that Ælfric understands *gebedda* as a carnal spouse; Migdonia does not leave her husband, she merely stops their carnal relations and thus is no longer a *gebedda*. This list should indicate that Ælfric does not necessarily use *gebedda* with any moral censorship or overtone; he uses it to indicate a spouse in a 'carnal' marriage, but he is not generally disparaging of that spouse. What should also be clear is that the term is never used to describe the spouses in 'true' marriage, since the sexual-marital semantic link of *gebedda* would have rendered it unsuitable for such a purpose.

Returning to the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, Ælfric's choice of *gemæcca* is significant since it is entirely suitable to his purpose of defining 'true' marriage. Basilissa will not only be a wife, but also a companion to Julian; she will not, however, be a *gebedda* – a sexual spouse. This companionate reading of *gemæcca* is confirmed by Christ's concluding line to Julian that "“ic þe under-fo mid ðinum mædene to heofonum”” (“I [Christ] will receive you [Julian], with your maiden, to heaven”; 21).³⁹ Christ implies the permanency of the marital union – Julian and Basilissa will be united, even after death in heaven – and the permanency of their mutual companionship, since Julian will be received into heaven *with* Basilissa. It is a statement of marital togetherness. Christ also confirms the spiritual fecundity that characterises 'true' marriage, since Julian and Basilissa will spiritually procreate: 'þurh eow me bið ge-halgod manegra oðre clenysse' ('through you the chastity of many others shall be dedicated to me'; 20). Christ asserts that in marriage Julian and his maiden will remain pure, but such purity will produce spiritual offspring in the consecration of more virgins to Him: 'the legend of the virgin spouses Julian and Basilissa offers the image of a new society that transforms the Old Testament injunction to marry and to increase and multiply into its New Testament equivalent, spiritual fecundity'.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ælfric here echoes his Latin source, 'et te et ipsam in celis virgines recipiam' (1.4)

⁴⁰ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 55.

After Julian's dream-vision of Christ:

Ða awóc Iulianus gewyssod þurh his drihten . cwæð to his freondum . þæt he on-fon wolde . mæden him to gemacan . and hi mycclum þæs fægnodon . Ða fundon his magas sum æðel-boren mæden basilissa gehaten . and him þa begeaten . Ða wurdon gegearcode þa gyftu æfter gewunan . and hí butu coman on anum bedde to-somne.

Then Julian awoke, instructed by his Lord, said to his kin that he wished to take a maiden, a companion, for himself, and they were greatly glad of this. Then his kinsmen found a certain nobly-born maiden named Basilissa, and attained that one for him. Then the wedding was prepared, according to custom, and they both came into one bed together. (22-28)

In this passage, Ælfric reiterates his ecclesiastical position that marriage is founded on personal consent and religious considerations, rather than parental or social expectations. Ælfric clearly aligns Julian's decision to marry with his vision of Christ, not with his kin's wish, since he accepts marriage only after being 'gewyssod þurh his drihten' ('instructed by his Lord'; 22).⁴¹ This alignment is further emphasised by Julian's repetition of Christ's instruction. Christ says that Julian should 'underfon mæden him to gemacan' ('take a maiden, a companion, for himself'; 13-14); Julian echoes this statement, saying that he 'on-fon wolde mæden him to gemacan' ('wished to take a maiden, a companion, for himself'; 23-24). The explicit parallel that Ælfric draws here is his own addition and it is not evident in his Latin source; Ælfric thus accentuates Christ's role in Julian's decision to marry. Dyan Elliott notes that usually, 'the hagiographer is at pains to explain why somebody of peculiar sanctity would be married in the first place, and compulsion [by parents] plays a central role in this context'.⁴² Interestingly, then, Ælfric's Julian marries not because of parental or social compulsion, but because of religious compulsion: 'true' marriage is sanctioned directly by Christ in Ælfric's version.

Ælfric similarly reiterates the companionate nature of the marriage that Christ has established in the previous lines. Julian's repetition of *gemæcca* (24), another Ælfrician

⁴¹ Ælfric here simplifies Julian's response in the Latin *Passio*, which proceeds: "ecce sicut desiderastis, quia ex divino precepto conjugium mihi non esse peccatum sed gratie, faciam q<uæ> hortamini" (1.5).

⁴² Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 66.

innovation, draws attention to Basilissa's wifely function as his companion. This companionate aspect of marriage is nuanced, however, by Ælfric's simultaneous emphasis on the compatibility of Julian and Basilissa. She is described as *æðel-boren* ('nobly-born'; 25), directly paralleling Julian's description in the opening phase of the *Life* as *æðele* ('noble'; 1) and *æðel-boren* ('nobly-born'; 3), thus calling attention to their compatibility.⁴³ That Basilissa is an appropriate companion for Julian is confirmed by her compatibility with him. In the *Life of St Agnes*, Christ is defined by his *æðelborenes* ('innate nobility'; 28): Julian and Basilissa here are implicitly the companions of Christ in their mutual companionship and compatibility.

It is interesting that Ælfric again constructs a socially recognisable scene in these lines. This betrothal-marriage scene is described realistically, if vaguely: 'þa fundon his magas sum æðel-boren mæden basilissa gehaten and him þa begeaten. Þa wurdon gegearcode þa gyftu æfter gewunan and hí butu coman on anum bedde to-somne' ('then his kinsmen found a certain nobly-born maiden named Basilissa, and attained that one for him. Then the wedding was prepared, according to custom, and they both came into one bed together'; 25-28).⁴⁴ As indicated by the discussion in the Introduction, the betrothal and wedding rites described here would have echoed Anglo-Saxon social reality in general terms: the two distinct parts of marriage, engagement (attaining Basilissa) and wedding; the role of kin in the betrothal agreement, and the 'wedding night, the beginning of which was part of the [wedding] ceremony' (the coming together into one bed).⁴⁵ Despite these general consistencies, Ælfric's description of the marriage rites is indistinct: he does not stipulate, for instance, whether Basilissa was approached and consented to the marriage directly, or what bride price, and to and by whom, was paid. However, Ælfric's clever inclusion of 'æfter gewunan' ('according to custom'; 27) would have directed his

⁴³ The Latin has similar repetition on *nobilis* (1.2 and 1.5).

⁴⁴ Ælfric radically changes his Latin source here (1.5), which develops the wedding ceremony at much greater length. Ælfric's abbreviation of his source indicates that he was attempting to make Julian's and Basilissa's wedding less foreign and more recognisable to his Anglo-Saxon audience.

⁴⁵ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 23. See discussion above, Introduction, pp. 16-24, pp. 39-43.

Anglo-Saxon audience to ‘fill in the blanks’ in his description. This marriage bears close enough resemblance to a late Anglo-Saxon marriage for an Anglo-Saxon audience to have understood the ‘customs’ implicit in Ælfric’s description. In these lines, Ælfric rewrites this *Life* to have immediate relevancy to his late Anglo-Saxon audience. He carefully makes Julian’s and Basilissa’s ‘true’ marriage socially recognisable as marriage and as fulfilling the social obligation to marry. In other words, these lines establish a social reality in which Ælfric may locate ‘true’ marriage.

Ælfric’s emphasis on situational realism in the marriage sequence which opens this *Life* has the dual effect of facilitating his Anglo-Saxon audience’s association with it, and of situating his ‘true’ marriage within potential social reality rather than as the privilege of a peerless saint. Thus Julian’s and Basilissa’s wedding night, whilst miraculous in terms of Christ’s appearance as *bræð* (‘fragrance’; 34, 40), is contextualised by the customary wedding within which Ælfric has situated it:

Hwæt ða iulianus hine georne ge-bæd . to ðam hælende criste . þæt he hine geheolde .
wið ealla ontendnysse . and yfele costnunga . Ða wearð þæt bryd-bed mid bræðe afylled .
swylce þær lægon . lilie and rose . Ða cwæð basilissa to þam clænan brydguman . Hit is
winter-tid nu and ic wundrie þearle hwanon þes wurt-bræð þus wynsumlice steme . and
me nu lyst . nanes *synscipes* . ac þæs hælendes geþeodnysse mid ge-healdenre clenisse .
Iulianus andwyrde þam æðelan mædene . þes wynsuman bræð þe ðu wundrast þearle .
næfð nan angin . ne eac nænne ænde . þes bræð is of criste seðe is clænnysse lufigend .
gif wit þurh-wuniað on ansundum mægð-hade . and hine clænelice lufiað . þonne cume
wit to his rice . and wit ne beoð to-twæmede . ác á to worulde blyssiað . Basilissa cwæð .
þæt heo on clænum mægð-hade þurh-wunian wolde . for ðam wynsuman behate . and
habban þæt ece lif . and ðone hælend to bryd-guman.

Listen! Then Julian zealously prayed to the Saviour Christ that He preserve him against all passion and evil temptation. Then that bridal-bed was filled with scent, just as if a lily and a rose were lying there. Then Basilissa said to the chaste bridegroom, ‘It is now winter-time and I intensely wonder whence this fragrance thus delightfully emanates? And now I have no appetite for any *synscipe*, but, with preserved purity, [desire] the Saviour’s association’. Julian answered the noble maiden: ‘This delightful fragrance, about which you intensely wonder, has no beginning, nor any end either. This fragrance is from Christ, He who is the lover of chastity. If we two abide continuously, entirely in virginity and love Him purely, then we two will come to His kingdom, and we two shall never be parted but we shall rejoice always and forever’. Basilissa said that she wished to abide continuously in pure chastity for the sake of that delightful

promise, and to have that everlasting life, and the Saviour as her bridegroom. (29–48; my emphasis)

Ælfric's return to Julian's humanity – lines 29–31, like line 17, assert the possibility of Julian's temptation by lust – further emphasises the 'real', as opposed to the saintly, domain in which this marriage is located. Equally important, however, is the fact that Julian's prayer here (29–31) echoes his first prayer (10) in that it associates the marriage bed into which he has come with Basilissa with marital sexual intercourse, and thus provides Ælfric with a second opportunity to teach Julian, and through Julian, Basilissa and his Anglo-Saxon audience, that sexual relations are not a requisite for a relationship to be defined as a marriage. Ælfric's characterisation of Julian as an accessible saint allows the latter to voice the concerns of his *Life's* audience that marriage must involve passion and temptation (31). Julian re-learns Christ's teaching that marriage is *asexual* through Christ's appearance as fragrance in his bedchamber (32), fulfilling His previous promise to 'beo eow æt-eowed' ('be revealed to you'; 19) in Julian's marriage-bed. Julian's knowledge of the discarnate nature of marriage thus prompts his successful teaching of Basilissa (40–45), who, as Ælfric intended for his audience, accepts and assimilates that message (46–48).

Julian's revelation that marriage is discarnate occurs implicitly and symbolically when 'wearð þæt bryd-bed mid bræðe afylled swylce þær lægon lilie and rose' ('that bridal-bed was filled with scent, just as if a lily and a rose were lying there'; 32–33).⁴⁶ This reference not only invokes Christ's earlier promise to Julian to be revealed in the bridal-bed, but moreover invokes Christ's lesson which contextualised that promise: marriage would not compromise Julian's chastity. Importantly, Christ's manifestation as the scent of the lily and the rose has potent symbolism: the lily symbolises purity, chastity and innocence, and the rose similarly symbolises love, purity and innocence. Further, the lily represents the

⁴⁶ Similarly in the Latin, Christ is revealed by the odour of the lily and the rose (2.6).

purity of the Virgin Mary,⁴⁷ significant in the context of Mary's appearance later in this marriage scene, and the rose represents the martyr: 'the red rose signified "red martyrdom" or the loss of life, and the white rose "white martyrdom" or celibacy',⁴⁸ prefiguring Julian's and Basilissa's eventual martyrdom, but emphasising their chaste purity. These flowers, made manifest by their scent in Julian's and Basilissa's bridal bed, are immediate reminders to Julian that his marriage is true and chaste as Christ has taught and promised him.

Basilissa is the first to comment on the fragrance of Christ, saying that 'me nu lyst nanas *synscipes* ac þæs hælandes geþeodnysse mid ge-healdenre clenisse' ('now I have no appetite for any *synscipe*, but, with preserved purity, [desire] the Saviour's association'; 37-38).⁴⁹ It is clear that the rose and the lily, more than simply representing chastity and purity, are the catalysts of Basilissa's purity and of her disregard for *synscipe*. Ælfric's use of *synscipe* here is significant and deserves some consideration. The base meaning of *synscipe* is 'marriage', 'wedlock' according to Bosworth Toller; Clark Hall supplements this meaning with 'cohabitation'. Fischer notes that it is the 'general' Old English term for marriage⁵⁰ and that 'its morphological structure is clear (prefix *sin-* "lasting, permanent" + semi-suffix *-scipe* "state, condition") [... and that] it is practically monosemous, meaning "marriage" and nothing else'.⁵¹ In other words, unlike *gebedda* (discussed above), *synscipe* has no basic

⁴⁷ Madeleine Gray, *Images of Piety: The Iconography of Traditional Religion in Late Medieval Wales*, BAR British Series, 316 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2000), p. 10 and p. 71; Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art* (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 213.

⁴⁸ Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art*, p. 296. See, for example, *CHI.30 (Assumptio Sanctae Mariae Virginis)* (pp. 429-38; 128-30): 'ðæra rosen blostman getacniað mid heora readnysse martyrdom:] þa lilian mid heora hwitnysse getacniað þa scinendan clænnysse ansundes mægðhades'. Eric Johns says that 'roses and lilies are ancient Christian symbols, but Ælfric shows that they have acquired a new significance for his circle, the roses representing martyrdom and the lilies chastity' (Eric John, 'The World of Abbot Ælfric', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough and Roger Collins [Oxford: Blackwell, 1983], pp. 300-16 [p. 312]).

⁴⁹ Ælfric's version deviates from his Latin source which does not state that Basilissa no longer desires marital intercourse (2.6).

⁵⁰ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 75.

⁵¹ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 77.

sexual semantic undertones or connotations. In this sense, it appears incongruous that Basilissa desires no *sinscipe*, since that implies she desires no marriage, and yet Ælfric is explicit that Julian and Basilissa have married. However, *sinscipe* was the most common Anglo-Saxon word for ‘marriage’: ‘in the corpus it is found 119 times, a number far above even that of its closest rival *æ* (found 31 times)’.⁵² Further, according to Anglo-Saxon social expectations, marriage was considered to involve sexual relations as a necessary legitimating factor.⁵³ Thus although *sinscipe* itself had no *semantic*-sexual connotations, the word was the most recognisable and popular nominal signifier for marriage that was *culturally* assumed to have been bodily and sexual. Ælfric must have recognised that the ‘true’ marriage he proposed ran counter to the social expectation of ‘carnal’ marriage, captured most often by the term *sinscipe*. It seems likely that he was aware of the social and sexual dimension of *sinscipe* and thus did not use the term for denoting his ‘true’ marriage.

In this sense, when Basilissa has no desire for *sinscipe* (‘and me nu ne lyst nanes synscipes’; 37), she is indicating her lack of desire for ‘carnal’ marriage. Ælfric’s insertion of *nu* (‘now’) implies that Basilissa once had desire for *sinscipe*, understood as marriage including sexual relations, and indeed she probably entered into marriage expecting her wedding night to entail consummation. In other words, just as Julian has been humanised throughout this initial marriage sequence, Basilissa is similarly humanised by her admission that *now* she does not desire the expected consummation of her ‘carnal’ marriage (*sinscipe*), since this statement implies that, like the Anglo-Saxon audience of her *Life*, she previously did desire and expect sexual consummation.

Julian and Basilissa thus participate ‘in what in the medieval period would have been designated a “spiritual marriage” – a [...] marriage in which sexual relations have been

⁵² Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 75.

⁵³ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 135.

remitted by the consent of both parties for reasons of piety’,⁵⁴ or, to Ælfric, ‘true’ marriage. Basilissa rejects *sinscipe* – ‘carnal’ marriage – in preference for such ‘true’, spiritual marriage. Lines 29 to 48, then, repeatedly refer to the chastity of their marriage: Julian is described by the narrator as ‘clæne brydguma’ (‘chaste bridegroom’; 34); Basilissa wants only to live ‘ge-healdenre clennis’ (‘with preserved purity’; 38); Julian aligns himself and Basilissa with Christ, who is ‘clænnys lufigend’ (‘the lover of chastity’; 42); Julian and Basilissa must abide in *mægð-had* (‘virginity’; 43) and ‘clænlice lufiað’ (‘love purely’; 44), and Basilissa affirms her desire to live in ‘clæne mægð-had’ (‘pure chastity’; 46). The repetition of words from the semantic field *clæne* emphasises chastity as the most important aspect of Julian’s and Basilissa’s marriage.

Ælfric is careful to reiterate Christ’s earlier teaching that ‘true’ marriage should be companionate, compatible and loving through Julian’s speech to Basilissa. Thus, Julian addresses his lesson to the ‘æðele mæden’ (‘noble maiden’; 39), again drawing attention to the compatibility between his nobility and Basilissa’s. Through Julian’s speech, however, Ælfric interweaves these ideals of compatibility and companionship with that of chastity: they are the products of the chaste union and ‘a continent marriage was truer, because endearment and concord there derive from “voluntary affections of souls”’.⁵⁵ Julian’s repetition of *wit*, the dual pronoun meaning ‘we two’, in lines 43, 44 and 45 emphasises the companionship and compatibility that he and Basilissa should share in an ideal marriage. The indissolubility of their union, even after death, indicates that their marriage has generated their eternal companionship: ‘wit ne beoð to-twæmede ác á to worulde blyssiað’ (‘we two shall never be parted but we shall rejoice always and forever’; 45). This rhetorical emphasis on the perpetual nature of their union, however, is qualified by *gif* (‘if’; 43): Julian’s and Basilissa’s unending companionship is only possible ‘*gif* wit þurh-wuniað on ansundum mægð-hade’ (‘if we two abide in uncorrupted virginity’; 43). In other words, Ælfric constructs marriage here as a union of everlasting partnership, but this intimacy is

⁵⁴ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine’s Writing on Women* (London: Longman and Todd, 1995), p. 36.

reliant upon the parties' continued chastity. Only through embracing virginity can Julian and Basilissa be assured of a companionate and eternal relationship.

Ælfric's construction of Basilissa's response to Julian is particularly enlightening. Julian promises that, should their marriage be chaste and should they love Christ: 'þonne cume wit to his rice and wit ne beoð to-twæmede ac á to worulde blyssiað' ('then we two will come to His dominion, and we two shall never be parted but we shall rejoice always and forever'; 44-45). The narrator recounts Basilissa's reply:

Basilissa cwæð . þæt heo on clænum mægð-hade þurh-wunian wolde . for ðam wynsuman behate . and habban þæt ece lif . and ðone hælend to bryd-guman.

Basilissa said that she wished to abide continuously in pure chastity for the sake of that delightful promise, and to have that everlasting life, and the Saviour as her bridegroom. (46-48)⁵⁶

There are three elements accounting for Basilissa's choice to remain chaste: firstly, the delightful promise ('wynsum behat'; 47); secondly, eternal life, and thirdly, Christ as bridegroom. It is important to note that these three elements are insistently separated by the conjunction *and*: each element is an isolable unit made distinct by Ælfric's use of *and*, as well as by the strong manuscript punctuation.⁵⁷ Julian does not allude to the third element in his speech, and it will be discussed further below. He does indicate that her choice will result in everlasting life since together they will come to heaven (Christ's dominion) and rejoice forever. The question thus arises as to what the 'wynsum behat' (47) refers: because *and* separates the three elements, it seems unlikely to refer to Julian's offer of eternal life. Rather, the 'wynsum behat' must refer to Julian's promise that 'wit ne beoð to-twæmede' ('we two shall never be parted'; 45). The effect is that the promise of marital perpetual companionship is described as *wynsum* ('delightful') and strengthens the assertion that Ælfric is not concerned to propagate anti-matrimonial polemic.

⁵⁶ Ælfric recasts Basilissa's response in an expansion on his briefer Latin source: 'opto tibi consentiens esse, ut possideam æternum sponsum Dominum Ihesum Christum' (2.6).

⁵⁷ As indicated by Skeat's edition of the *Lives*. Skeat uses London, British Library, Cotton MS Julius E.vii for his edition and remarks that 'the text is printed precisely as it stands in the MS [...]'. This remark applies particularly to the accents and the punctuation' (*ÆLS*, p. vii).

The brief allusion to the *sponsa Christi* motif here in line 48 (Basilissa will remain a virgin in order to have Christ as her bridegroom) follows Ælfric's Latin source in its brevity, yet it acts to unite a number of symbolic features at work in this section. Firstly, it refers back to the symbolic lily and rose, the catalysts of Basilissa's conversion to 'true' marriage, since it recalls the typological description of Christ and his spouse in the biblical *Song of Songs* in which Christ caresses his spouse and invites her to Him: 'ego flos campi et lilium convallium sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias' ('I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters'; 2.1). Secondly, it anticipates the Virgin Mary's appearance with Christ in Julian's and Basilissa's bedroom: by introducing the *sponsa Christi* motif, Ælfric heralds Mary's allegorical personification as Christ's church. The *sponsa Christi* motif finally prefigures the Agnes legend, which will support and complement this *Life* of married saints.

Once Basilissa and Julian have entered into their spiritual marriage and Basilissa pledges herself to such a marriage, the two pray to Christ together, emphasising their unity and companionship:

Ða clypode iulianus on cneow-gebedum ðus . *Confirma hoc deus . quod operatus es in nobis . et reliqua*. Gefæstna þis hælend . þæt þæt ðu on ús gewyrcest . and basilissa sona swa ge-lice dyde .

Then Julian, on his knees in prayer, cried out thus: '*Confirma hoc deus, quod operatus es in nobis et reliqua*. Confirm this, Saviour, that you work in us'. And Basilissa straightaway did just the same. (49–52)⁵⁸

Ælfric confirms the compatibility and companionability of their marriage by asserting that Christ works *on us* ('in us'; 51), that is, in both Julian and Basilissa and, by implication, their marriage. It is further confirmed when Basilissa did *swa gelice* ('just the same'; 52) as Julian: their actions, and indeed their faith, are in unison. After this statement of marital unity, Ælfric describes Christ's and Mary's manifestation in the bridal chamber:

⁵⁸ Similarly, the Latin *Passio* has "Confirma hoc Deus quod operaris in nobis." Hæc videns virgo similiter fecit' (2.6).

Þa astyrede þæt bryd-bed . and beorht leoht þær scéan . and crist wearð gesewen mid scinendum werode . and his modur maria mid hyre mædenlicum heape . Crist clypode þa to ðam clænan cnihte . and cwæð þæt he hæfde oferswiðod woruldlice gælsan . and þone gramlican feond . Of marian werode wæs þus geclypod . Eadig eart þu basilissa . forþan þe þu gebygdest þin mod to halwendum mynegungum . and middan-eardlic swæsnyse mid ealle forsiht . and þe sylfe gearcost to wuldre . Þa com to ðam bedde boc fram hælende . and twegen his halgan mid twam cynehelmum . arærdan hi þa úpp . and heton hí rædan . Ða rædde iulianus þas word on þære béc. Se ðe for minre lufe middan-eard forsihð . he bið soðlice geteald to þam unbesmitenum halgum . þe næran on heora life besmitene mid wifum . Basilissa bið geteald to þæra mædena getæle þe maria folgiað þæs hælendes meder . Æfter þissere rædinge . and oðrum tihtingum . gewendon þa halgan to þam hælende úpp.

Then the bridal-bed was stirred up and a light shone there, and Christ was shown with a shining company, and his mother, Mary, with her maidenly host. Christ then cried out to the chaste youth and said that He had vanquished worldly wantonness and the wrathful enemy. Out from Mary's company was thus spoken: 'You are blessed, Basilissa, because you turned your spirit to healing exhortations and [because you] entirely despise earthly pleasure and prepare yourself for glory'. Then a book from the Saviour came to the bed and two of his saints, with two royal crowns, then raised them up and commanded them to read. Then Julian read these words from the book. 'The one who, for my love, despises the world, he shall be certainly numbered among the undefiled saints who in their lives were never defiled with women. Basilissa shall be counted among the number of maidens who serve Mary, the Saviour's mother'. After this reading and other persuasions the saints returned up to the Saviour. (53-74)

As is characteristic of Ælfric's depiction of Julian's and Basilissa's 'true' marriage, the emphasis in this section lies on the chastity of their union. Christ not only addresses Julian as *clæne* ('chaste'; 56), but further accentuates this chastity by affirming that He has vanquished 'woruldlice gælsan and þone gramlican feond' ('worldly wantonness and the wrathful enemy'; 58).⁵⁹ Mary's host's confirmation of Basilissa's action – Basilissa 'middan-eardlic swæsnyse mid ealle forsiht' ('entirely despise[s] earthly pleasure'; 62) – repeats Ælfric's insistent moral that 'true' marriage is spiritual and lustless. Significantly, Ælfric here demonstrates the esteem in which he holds 'true' marriage: Julian reads from Christ's book that he will be accounted among the undefiled saints (*unbesmiten halga*; 69) for despising the world (*middan-eard forsihð*; 68).⁶⁰ It should be noted firstly that Julian here

⁵⁹ The Latin *Passio* has the less explicit, 'vicisti, Juliane, vicisti' (2.7).

⁶⁰ Ælfric's Latin source has: 'qui pro amore mundum contempsit, deputetur in eorum numerum, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati' (2.7). Ælfric expresses a similar sentiment in his Letter to Sigefyrth: 'Ðas

repeats Mary's host's description of Basilissa (*middan-eardlic* [...] *forsihst*; 62), and this repetition aligns Julian with Basilissa, continuing and heightening the emphasis on their compatibility as a married couple. More importantly, however, Ælfric synthesises saintliness with a rejection of the world which is grounded in the decision to remain undefiled by women: the saints 'næran on heora life besmitene mid wifum' ('in their lives were never defiled with women'; 70). Julian will be counted as holy *because* of his rejection of bodily lusts and implicitly of 'carnal' marriage. Since

hagiography is most useful for telling us why particular people at a particular time were regarded as saints, and thus for giving us some insight into the attitudes and priorities of the hagiographer and his audience, i.e., for analysing and defining the concept of sanctity,⁶¹

then Ælfric's promotion of chastity – specifically Julian's marital chastity – as the primary vehicle for sanctity is significant. Ostensibly this statement removes Ælfric's 'true' marriage from the realm of the accessible and social, in which his humanisation of Julian has hitherto located it: Julian's participation in 'true' marriage (to remain undefiled by his wife) counts him among the saints. However, when coupled with Ælfric's unusual and adamant de-mystification of Julian as a saint, the effect of this statement is a promise of hope for redemption and righteousness: 'true' marriage is a path for the holy and the faithful, and will lead to redemption. It is significant, then, that the two saints who are manifest along with Christ and Mary in Julian's and Basilissa's bedchamber are described as being adorned with crowns (*cynehelm*; 65), for crowns are iconographic not only of achieved righteousness and eternal life already granted,⁶² but also for the hope of redemption. The second Pauline letter to Timothy makes this second level of symbolism clear:

halgan næron næfre mid wifum besmitene' (124) (*Angelsächsische Homilien Und Heiligenleben*, ed. by Bruno Assmann [Kassel, 1889; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964, with a new introduction by Peter Clemoes], §2, pp. 13–23).

⁶¹ David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 168.

⁶² 'When worn by a martyr, a crown implied victory over human sinfulness and death' (Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art*, p. 91).

Bonum certamen certavi cursum consummavi fidem servavi in reliquo reposita est mihi iustitiae corona quam reddet mihi Dominus in illa die iustus iudex non solum autem mihi sed et his qui diligunt adventum eius

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me at that day: and not to me only, but to them also that love his coming. (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

The crown is the symbol of justice for *all* faithful and a promise of redemptive reward for following Christ's teaching, including, as Ælfric has so emphatically stated in his extended opening to the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, chastity in marriage.

Ælfric's translation of his Latin source text is generally close, although his tendency to abbreviate is more evident in this text than it is in his *Life of St Agnes*. A number of sense changes, clarifications, and additions, as have been noted, emphasise his purpose of constructing 'true' marriage for his Anglo-Saxon audience. As Upchurch notes, Ælfric makes 'numerous, mostly small-scale changes' to his source, and, 'as a result, the couple's spiritual marriage dominates the beginning of Ælfric's retelling'.⁶³ It is significant, then, that Ælfric chooses to omit completely a lengthy reference in his source (2.7) to Luke 14:26, in which Christ proclaims that anyone must hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters to be His disciple.⁶⁴ Ælfric's omission suggests that he considered this biblical reference confusing or detrimental to his overarching objective; indeed Christ's statement that one should hate one's wife would have been totally inappropriate to his construction of 'true' marriage, which was, in Ælfric's conception, sanctioned and directed by Christ Himself.

Ælfric's summarises 'true' marriage succinctly in lines 75 to 77:

⁶³ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', pp. 68-69.

⁶⁴ It is possible that Ælfric re-orders the Latin and that the lines 'se ðe for minre lufe middan-eard forsihð . he bið soðlice geteald to þam unbesmitenum halgum' ('the one who, for my love, despises the world, he shall be certainly numbered among the undefiled saints'; 68-69) refers to the Luke passage. If this is the case it remains notable that Ælfric's translation of Luke is very loose, making no reference to the need to hate one's wife to be Christ's disciple, unlike the very specific and faithful transcription of the Luke passage in Ælfric's source.

Hwæt þa iulianus ungewæmmede heold his bryde . and hi wæron geðeodde mid soðre clænnysse gastlice þeonde on godes gewytnysse .

Indeed! Then Julian cherished his undefiled bride and they were joined as companions in righteous chastity, prospering spiritually in the knowledge of God. (75-77)⁶⁵

All of the elements of ‘true’ marriage are present in these forceful lines, the significance of which is indicated by Ælfric’s use of the emphatic interjection, *hwæt*. ‘True’ marriage is loving: Julian ‘cherishes’ Basilissa (*bealdan*; 75). It is companionable: Julian and Basilissa are ‘joined as companions’ in their marriage (*geðeodan*; 76), where *geðeodan* indicates uniting or joining together. Yet, this companionship and unification is explicitly grounded in, and implicitly reliant on, chastity: Julian cherishes an ‘undefiled’ (*ungewemmed*; 75) wife and their relationship has as its foundations the ‘righteous chastity’ (*soð clænnys*; 76) that Ælfric has so painfully elucidated as the defining feature of ‘true’ marriage. Perhaps most illuminating, however, is the spiritual enlightenment that develops out of such ‘true’ marriage. Julian and Basilissa, as truly married companions, prosper spiritually as befits the spiritual nature of their union. Not only do they prosper spiritually, they grow in the ‘knowledge of God’ (*godes gewytnysse*; 77), indicating Ælfric’s confirmation that ‘true’ marriage is not only spiritually satisfying, but also divinely ordained and a vehicle through which knowledge of God can be attained.

As indicated earlier, Ælfric’s conception of ‘true’ marriage had the political agenda of aligning marriage within the church’s domain, rather than the parental domain,⁶⁶ and

the lives of saints [...] offer the Anglo-Saxon church a vehicle for moral commentary on contemporary social and political life, as evidenced by [...] the ways in which hagiography fosters Christian visions of social relations such as gender, the family, and marriage.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ These lines deviate slightly from Ælfric’s source which has ‘ceperunt spiritu esse conjuncti non carne fructificantes, et ita mysterium divine gratie in se conlatum occultabant, a Domino Christo et sanctis angelis sciretur, quod agebant’ (2.8).

⁶⁶ See discussion above, pp. 318–19.

⁶⁷ Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing and Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures, 19 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 7–8.

Ælfric thus concludes this opening marital section of his *Life* by emphasising a second political point:

Heora fæderas wæron gefyrn cristene . Hit gelamp þa raðe . þæt hi of life gewytan . and læfdon heora æhta þam æðelum mannum . Iulianus þa dælde . be his drihtnes wyssunga heora land are . þe him læfed wæs . and arærde him mynster and his mædene oðer .

Their parents were Christians already. Then it soon occurred that they departed from life and bequeathed their possessions to the noble ones. Then, with his Lord's guidance, Julian distributed the possessions of their land, which was bequeathed to them, and established a monastery for himself and another for his maiden. (78-83)

Whilst this sequence is not specifically marriage-oriented, it does point to Ælfric's interest in ecclesiastical endowments. In practical terms, Julian's and Basilissa's spiritual and non-bodily marriage was heirless. Unlike their parents, who were able to bequeath their estates to Julian and Basilissa, they themselves have no heir to whom to bequeath their inherited estates. Ælfric's explanation of their consequent course of action – the endowment of two monasteries – affirms the notion discussed in Chapter 3 that 'a considerable proportion of the immense possessions of the Church came from donations made by particular families'⁶⁸ and indeed that 'monasteries were maintained by landed estates, which were the gift of the faithful'.⁶⁹ However, Ælfric's explicit endorsement of Julian's and Basilissa's ecclesiastical endowment, made obvious by his statement that the donation was given 'be his drihtnes wyssunga' ('with his Lord's [God's] guidance'; 81), is a subtle political manoeuvre: Ælfric's 'true' and heirless marriage is a vehicle by which he, and his church, might bring 'about the further alienation of family holdings'⁷⁰ in order that such ecclesiastical donations might more readily be made. Hollis makes the pertinent point that 'English hagiography is most explicitly concerned to affirm the primacy of spiritual relations over those of the flesh where the church's retention of family-owned lands is threatened';⁷¹ Lees similarly asserts that 'Christianity commands the reorientation of

⁶⁸ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 123. See discussion above, Chapter 3, pp. 250-51.

⁶⁹ Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000-1066: A History of the later Anglo-Saxon Church*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Longman, 1963; repr. 1979), p. 324.

⁷⁰ Goody, *Development of Family and Marriage*, p. 123.

⁷¹ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 39.

familial bonds toward God'.⁷² Ælfric's *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* has such proprietary aims, and such aims reveal a specifically Anglo-Saxon, and indeed Reform, slant to Ælfric's inclusion of this *Life* in his collection.

Ælfric concludes his idealised portrait of Julian's and Basilissa's 'true' marriage with a statement regarding their spiritual fecundity:

He wearð þa fæder ofer fæla muneca . and basilissa modor ofer manega mynecena . and hi þa gastlican werod under gode gewyssodon . on dæg-hwamlicre lare to heora dryhtnes wyllan.

Then he [Julian] became a father over many monks and Basilissa [became] a mother over many cloistered women and then they, under God, instructed the holy company in daily preaching, in accordance with their Lord's wish. (78-87)

Whilst Julian's and Basilissa's marriage may be *physically* heirless, their spiritual progeny are the faithful, holy company – the 'fæla muneca and [...] manega myneccena' ('many monks and [...] many cloistered women'; 84-85) – whom they instruct in Christ's law. Again, the insistent emphasis that Julian's and Basilissa's spiritual children are produced 'under God' ('under gode'; 86) and 'in accordance with their Lord's wish' ('to heora dryhtnes wyllan'; 87) situates 'true', spiritual marriage within God's law and direction. As Leslie Donovan notes, in these lives of virgin-martyrs, Ælfric could not 'reconcile the practical necessity of the reproductive aspects of the female [and indeed male] body with the religious requirement that it be rejected'.⁷³ Rather than attempting such reconciliation, then, Ælfric constructed a non-biological model of reproduction, that of spiritual conversion and teaching. Thus, Julian's and Basilissa's spiritual childbearing 'is a metaphor for teaching and making converts, and every Christian's innate capacity for motherhood insures that the church grows continuously'.⁷⁴

⁷² Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 121.

⁷³ Leslie Donovan, 'The Gendered Body as Spiritual Problem and Spiritual Answer in the Lives of Women Saints', in Leslie A. Donovan, *Women Saints' Lives in Old English Prose*, Library of Medieval Women (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 121-34 (p. 122).

⁷⁴ Robert Kimmons Upchurch, 'The Legend of Chrysanthus and Daria in Ælfric's Lives of Saints', *Studies in Philology*, 101 (2004), 250-69 (p. 257). Ælfric repeats this sentiment in a number of his homilies, for example in *CHI.33 (Dominica XVII Post Pentecosten)* (pp. 459-64; 20-24). Unless otherwise indicated, all

The remainder of this *Life* engages little with ‘true’ marriage: by line 100, Basilissa, accompanied by her virgin followers, dies. We are told that ‘iulianus mid blisse hi bebyrgde mid his munecum’ (‘Julian, with honour, with his monks, buried her [Basilissa]’; 101). Whilst Basilissa’s name is not mentioned again until Julian himself is martyred, we are reminded of her, and of their ‘true’ marriage, twice more during Julian’s *Life*. One miracle performed during his martyrdom sequence is the resurrection of a dead man by means of Julian’s prayer to Christ. Having been resurrected, the man cries out ‘Eala hu andfæncge gebed and hu clæne mægð-had is on þisum mæran iuliane’ (‘Oh! How acceptable the prayer and how pure the virginity is in this splendid Julian’; 280–81). The reminder is subtle, but the use of the formula *clæne mægð-had* here recalls the epithets used to describe Julian’s and Basilissa’s chaste marriage. We are secondly reminded of Basilissa when Julian converts Celsus’s mother (Martianus’s wife). At the moment of her conversion, ‘mære bræð þær stanc swa þæt þæt wif wundrode þæs wynsuman bræþes’ (‘a sublime fragrance was emitted there so that the woman wondered at that delightful fragrance’; 347–48), and we are reminded clearly of Basilissa’s conversion on her wedding night, and thus of Julian’s and Basilissa’s ‘true’ marriage. At the conclusion to the *Life* Julian is martyred. Here, Ælfric explicitly aligns the ‘true’ marriage that he constructed in the opening sequence of the *Life* with the achievement of sanctity, and fulfils the ‘true’ marital promise of perpetual companionship. We are told that, through his death, Julian joins his companion, Basilissa, just as all those faithful who were martyred with him join their companions who have been previously martyred throughout the course of the *Life*. Julian, and his comrades, go ‘to heora geferum þe him fore-stopon, þæt is basilissa mid hyre beorhtum mædenum’ (‘to their *geferan* who preceded them, that is, Basilissa with her bright maidens’; 417). The construction of the lines makes clear that Julian, and his companions, joins Basilissa, and her companions, with the emphasis on the reunion of

references to Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies* are to *CHI* and *CHII*; all further references to Ælfric’s *CHI* and *CHII* are given after quotations in the text. See also Hugh Magennis, ‘Conversion in Old English Saints’ Lives’, in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon Themes*, ed. by Roberts and Nelson, pp. 287–310, in which he argues that ‘it is a feature of saints that they bring others to God’ (p. 292).

Julian with Basilissa. Importantly, then, *gefera* denotes both ‘companion’ and ‘spouse’.⁷⁵ Julian joins the companionship not only of his fellow-martyrs, but simultaneously of his wife. Even in death, Julian and Basilissa are united as spouses.

Some concluding points should be made about the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*. Firstly, Ælfric’s unusual humanisation of his saintly characters is missing from the remainder of the *Life*: in Julian’s martyrdom sequence, Julian is an archetypical saintly figure, inimitable and remote in his unwavering acceptance of the tortures inherent in his passion and his performance of miracles throughout it. In striking contrast to the unsure and possibly lustful Julian of the marriage sequence, the Julian of the passion sequence is distanced from the audience by his unswerving faith in the face of severe torture. Julian is a ‘typically idealized’ figure of ‘superhuman virtue’ who Ælfric presents ‘in a state of achieved sanctity, elevated above human fallibility’.⁷⁶ It appears, then, that Ælfric consciously attempted to humanise the opening scene of ‘true’ marriage to suggest its applicability to his audience. Such an assertion is supported by one of Ælfric’s most significant deviations from his Latin source. As Upchurch notes:

missing from the idealized portrait of the marriage, however, is the emphasis on secrecy featured [...] in the Cotton text [...]. In the Latin Julian and Basilissa are said to have ‘concealed the mystery of divine grace bestowed on them so that what they were doing was known [only] to Christ the Lord and the holy angels’. Ælfric, on the other hand, seems to make their purity more open [...] In Ælfric’s hagiographic world, chaste marriage does not need to be hidden from Christian parents.⁷⁷

The absence of the secrecy motif in Ælfric’s version is conspicuous and Julian and Basilissa take open pride in their ‘true’ marriage. Ælfric ‘is highly selective in what he includes in his saints’ lives. Here his main purpose is moral teaching [...]. In retelling the Latin lives he rearranges and makes omissions in order to sharpen the moral structure’.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ DOE has ‘companion, comrade, friend’ as the primary meaning of *ge-fera*; definition VII is ‘spouse’.

⁷⁶ Magennis, ‘Conversion in Saints’ Lives’, p. 287.

⁷⁷ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, pp. 71–72.

⁷⁸ Janet Bately, ‘The Nature of Old English Prose’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; repr. 1996), pp. 71–87 (p. 79).

In Ælfric's version it appears that Julian's and Basilissa's parents actively approve of their spiritual marriage since they bequeath their estates to the pair and since Ælfric tells us that the parents 'wæron gefyrn cristene' ('were Christian already'; 78). Ælfric's changes to his Latin source make his 'true' marriage between Julian and Basilissa socially and parentally acceptable, in turn suggesting 'true' marriage as an accessible and possible choice for his audience to whom it is recommended. In Ælfric's version, Julian's parents and kin did not explicitly wish for Julian to marry to have an heir. Thus Ælfric circumvents the need for secrecy which is present in the *Passio*: in the *Passio*, 'true' marriage is a cause for social and parental frustration;⁷⁹ in Ælfric's version, there is no such conflict. By his persistent humanisation of Julian in his pursuit of 'true' marriage in a *Life* which otherwise presents Julian as absolutely saintly, as well as by his changes to his Latin source, Ælfric manages to construct the tenets of 'true' marriage, as found exemplified by Christ and Agnes in the *Life of St Agnes*. He also manages to manipulate subtly his audience to accept this 'true' marriage as an actual, possible and socially acceptable re-definition of the institution: Julian's and Basilissa's marriage is a 'lived experience of the faith'.⁸⁰ In this sense, Ælfric's *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* emphasises 'both the centrality of [the] marriage union as a constituting metaphor for religious experience and theological discourse; and, even, more importantly, the pervasive tendency to blur metaphoric with objective levels of reality'.⁸¹

One last point must be mentioned in defence of the aforesaid reading of Ælfric's *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*: in including this *Life* in his hagiographic collection, Ælfric was not necessarily participating in an established tradition, and his 'decision to include Julian and Basilissa [...] does not appear to be based on the popularity of the saints' cult in late

⁷⁹ Carol Pasternack 'The Sexual Practices of Virginité and Chastity in Aldhelm's *De Virginitate*', in *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillmore Calder*, ed. by Carol Pasternack and Lisa M. C. Weston, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 277 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), pp. 93-120 (p. 109).

⁸⁰ Lees, *Tradition and Belief*, p. 35.

⁸¹ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 37.

Anglo-Saxon England’;⁸² neither can we ‘assume that Julian and Basilissa were actively culted in early Anglo-Saxon England’.⁸³ Whilst it is probable that Julian and Basilissa enjoyed some popularity in the early Christian period, it is difficult to assess how popular they were during the Anglo-Saxon period.⁸⁴ Whatley cites a hymn by Venatious Fortunatus (d. c. AD 600), Bishop of Poitiers, as an early witness ‘to the currency of the cult’, as well as ‘notices for the feast day [January 6] in a fifth-century martyrology’,⁸⁵ the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, although their feast-day is usually January 9. Their Greek *Passio* was translated into Latin before or in the seventh century.⁸⁶ On the Continent, they are commemorated, with a feast-day of January 9, in the *Martyrology* of Ado (written by AD 858), in Usuard’s ninth-century *Martyrologium*, and in Notker’s *Martyrology* (ninth-century). In Hrabanus Maurus’s ninth-century martyrology, Julian and Basilissa are commemorated on 13 January.⁸⁷ Whatley finally notes that their cult seems to have flourished in Spain.⁸⁸

Julian’s and Basilissa’s popularity in Anglo-Saxon England is not so easily assessed. Susan Ridyard argues that:

the importance of a cult at its principal centre, and both the geography and the chronology of its diffusion from that centre traced, by reference to liturgical sources – in particular to calendars, litanies and *lectiones* for the festival of the saints. Generally produced in order to fulfil the liturgical requirements of a specific religious community, these sources might be expected to provide sound contemporary evidence for the emergence and spread of the cults of the saints. They are however subject to a number of problems, of which the most important are those of dating, of provenance and of dependence upon the hagiographical tradition.⁸⁹

⁸² Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 60.

⁸³ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 58.

⁸⁴ Butler dates their martyrdoms at c. AD 313 under Emperor Maximin II (Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints*, 1 [London: Charles Dolman, 1847], pp. 122–24).

⁸⁵ Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 280.

⁸⁶ Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 280.

⁸⁷ There is evidence for their veneration on the Continent in an earlier period in the translation of Julian’s skull from the east into France as a gift to queen Brunhault in ‘the time of Gregory the Great’ (Butler, *Lives of Saints*, p. 124).

⁸⁸ Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 280.

⁸⁹ Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 16.

These issues present themselves for an analysis of Julian's and Basilissa's importance and popularity in the Anglo-Saxon period; for example, 'these two saints are very rarely commemorated in Anglo-Saxon calendars'⁹⁰ and they were only included in four of the twenty-five extant monastic calendars.⁹¹ Indeed, the date for these saints' commemoration was variously assigned to 9 January,⁹² 27 February,⁹³ and 20 December;⁹⁴ the Cotton-Corpus legendary (akin to Ælfric's probable source) has 9 January.⁹⁵ Differing from all of these examples, but echoing Hrabanus Maurus, Ælfric's date for Julian's and Basilissa's commemoration is 13 January, perhaps indicating that their veneration was not well established. Further implying a lack of popularity is the extant litany evidence. A 'Sanctae Iuliane' was mentioned in only eleven (of sixty-one) litanies of the saints.⁹⁶ However, only in London, British Library, MS Add. 28188 (IX.i), London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A. vii (XXII.i), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296 (XXXII) was St Julian listed as 'Sancte Iuliane cum sociis' ('St Julian with his companions'),⁹⁷ a reference often used for Ælfric's St Julian; thus these three litanies possibly referred to St Julian (and Basilissa). In London, British Library, MS Harley 863 (XXIII) and Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 180 (XLIV) both a St Julian and a St Basilissa were listed, albeit separately.⁹⁸ It is possible, then, that only five of the eleven mentions of St Julian in the

⁹⁰ Michael Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"' in *Holy Men*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 115-29 (p. 123).

⁹¹ *English Kalendars Before AD 1100*, ed. by Francis Wormald, Henry Bradshaw Society, 72 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988; first publ., 1934); Michael Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 243-63 (p. 247). Upchurch says that Julian and Basilissa appear in five of twenty-two extant calendars ('Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 60, n. 25), but I cannot find the fifth instance which he cites as Wormald, *English Kalendars*, §5; cf. Lapidge, who lists only three calendars with commemorations to Julian and Basilissa ('Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', p. 123).

⁹² Wormald, *English Kalendars* §8, London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A. xviii (a later addition to the manuscript); §20, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296.

⁹³ Wormald, *English Kalendars* §10, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R 15.32.

⁹⁴ Wormald, *English Kalendars* §3, London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A. ii.

⁹⁵ Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', p. 123. On the Cotton-Corpus legendary, see above, p. 316, n. 19.

⁹⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, Henry Bradshaw Society, 106 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), nos. V, IX.i, XVI.ii (twice), XXII.i, XXIII, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX.ii, XXXII, XLIII, XLIV. See also Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life', pp. 246-48.

⁹⁷ See Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 133, p. 188 and p. 236 respectively.

⁹⁸ See Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 194 and p. 200, and p. 290 and p. 293 respectively.

litanies refer to the St Julian commemorated by Ælfric, but this number may have been greater or, indeed, smaller.⁹⁹

Apart from such brief mentions, the legend of Julian and Basilissa is extant in only three works of the Anglo-Saxon period, other than Ælfric's: the Latin *Prosa de virginitate* and the *Carmen de virginitate* by Aldhelm (d. AD 709), and the ninth-century Old English *Martyrology*.¹⁰⁰ According to Whatley, its inclusion in the *Prosa* and *Carmen de virginitate*, works 'well known to the later Anglo-Saxon literati', may have influenced Ælfric's 'selection of the legend'.¹⁰¹ However, his later study in his 'Acta Sanctorum' reveals two distinct recensions of the Julian and Basilissa legend (as is indicated by two separate entries for 'Iulianus et Basilissa' in his 'Acta Sanctorum'), and according to this scheme, Ælfric's version develops independently from that found in Aldhelm and in the Old English *Martyrology*.¹⁰² In support of this argument, Upchurch, in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, has analysed the differences and points of connection between these three versions and Ælfric's,¹⁰³ concluding that the former 'reflect monastic sensibilities and underscore the values of that culture', and that Ælfric's version is rather 'for a devout laity, reflecting his homiletic teaching about lay virginity'.¹⁰⁴ Upchurch's conclusions also support Clare Lees's and Gillian Overing's, who contend that Aldhelm's 'direct influence on Ælfric is negligible'.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Compare this number to the number of listings for St Agnes, who has forty-three entries in the litanies. See Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 303.

¹⁰⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, all Latin quotations from the *Carmen de virginitate* are taken from Migne's edition, Aldhelmus Schireburnensis, 'De laudibus virginitatis', in *PL*, vol. 89; all translations are taken from Aldhelm, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985). All further references to the *Carmen de virginitate* are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁰¹ E. Gordon Whatley, 'An Introduction to the Study of Old English Prose Hagiography: Sources and Resources', in *Holy Men*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 3-32 (p. 12).

¹⁰² Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', pp. 280-81.

¹⁰³ See 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', pp. 51-61.

¹⁰⁴ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 60 and p. 61 respectively.

¹⁰⁵ *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 127.

Lapidge argues that Ælfric's intention in his *Lives of Saints* 'was simply to provide for lay readers an abbreviated legendary containing readings for those saints' days which he judged to be most universal'.¹⁰⁶ If this argument is accepted, and considering the possible relative unpopularity of Julian and Basilissa in late Anglo-Saxon England, then Ælfric's inclusion of their *Life* is perhaps one of the 'eccentricities' of his collection,¹⁰⁷ especially when combined with an appreciation of what Lapidge terms Ælfric's 'curious omissions' of feasts of universal observance, Frankish and Flemish saints who were widely venerated in late Anglo-Saxon England, and English saints, even those with specific cult connections to Winchester.¹⁰⁸ It is possible that Ælfric saw in this *Life* a vehicle by which his treatment of 'true' marriage might be exemplified to his audience. It is my suggestion that it was the marital aspect of this *Life*, and indeed that of Chrysanthus and Daria (also a 'liturgically marginal couple'¹⁰⁹), that appealed to Ælfric and for which reason he chose to include them into his *Lives of Saints*.

4.1.2 *The Lives of SS Cecilia and Valerian*

Ælfric's inclusion of the *Life of St Cecilia* in his *Lives of Saints* was not as unusual or as eccentric as his inclusion of the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, or indeed the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*. Cecilia (d. c. AD 230),¹¹⁰ like Agnes, was a popular saint during the late Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods,¹¹¹ and, along with Sebastian and Agnes, Cecilia

¹⁰⁶ Lapidge, 'The Sainly Life', p. 258.

¹⁰⁷ Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', p. 123.

¹⁰⁸ Lapidge, 'Ælfric's "Sanctorale"', p. 119-22.

¹⁰⁹ Upchurch, 'Chrysanthus and Daria', p. 252.

¹¹⁰ Butler, *Lives of Saints*, XI, pp. 375-78 (under Cecily, 22 November).

¹¹¹ Connolly notes that 'around the end of the fifth century, suddenly and for the first time, a saint appears who receives all the cult due to one of the most revered of the Roman virgin-martyrs yet seems to have been unknown to previous generations'. He further states that Cecilia is listed in the Roman Canon of the Mass; that she is depicted in the earliest mosaics in Ravenna, and that her *Passio* was written c. AD 495-500. There is no evidence that she was venerated before this date: 'Augustine, Ambrose, Prudentius, and others, who knew so much about Agnes and Eulalia and Agatha, do not even breathe Cecilia's name'. She is not listed in the fourth century *Depositio Martyrum*; the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has four separate entries for Cecilia: 11 August (Tiburtius's, Cecilia's brother-in-law, feast day), 16 September, 17 November, 22 November (as given in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*). The latter date is adopted by Ælfric. (Thomas Connolly,

was one of the three most popular Roman martyrs in Anglo-Saxon England.¹¹² Ælfric's translation of her *Life* in his collection adheres to a long tradition of veneration of Cecilia and Valerian, both separately and together.¹¹³ Like Agnes, Cecilia is commemorated in all of the extant Anglo-Saxon calendars,¹¹⁴ and in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary'.¹¹⁵ In immediate contrast to Julian's eleven extant commemorations, commemorations to 'Sancta Caecilia' occur in forty-one litanies of the saints, only two fewer occurrences than Agnes.¹¹⁶ In Bede's Latin panegyric (or elegiac hymn) to Æthelthryth in praise of virginity in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, both Agnes's and Cecilia's importance as pre-eminent virgins is acknowledged.¹¹⁷ Also like Agnes, Cecilia is commemorated in the Latin metrical calendars (the Metrical Calendar of York, the Metrical Calendar of Hampson, and the Metrical Calendar of Ramsey).¹¹⁸

Cecilia's and Valerian's *Passio* 'appears to have been known in England throughout the Anglo-Saxon period'.¹¹⁹ Cecilia and Valerian are celebrated separately in Bede's *Martyrologium*. Whilst 'in Cecilia's entry [...] Bede makes only the briefest allusion to her

Mourning Into Joy: Music, Raphael, and Saint Cecilia [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994], pp. 24-28.)

¹¹² Michael Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs and their Miracles in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic Literature*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra, Germania Latina V, Mediaevalia Groningana, NS 6 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 95-120 (p. 112, p. 120).

¹¹³ Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 124.

¹¹⁴ Wormald, *English Kalendars; The Calendar of Willibrord from MS. Paris. Lat. 10837*, ed. by H. A. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society, 55 (London: Harrison, 1918).

¹¹⁵ Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', p. 120.

¹¹⁶ Lapidge, *Litanies*, nos. I, II.i, IV.i, IV.ii, VIII.i, VIII.ii, IX.i, IX.ii, XI, XII, XIII, XVI, XVIII, XIX, XXI, XXII.i, XXII.ii, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXIII (in his 'Index of Saints', Lapidge lists Cecilia at XXVIII.59; she in fact occurs at XXVIII.159. See p. 306), XXIX.ii, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV.i, XXXVI, XXXVII.i, XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL, XLI.i, XLI.iii, XLII.i, XLII.ii, XLIII, XLIV, XLV.

¹¹⁷ *HE*, Book IV; XX (p. 398).

¹¹⁸ See André Wilmart, 'Un témoin anglo-saxon du calendrier métrique d'York', *Revue Bénédictine*, 46 (1934), 41-69; P. McGurk, 'The Metrical Calendar of Hampson: A New Edition', *Analecta Bollandia*, 104 (1986), 79-125; Michael Lapidge, 'A Tenth-Century Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', *Revue Bénédictine*, 94 (1984), 326-69. Like Agnes, she is also missing from the Old English *Menologium*. See discussion above, Chapter 3, p. 271.

¹¹⁹ Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 124.

spiritual marriage and focuses almost exclusively on her martyrdom',¹²⁰ Bede shows more familiarity with the *Passio* in his entry for Valerian.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the marriage of Cecilia and Valerian does not occupy Bede's focus in his *Martyrologium*. In Aldhelm's prose *De virginitate*, Cecilia is *not* a married saint; Aldhelm instead writes of Cecilia as he does his other virgin martyrs, shunning the marriage of an earthly suitor.¹²² Remarkably, then, in his poetic version, Aldhelm *does* make reference to Cecilia's marriage (although Valerian is never named) but it is framed within the *sponsa Christi* motif and her marriage is incidental rather than fundamental to her *Passio*.¹²³ Conversely, the version found in the Old English *Martyrology* is substantial and follows the Latin *Passio* closely,¹²⁴ including extended reference to Cecilia's marriage to Valerian and to his conversion; however, despite that Cecilia and Valerian are married in the Old English version of Cecilia's legend, Valerian's separate entry in the *Martyrology* has no reference to his marriage to Cecilia. Connolly notes that 'the celibate marriage of Valerian and Cecilia, is the most singular element of the *Passio*';¹²⁵ it is interesting, then, that this element is not given such prominence in Anglo-Saxon versions. Ælfric's version of Cecilia's and Valerian's legend contributes to this thriving cult of veneration; however, it deviates from the previous accounts of Aldhelm and Bede by emphasising and concentrating on the 'true' marriage of Cecilia and Valerian, following the 'singular element' of the source *Passio*.

Ælfric's *Life of St Cecilia* has a number of points of connection with his *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, as well as a number of striking differences, and the tone of Cecilia's legend is demonstrably different from that of Julian's and Basilissa's. Nevertheless, Ælfric's

¹²⁰ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', pp. 102-03; Bede, *Édition Pratique des martyrologes de Bède, de l'anonyme Lyonnais et Florus*, ed. by Jacques Dubois and Geneviève Renaud (Paris: Editions du centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1976), p. 211.

¹²¹ Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 125; Bede, *Édition Pratique des martyrologes de Bède*, p. 61 (14 April).

¹²² See Aldhelm, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Ipswich and Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979), p. 107; Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 98.

¹²³ Aldhelm, *The Poetic Works*, p. 141

¹²⁴ Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 125; *An Old English Martyrology*, ed. by George Herzfeld, EETS OS 116 (Oxford: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1900; repr. 1973), pp. 208-09.

¹²⁵ Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, p. 67.

construction of his ideal 'true' marriage is both evident in the *Life of St Cecilia*, and consistent with that constructed in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*. Through his examination of Cecilia's and Valerian's 'true' marriage, Ælfric further develops the fundamental principles upon which his 'true' marriage was based: companionability, compatibility, chastity and love.

In an immediate divergence from the opening to Julian's legend, Ælfric's introduction of Cecilia in her *Life* establishes her as a remote and inaccessible saint, both in situational terms, and in terms of her fervent devotion. In Cecilia's *Life* Ælfric does not appear to be concerned to humanise her, or to make her situation recognisable to his Anglo-Saxon audience:

Iu on ealdum dagum wæs sum æðele mæden Cecilia gehaten fram cild-hade christen on romana rice þa þa seo reðe ehtnys stód on þæra casera dagum þe cristes ne gymdon . Þeos halige fæmne hæfde on hire breoste swa micle lufe to þam ecan life . þæt heo dæges and nihtes embe drihtnes godspel . and embe godes lare mid geleafan smeade . and on singalum gebedum hi sylfe gebysgode .

Formerly, in the old days, there was a certain noble maiden called Cecilia, who was a Christian from childhood, during the Roman Empire when violent persecution took place, in the days of the emperors who disregarded Christ. This holy woman had in her heart such great love for the eternal life that she, with faith, meditated on the Lord's gospel and about the doctrine of God, day and night, and she busied herself with constant prayers. (1-9)

Ælfric immediately places Cecilia's story in a remote past with his assertion that her *Life* is set 'iu on ealdum dagum' ('formerly, in the old days'; 1). Whilst Julian's legend was set at an indeterminate time, simply in Antioch in Egypt (2), Cecilia's legend is cast not only in the Roman Empire, implying both geographical *and* chronological distance from late Anglo-Saxon England, but specifically during the persecutions, an addition which further alienates Cecilia from the Anglo-Saxons listening to her *Life*. Ælfric's introduction of Cecilia's context immediately suggests her martyrdom: she is a devout Christian during a period of anti-Christian persecution. Unlike Julian, whom Ælfric simply designates as Christian from youth (4) and whose devotion and fervour is understated, Cecilia is

unmistakeably ‘saintly’ in her fervour and her dedication to eternal life (6): Cecilia is at once recognisable as an incomparable saint. Upchurch notes that Ælfric ‘describes Cecilia’s fervent devotion to God much earlier than in the Latin text’,¹²⁶ and Ælfric’s insistence on Cecilia’s saintliness indicates that he considered his ‘true’ marriage equally as appropriate for this resolute and perfect saint, as it was for Julian, whom Ælfric depicted as less adamantly ‘saintly’. Cecilia is thus designated in this opening scene as a noble maiden (*æðele mæden*; 1), recalling Christ, Julian, and Basilissa who have all been designated as noble (*æðele*).

In closer connection to Julian’s legend, Ælfric then says that:

Heo wearð swa-þeah beweddad swa swa hit woldon hire frynd . anum æþelan cnihte . se næs christen þa git ualerianus gehaten . sé is nú halig sanct .

However, she was betrothed, just as her kin wished it, to a certain noble youth who was then not yet Christian, called Valerian, who is now a holy saint. (10-12)

Whilst Ælfric here displays none of the political subtlety which he does in Julian’s legend (there is no suggestion that Cecilia or God had any role in the marriage into which she is committed), he does insist from the outset on the compatibility of Cecilia and Valerian. Valerian, like Cecilia, is described as a noble (*æþele*; 11) youth: just as Basilissa’s compatibility with Julian is confirmed by their mutual description as *æðele*, so too here the compatibility of Cecilia and Valerian is confirmed. Such compatibility is ostensibly undermined by Ælfric’s assertion that Valerian was not Christian (11),¹²⁷ but Ælfric is careful to construct this sentence to ensure that Valerian’s compatibility with Cecilia is maintained. Firstly, that Valerian was not *yet then* (*þa git*; 11) a Christian implies that he will be converted to Christianity, and thus will be compatible with Cecilia. Secondly, and strikingly, Ælfric asserts that Valerian is ‘nú halig sanct’ (‘now a holy saint’; 12). This

¹²⁶ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 113.

¹²⁷ It is notable that Ælfric words this caveat so carefully. Valerian is ‘not a Christian’; Ælfric does not label him a heathen or an idolator, as he does for example to Agnes’s earthly suitor in the *Life of St Agnes* (16). In other words, Ælfric does not describe Valerian with a negatively emotive term. That Valerian is ‘not a Christian’ is not found in the Latin *Passio* (3).

statement is not found in Ælfric's Latin source, but rather is his addition, and his inclusion of it ensures that there is no moment at which we imagine that Cecilia and Valerian are not compatible. Valerian's immediate designation as a saint clearly parallels Cecilia's similar designation, so that he is an obvious and explicitly compatible partner for the saintly Cecilia.

Ælfric proceeds to describe Cecilia's response to her impending marriage:

Hwæt ða Cecilia hi sylfe gescrydde mid hāran to lice . and gelome fæste biddende mid wope . þæt heo wurde gescyld wið ælce gewemmednysse oððe weres gemanan. Heo clypode to halgum and to heah-englum biddende heora fultumes to þam heofon-lican gode . þæt heo on clānnysse criste moste þeowian .

Indeed! Then Cecilia clothed herself with a haircloth on her body and frequently fasted, praying with weeping that she would be shielded against every defilement or the companionship of a man. She cried out to the saints and to the archangels praying for their protection from the Heavenly God that she be allowed to serve Christ in chastity. (13-19)

Cecilia's protest is both vocal (although not necessarily publicly so) and bodily; it is not, however, explicitly anti-matrimonial. Whilst her behaviour may have been implicitly anti-matrimonial given the expectation of her Anglo-Saxon audience for marriage to be consummated, her prayers, paralleling Julian's, do not explicitly articulate a wish *not* to marry, but rather, only reiterate Cecilia's desire to serve Christ in chastity. Cecilia's reaction is undoubtedly more extreme than Julian's, but, like him, her distress is not for her marriage, but for her virginity: 'it was the requirement that she give up her virginity [...] that caused Cecilia grief over the impending marriage'.¹²⁸ Again, it is notable that Ælfric is careful not to include any specifically anti-matrimonial polemic in Cecilia's prayers. Rather, he characterises 'carnal' marriage by reference to its threat to Cecilia's purity: 'carnal' marriage is typified by defilement and pollution (*gewemmednys*; 16) and sexual companionship (*gemana*; 16)¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Donovan, 'Spiritual Problem and Spiritual Answer', p. 130.

¹²⁹ See BT (Supplement), s. v, 'gemana' (3.b).

As with Julian and Basilissa, Ælfric makes it explicit that Cecilia and Valerian do actually marry:

Hit gewearð swa-þeah þæt se wurðfulla cniht þa brydlác geforþode . and gefette þæt mæden mid woruldlicum wurðmynte swa swa heora gebyrde wæron .

Nevertheless, it took place that the worthy youth carried out the marriage ceremony and married the maiden with earthly dignity just as befitted their rank. (20-22)

Ælfric continues to emphasise the compatibility of the couple, despite the fact that Valerian is not a Christian. Valerian is worthy (*wurðful*; 20), presumably both of Cecilia and of Christianity; since the wedding befits *their* (*heora*; 22) rank, Ælfric constructs them as a couple. Nevertheless, like Basilissa who initially expects her marriage to Julian to be consummated, Valerian, as a non-Christian, is not yet cognisant of ‘true’ marriage and we, along with Cecilia, may assume that that he expects his marriage to include sexual relations. Ælfric confirms such an assumption when he asserts that Valerian marries Cecilia with *worldly* dignity (*‘woruldlic wurðmynt’*; 22, my emphasis). The grammatical construction is such that Valerian is the active agent in their marriage, and his sexual expectation is captured in the worldliness of his action. His is not a ‘true’, spiritual marriage but a bodily, worldly, ‘carnal’ marriage. Cecilia’s concerns about the loss of her chastity are well founded.¹³⁰ Still, Ælfric does not overplay this aspect: Valerian’s marriage is conducted with dignity (*wurðmynt*; 22), and Ælfric’s use of *wurðmynd* subtly reminds us of the *wurðful* (‘worthy’; 20) Valerian’s compatibility with Cecilia.

In a similar way to his exploration of ‘true’ marriage in Julian’s and Basilissa’s bridal chamber, Ælfric here continues his development of ‘true’ marriage in Cecilia’s and Valerian’s bridal bed:

¹³⁰ We are told that ‘þa betwux þam sangum . and þam singalum dreamum sang cecilia symle þus god . *Fiat cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut Non confundar* . Beo min heorte and min lichama þurh god ungewemmed þæt ic ne beo gescynd . and sang sumle swa’ (‘Then, amidst the songs and the continual rejoicing, Cecilia sang constantly to God thus: “*Fiat cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut Non confundar*. Let my heart and my body be, through God, undefiled, so that I not be shamed”. And she sang like this continually’ (23-27).

Hi wurdon þa gebrohte on bedde ætgædere . and Cecilia sona þæt snotere mæden
gespræc hire brydguman . and þus to gode tithe . Eala þu min leofa man ic þe mid lufe
secge . Ic hæbbe godes encgel þe gehylt me on [lufe] . and gif þu wylt me gewemman .
he went sona to ðe . and mid gramum þe slihð þæt þu sona ne leofast . Gif þu þonne me
lufast . and butan laðe gehylst on clænum mægð-hade . crist þonne lufað þe . and his
gife geswutelað þe sylfum swa swa me .

Then they were brought to bed together and Cecilia, that clever maiden, immediately
spoke to her bridegroom, and in this way persuaded him to God: ‘Oh you, my beloved
man, I say to you with love that I have God’s angel who guards me in love, and if you
wish to defile me then he will immediately turn to you and beat you in anger so that
you will soon not live. If you yet love and cherish me without injury in chaste virginity,
then Christ will love you and manifest his grace to you, just as he has to me’. (28-37)

Cecilia and Valerian are brought to bed together for marital consummation; Cecilia’s
comprehension of this purpose is indicated by her immediate (*sona*; 29) address to
Valerian. Cecilia is clearly worried about Valerian’s sexual expectations: her prayers and her
laments to this point have been characterised not by her reticence to marry, but rather by
her certainty that marriage to Valerian will be sexual (a certainty that is confirmed by
Valerian’s worldly marriage to her). Cecilia, unlike Ælfric’s audience, has not had
Valerian’s future saintly status verified. However, as her speech to Valerian reveals, Cecilia
is fully aware of the Christian potential of ‘true’ marriage – unlike Julian, Cecilia does not
need to be instructed by Christ – and thus her lesson to Valerian establishes all the tenets
of Ælfric’s ‘true’ marriage and confirms that, in essence, Cecilia is not anti-matrimonial.
Cecilia begins her speech to Valerian by addressing him as ‘min leofa man’ (‘my beloved
man’; 31). Her opening address is not simply homiletic rhetoric: unlike Ælfric in his
homily on Judith in which he addresses his audience as ‘leofan men’ (‘beloved men’; 1),¹³¹
Cecilia addresses Valerian as *my* beloved man. This possessive inclusion implies Cecilia’s
intimacy with ‘her man’ and marks her speech to Valerian not as homily but as loving
discourse. Thus she speaks to him ‘mid lufe’ (‘with love’; 31). The intimacy of Cecilia’s
initially loving speech to her beloved husband is confirmed by Ælfric’s remarkable re-
contextualisation of Cecilia’s and Valerian’s location during her speech. In the Latin *Passio*

¹³¹ Printed in Assmann, *Homilien*, §9, pp. 102-16.

we are told that Cecilia confronts Valerian in their bed chamber: in Ælfric's recasting of this scene, Cecilia talks to Valerian in their bridal bed. Upchurch observes that:

Ælfric, remarkably, recasts this initial encounter as a pillow talk [...] By setting this scene in the bridal bed, he forestalls the reader who might imagine Cecilia withdrawing a step from Valerian as they entered the bridal chamber in order to reveal her secret threateningly. Now, she essentially 'makes love' to him with her beauty, wisdom, and language.¹³²

Whilst these observations are correct, it must be noted that Ælfric is careful not to suggest that Cecilia is physically seductive: in fact, it is with her wisdom – she is a 'snotere mæden' ('clever maiden'; 29) – and with her language or speech that she explicitly 'makes love' to Valerian; no mention is made of her beauty or physicality. Importantly, Ælfric's rewriting of Cecilia's speech out of the bed chamber and into the bridal bed recalls Julian's and Basilissa's 'true' marriage, in which Christ was revealed in their bridal bed (*brydbed*; 32). Ælfric here specifically recalls his earlier example of 'true' marriage, and the chaste intimacy that Julian and Basilissa shared in their bridal bed is imitated here in Cecilia's and Valerian's bridal bed.

Cecilia's initially loving speech, however, is alternated with threatening speech. After her opening intimate address to him, she explicitly threatens Valerian with death (administered by her angel) should he defile her, before her tone becomes loving again. The message implicit in her alternation between tenderness and threat is two-fold: on the one hand, Cecilia offers the promise of loving marriage – 'true' marriage; on the other, she, like Agnes, constructs physical, sexual marriage as *deaðes bigleafa* ('death's sustenance'; *ÆLS [Agnes]*, 26). Her opening is an enticement, an offer of the spiritual love intrinsic to 'true' marriage; her threat is a dissuasion from, and an indictment of, carnal marriage.

Within this context, it is not unexpected that Cecilia's speech to Valerian summarises the principles of 'true' marriage. Cecilia first establishes the absolute basics: marital sexual intercourse is a defilement or pollution (*gewemman*; 33), both of herself and of the

¹³² Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 118.

institution of ‘true’ marriage. Secondly, she asserts that ‘true’ marriage is based on mutual love: she loves Valerian, who must, in turn, love her (‘me lufast’; 35). Their marital love must be mutual and reciprocal. Most importantly, of course, ‘true’ marriage is characterised by a union founded in chaste virginity (‘clæne mægð-had’; 36), a formula which again recalls the spiritual and discarnate union of Julian and Basilissa. Lastly, Cecilia avows that ‘true’ marriage will result both in a closer union with Christ and in living His ideal: if Valerian loves Cecilia in chaste virginity then ‘crist þonne lufað þe and his gife geswutelað þe sylfum’ (‘Christ will love you and manifest His grace to you’; 36-37).

Cecilia’s construction of ‘true’ marriage, coupled with her threatening deterrent, thus converts Valerian to her, to ‘true’ marriage, and to Christianity. As Upchurch notes, ‘Cecilia’s true affection for Valerian is expressed verbally as she, not pope Urban (as is the case in the *Passio*)’¹³³ teaches Valerian and converts him, and in this sense they complement each other: Cecilia is the teacher, and Valerian, the student. Ælfric further emphasises this scene of intimacy by introducing the notion of companionability into their ‘true’ marriage. Cecilia tells Valerian that ‘Ic hæbbe godes encgel þe gehylt me on [lufe]’ (‘I have God’s angel who guards me in love’; 32). Valerian’s first response to Cecilia is that he, too, wishes to see the angel: ‘dó þæt ic geseo sylf þone engel’ (‘make it so that I may see the angel myself’; 39). Although this initial request is motivated by Valerian’s search for proof of Cecilia’s words, a few lines later, Valerian repeats his request, ‘þæt ic mihte geseon þone scinendan engel’ (‘that I might see the shining angel’; 48), this time in the context of his baptism. In other words, Valerian’s repeated call to see Cecilia’s angel is a call to share with her this vision: Valerian explicitly goes to Pope Urban to be baptised so that he can, in companionship *with* Cecilia, *share* her angel. Thus on Valerian’s return from Urban, Ælfric constructs a scene of intimacy and companionability:

Se papa ða [...] ge-fullode . and his geleafan him tæhte . and let hine eft faran ham to
cecilian þam halgan mædene . Þa funde se cniht þa fæmnan standende on hire gebedum

¹³³ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 118.

on hire bure ane and godes engel standande mid gyldenum fyþer-haman . mid twam cyne-helmum gehende þam mædene . Ða cyne-helmas wæron wundorlice scinende on rosan readnysse . and on lilian hwitnysse . and he forgeaf þa ænne þam æþelan mædene . and oþerne þam cnihte . and cwæð him þus to . Healdað þas cynhelmas mid cleanre heortan for-þam-þe ic hí næfre ne for-seariað ne heora swetnysse ne forleosað . ne heora wlita ne awent to wyrsan hiwe . ne hí nan man ne gesihð butan se þe clænnysse lufað . and þu ualeriane for-ðan-þe ðu lufast clænnysse . se hælend þe het biddan swa hwilce bene swa þu wille .

The Pope [Urban] thereupon baptised him [Valerian] and taught him his faith, and let him go home again to Cecilia, the holy maiden. Then the youth found the woman standing at her prayers, alone in her chamber, and God's angel with golden wings, with two royal crowns, was standing near to the maiden. The royal crowns were shining wonderfully, with the redness of the rose and with the whiteness of the lily. And he then entrusted one to the noble maiden and the other to the youth, and he thus said to them: 'Cherish these royal crowns with a pure heart; because I received them in Paradise they will never wither, nor loose their fragrance, nor will their splendour alter to a worse appearance, nor will anyone behold them except the one who loves purity. And because you love chastity, Valerian, the Saviour bids you to ask whatever request you wish of Him'. (69-86)

The companionability of Cecilia and Valerian, as well as their domestic intimacy, is confirmed when Urban sends Valerian 'ham to cecilian' ('home to Cecilia'; 71).¹³⁴ The imagery of the following sequence is striking: when Valerian is away, Cecilia is *ane* ('alone'; 73). Her isolation is prominent: although the angel stands near to her, Cecilia is 'on hire bure ane' ('alone in her chamber'; 73), and Ælfric's emphasis on Cecilia's solitariness is not evident in his source. The juxtaposition of her aloneness in this scene against her previous intimacy with Valerian in their bridal bed implies that Valerian is Cecilia's only companion, other than God's angel. This sense is further heightened since the angel holds two crowns, clearly waiting for Valerian to join Cecilia in saintly companionship. Ælfric follows his Latin source in employing the iconography of lilies, roses, and crowns; yet his decision to include these symbols recalls again the 'true' marriage of Julian and Basilissa, and the symbolism of the flowers emphasises the chastity of Cecilia's and Valerian's 'true' marriage. Further, as Elliott notes, roses and the lilies are

well-known symbols of virginity and martyrdom. The wreaths [here crowns] also evoke classical marital rites, which involve the double crowning of the bride and groom [...].

¹³⁴ The Latin *Passio* only has 'ad Ceciliam' (7).

Hence the wreaths function as symbols of both virginity and marriage – once again providing a dramatization of the consensual nature of the bond.¹³⁵

The iconography of the flower wreaths, then, invokes Ælfric's 'true' marriage. Further, the crowns unite Cecilia and Valerian and emphasise their perpetual bond: just as the lily and the rose are constant companions,¹³⁶ so too, Cecilia and Valerian are eternally united. In this sense, Ælfric here 'produced an ideal of marriage union as a one-ness and likeness of identity, a sharing of the same fate', that the rose of martyrdom symbolises, 'that persisted beyond physical separation in life and in death',¹³⁷ which is made manifest in their eventual martyrdom.

The angel's crowning of both Cecilia and Valerian is accompanied by further reiteration of the tenets of 'true' marriage: it is entered into with pure heart ('clænre heortan'; 80); it is an eternal union, never diminishing in splendour (81-83), and it is for those who, like Christ in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, love chastity ('clænnys lufað'; 84 [cf. 'clænnys lufigend'; 42, *Julian*]). Upchurch asserts that Ælfric's innovative 'decision to require of them [Cecilia and Valerian] a *clæne heortan* suggests that he wanted to downplay their exceptional physical commitment and to emphasize their spiritual bond'.¹³⁸ I would also argue that Ælfric's intention is to 'emphasize their spiritual bond', but Ælfric's corresponding concern that they love chastity suggests that, to him, a pure heart was inseparable from the love of chastity, and that both were necessary for 'true' marriage. Connolly notes of the Latin *Passio* that 'increasingly one realizes that the *Passio* wishes to inculcate not only the new vision that comes with Christian faith, but the new vision of the Christian ideal of chastity'; Ælfric arguably exploits the same realisation in his version of the *Passio*.¹³⁹ When Cecilia's and Valerian's angel returns to heaven, 'hi smeadon þa mid

¹³⁵ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 69.

¹³⁶ In all but two of Ælfric's fourteen references to lilies and roses, these flowers appear together. The two occasions in which the lily alone appears is in a biblical quotation in *CHII.31 (Dominica XVI Post Pentecosten)* (pp. 268-71; 13-15).

¹³⁷ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 50.

¹³⁸ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 119.

¹³⁹ Connolly, *Mourning Into Joy*, p. 69.

glædnysse and embe godes willan spræcon' ('then, with gladness, they reflected and spoke about God's will'; 100). Ælfric ends his discussion about 'true' marriage thus, and it is notable that the final image of the married couple with which Ælfric leaves us is one in which they are united and comforted by their companionship, which has given them gladness and the satisfaction of doing God's will in their 'true' marriage: they are happily *together*.

Cecilia's *Life* then dwells upon Tiburtius's (Valerian's brother) conversion to Christianity, and then her own, Valerian's, and Tiburtius's tortures and eventual martyrdoms. Nevertheless, there remain some instances of interest to 'true' marriage. Maximus is converted by Valerian and Tiburtius whilst they are awaiting torture and death. It is notable that Cecilia (who has not been captured along with Valerian and Tiburtius) comes to support her husband and brother-in-law in their effort to convert Maximus (253-62). In this sense, Valerian and Cecilia, like Julian and Basilissa, are spiritually fecund, giving life to new converts to the church. No mention is made of Cecilia burying Valerian after his death; nevertheless, she gives his possessions to the poor (285-6), and, even after martyrdom, Valerian is still called Cecilia's bridegroom (*brydguma*; 286): their marital union is thus sustained even after his martyrdom. Interestingly, in line with Ælfric's concern with ecclesiastical donations, he notes that Cecilia's house is consecrated as a holy church (360) after her martyrdom.¹⁴⁰

Two things become clear in Ælfric's *Life of St Cecilia*. Firstly, in including this life, Ælfric was participating in established hagiographic tradition. As one of the three most popular saints in Anglo-Saxon England, it is likely that Cecilia's legend was at least reasonably well-known. Perhaps for this reason, Ælfric takes fewer liberties with his source, and does not treat the 'true' marriage concept as fully as he does in Julian's and Basilissa's *Life*, which was less well known and thus possibly more amenable to his reworking. Secondly,

¹⁴⁰ Cecilia's house is also consecrated as a church in the Latin *Passio* (31).

despite his less detailed treatment of 'true' marriage in this *Life*, the tenets of his construction are still present and, indeed, insistently so. Cecilia's and Valerian's *Life* contributes to his overall purpose of redefining marriage. They love each other; they are companionable and compatible; they are chaste; they are godly, and their union is everlasting: as Cecilia is introduced as loving 'ece lif' ('eternal life'; 6), so too, the 'true' marriage she shares with Valerian is eternal. This *Life*, then, is another example of Ælfric's programme to assert his 'true' marriage as the ultimate marital ideal.

4.1.3 *The Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*

In late Anglo-Saxon England, the veneration of St Chrysanthus and St Daria¹⁴¹ is more evident than it is for Julian and Basilissa; nevertheless, Chrysanthus and Daria were still not universally commemorated saints, and Ælfric's inclusion of their *Life* within his collection was not as certain as it was in the cases of Agnes and Cecilia. For example, on the one hand, Chrysanthus and Daria are listed in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary', along with Agnes and Cecilia,¹⁴² and their *Passio* is recorded in Aldhelm's *Prosa de virginitate* and *Carmen de virginitate*, and in the Old English *Martyrology* (with a feast day of 28 November).¹⁴³ On the other hand, they are only commemorated in nine of the extant calendars of the Anglo-Saxon period (with a feast day of 1 December), and not in the Calendar of Willibrord,¹⁴⁴ and although Daria is venerated in four of the extant litanies of

¹⁴¹ Chrysanthus and Daria were martyred in the third century according to Butler, *Lives of Saints*, X, pp. 502-03 (25 October).

¹⁴² Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', p. 120.

¹⁴³ Gregory of Tours knew their *Passio* (*De Gloria Martyrum*; XXXVII), and their feast day of 1 December is listed in Ado's ninth-century martyrology (Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 141).

¹⁴⁴ Wormald, *English Kalendars*, §7 (London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A. xii); §9 (London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus D. xxvii); §10 (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 15.32); §11 (London, British Library, MS Arundel 60); §12 (London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii); §14 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422); §17 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 391); §18 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 9); §20 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296); Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', p. 120; Whatley states that 'among the infrequent calendar references, there is some variety as to the date of the saint's feast day' ('Acta Sanctorum', p. 141).

the saints, it appears that Chrysanthus has no dedication to him at all in the litanies.¹⁴⁵ Further, they are not venerated in Bede's *Martyrologium*.

Aldhelm's entries for Chrysanthus and Daria in his *Carmen* and *Prosa de virginitate* are 'extravagant tributes'.¹⁴⁶ Whatley suggests that Ælfric was perhaps influenced by this extravagance and thus included Chrysanthus's and Daria's *Life* in his *Lives of Saints*. Certainly, the similarities between Aldhelm's versions and Ælfric's indicate that the *Passio* from which they ultimately were derived was the same, although their immediate sources were different. Nevertheless, Aldhelm's focus is not on Chrysanthus and Daria as married, but rather on Chrysanthus's steadfastness: their marriage is a means by which Chrysanthus may perform his faith and conversions.¹⁴⁷ In the Old English *Martyrology*, Daria is introduced into the short twenty-one line dedication only in line 16: the first fifteen lines are concerned with Chrysanthus's own conversion and his consequent piety. Although, like Ælfric, the martyrologist has a concern with the togetherness of the couple (as indicated by the repetition of *samod* ['together'; 18-19]), he never makes their marriage explicit: Daria and Chrysanthus simply live together (17-18).¹⁴⁸

Ælfric's *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria* is both similar to, and deviates from, the patterns seen in the other lives examined in this chapter. Like Cecilia's *Life*, Ælfric sets Chrysanthus's *Life* in a chronologically, geographically and culturally distant past: we are told that this *Life* is set during the reign of Emperor Numerianus (1-2) and concerns the son, Chrysanthus, of 'sum æðelboren man' ('some nobly-born man'; 2), Polemius, who went 'fram Alexandrian byrig to rome byrig' ('from the city of Alexandria to the city of Rome'; 3). Ælfric is careful, however, to establish straightaway the difference between Chrysanthus's *Life* and those he has told of Julian and Cecilia: Polemius, Chrysanthus's

¹⁴⁵ Lapidge, *Litanies*, XXI.114, XXIII.295, XXVII.118, XLIV.272. In XXI (London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus D. xxvi) there is a dedication to St Crisante (64), which may be Chrysanthus.

¹⁴⁶ Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', p. 141.

¹⁴⁷ See Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, pp. 96-99 and Aldhelm, *The Poetic Works*, pp. 127-30.

¹⁴⁸ Herzfeld, *Old English Martyrology*, pp. 212-15.

father, despite being *æðelboren*, ‘wæs hæþengilda’ (‘was an idolater’; 4).¹⁴⁹ The first fifteen lines of this *Life* verify Chrysanthus’s heathen parentage: his father sends him to learn worldly wisdom (‘lare to woruld-wisdome’; 8-9) so that he might become a heathen scholar (*uð-wita*; 9). Ælfric asserts that Chrysanthus learns such wisdom ‘mid leohtum andgite and mid gleawum mode’ (‘with agile intellect and with prudent mind’; 13-14) until the time that Chrysanthus discovers Christianity (15), is baptised (27), and boldly begins to preach his new faith (‘began to bodigenne bealdlice þone hælend’; 30).

Chrysanthus’s bold, and vocal, conversion to Christianity so enrages his heathen father that Polemius imprisons and starves Chrysanthus (35-38). Ælfric aligns Chrysanthus’s punishment with the advice given to Polemius by his kin that Chrysanthus’s Christianity is ‘to plihte þinre æhta and þines agenes heafdes’ (‘to the peril of your possessions and of your own head’; 32). Chrysanthus’s Christianity, then, precludes his physical procreation, since he will implicitly provide no heir to maintain the patrimonial possessions: ‘saintly love begins with resistance to the temptations of “worldly” eroticism – resistance not merely to the transient pleasure of physical intercourse (opening onto a broader realm of tempting sensory delights) but also to perduring familial and political hierarchies’.¹⁵⁰ Strikingly, it is not religious fervour, then, that moves Polemius to such extreme behaviour, but rather the threat of Chrysanthus remaining heirless: Polemius, and the kin who advise him, are immediately recognisable as the antagonists in this sequence.

Implicitly, Chrysanthus’s imprisonment does not sway him from Christianity, and so his kinsmen further advise Polemius:

Gif þu will þinne sunu geweman fram criste . þonne most þu him olæcan . and eft-mettas beodan . and dó þæt he wifige þonne wile he forgitan siððan he wer bið þæt he wæs cristen .

¹⁴⁹ Julian’s parents are said to be *æwfæst* (‘devout’; 3) and ‘gefyren cristene’ (‘already Christian’; 78); Cecilia’s parents are assumed to be Christian (although this is never made explicit), since Cecilia is ‘fram cild-hade cristen’ (‘from childhood a Christian’; 2).

¹⁵⁰ Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 14.

If you wish to lead your son away from Christ, then you must flatter him, and offer him food, and make him take a wife: then he will forget that he was a Christian, after he is a husband. (40-43)

In this construction, marriage is set up as an institution which will seduce Chrysanthus away from Christianity. In the heathen mind-set of Chrysanthus's kin, marriage is not a Christian bond; indeed, marriage is actively *anti*-Christian. It becomes quickly evident, however, that the marriage which the kinsmen envisage is not Ælfric's 'true' marriage, but rather its antithesis, 'carnal' marriage. Polemius orders five maidens to go to Chrysanthus: their explicit purpose is to seduce him, physically and sexually, away from Christ. Thus they are beautiful and ostentatious ('wlitig and ranc'; 52), and Chrysanthus must evade or shun their kisses and embraces ('forbeah heora cossas'; 59). Like Julian and Cecilia before him, Chrysanthus 'bæd þone hælend þæt he ge-heolde his clænnysse' ('asked the Saviour that He would preserve his chastity'; 60).¹⁵¹ Chrysanthus's prayers, however, are in the context of the immediate threat to his chastity from the five seductive maidens and so he supplements this formulaic prayer for the preservation of his chastity with a request that the snakes (*næddre*; 63), the seductresses, 'awræccan ne magon mid heora wodlican plegan ænige galnysse on me fo-ðan-þe ic truwig on þe' ('are not able to arouse any lust in me with their foolish play for the reason that I trust in You'; 65-66). In these lines, Ælfric clearly echoes a point he has made previously in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*: Chrysanthus, like Julian, never succumbs to his seductresses embraces, but Chrysanthus's concern is that those kisses might arouse his lust and, like Julian, he requires Christ's intercession to uphold his imperviousness to sexual temptation. The effect of Chrysanthus's admission is also similar to the effect of Julian's: Chrysanthus's conviction that Christ will indeed quench his lust asserts Chrysanthus's absolute, saintly faith, as well as humanising him.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Julian who 'bæd þone ælmihtigan crist þæt he his clænnysse geheolde' (10).

In effect, Ælfric's construction of this scene does nothing to contribute to his representation of 'true' marriage; rather, it deconstructs 'carnal' marriage as fundamentally *against* Christianity and a threat to faithful Christians. Just as Agnes's flawed earthly suitor acts to contrast the perfection embodied by her relationship with Christ in the *Life of St Agnes*, here, the heathen conception of 'carnal' marriage – marriage lacking in love, companionability, reciprocity and compatibility, and based in sexual relations – will be used by Ælfric to juxtapose the perfection of 'true' marriage that Chrysanthus's and Daria's union will embody. Significantly, the seductresses – the would-be wives – are characterised as snakes, and Chrysanthus detests them 'swa swa [...] næddran' ('just as snakes'; 58): just as the snake seduced Eve from God, these snakes attempt to seduce Chrysanthus from Christ under the auspices of 'carnal' marriage.

The *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria* is unusual in Ælfric's collection of married saints' lives because it is not until line 80 that Daria makes an appearance: Ælfric instead is initially concerned to establish the moral dangers to Christians of 'carnal' marriage. When Daria does enter her *Life*, it is with Ælfric's confirmation that she is a perfect companion for Chrysanthus, although, unlike his introduction to Valerian in Cecilia's *Life*, Ælfric does not assure us immediately that Daria is 'nú halig sanct' ('now a holy saint'; 12). Daria is introduced as wonderfully learned ('wundorlice cræftig'; 80) and wise in philosophy ('on uðwitegunge snoter'; 83), recalling Chrysanthus's agile intellect and prudent mind (13–14), as well as his former calling to be a philosopher (uðwita; 9). The repetition of uðwita (9 and 83) is a reminder that, just as Chrysanthus has been converted from heathen philosophy to Christianity, so too, Daria may be converted; the repetition also establishes Daria's compatibility with Chrysanthus, despite that she is a heathen. Thus, Daria, like Chrysanthus is not herself described as noble (æðele): Chrysanthus's æðelboren father, Polemius, is paralleled by Daria's 'æðelboren mægð' ('noble family'; 81).

Polemios enlists Daria to lead his son away (*geweman*; 86) from Christianity, but, rather than by physical seduction, Daria is to entice Chrysanthus with speech ('mid spræce'; 86). In other words, from Daria's introduction, Ælfric downplays her physicality: she is not a 'snake' who will seduce Chrysanthus with sexual wiles; rather, somewhat like Cecilia, Daria 'makes love' to Chrysanthus with her intelligence and words. Nevertheless, when Daria comes to Chrysanthus she is adorned with gold ('geglenged mid golde'; 89) and with shining gemstones ('scinende gymstan'; 90): as Valerian marries Cecilia with worldly dignity, so too, Daria pronounces her worldliness by her appearance, adorned with gold and gems. Yet this imagery recalls the gift-giving in Ælfric's *Life of St Agnes*, in which Christ gives Agnes precious stones ('deorwurðe stan'; 33), shining gems ('scinende gimm'; 33) and a veil woven in gold ('orel of golde awefen'; 36); similarly it recalls the gifts of Agnes's earthly suitor of 'deorwurða gimmas and woruldlice glencga' ('precious jewels and worldly ornaments'; 23). Daria's bejewelled appearance evokes the 'diametrical contrast'¹⁵² that characterises the parallels between Christ and the suitor in the *Life of St Agnes*: Ælfric symbolically foreshadows Daria's conversion from worldliness to godliness; from being adorned with worldly ornaments to her adornment with Christ's allegorical gifts of faithfulness and virtue.¹⁵³

When Chrysanthus and Daria meet, Chrysanthus immediately interprets Daria's appearance as a symbol of her worldliness: 'swyðe þu geglengdest mid gold þe sylfe þæt þu mid þinre wlite mine willan aidlige' ('exceedingly have you adorned yourself with gold so that you, with your beauty, might frustrate my will'; 93-94). Chrysanthus makes explicit the 'diametrical contrast' between outer worldly ornamentation, and inner spiritual adornment: when he promises Daria Christ as her bridegroom, his conditions are that she love Christ, preserve her chaste virginity,¹⁵⁴ and that 'þu wurde swa wlitig wiþ-innan on

¹⁵² Margaret Enid Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, *Anglistica*, 22 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1984), p. 113.

¹⁵³ See discussion above, Chapter 3, pp. 282-90.

¹⁵⁴ Christ will be her bridegroom if Daria were to love Christ ('hine lufodest'; 96), and be chastely virginal ('heolde þe clænlice on ungewemmedum mægðhade'; 96-97); see discussion above, Chapter 3, p. 277.

mode swa swa þu wið-utan eart' ('you become as beautiful within, in your heart, as you are without'; 97-98). In other words, Daria's physical beauty is less relevant to Chrysanthus: it is her spiritual beauty with which he is concerned. Ælfric thus establishes a basic condition for the 'true' marriage of Chrysanthus to Daria: the transformation of her physical beauty, irrelevant to 'true' marriage, into spiritual beauty. In this light, it is important that Daria protests that 'ne dyde ic for galnysse' ('I did not do it for lust'; 99): physicality is not Daria's concern either.

Daria's conversion is more detailed than those which Ælfric depicts in his other married saints' lives, although he nevertheless radically abbreviates his Latin source so that, when compared to the Latin, his report of her conversion is relatively brief (104-20).¹⁵⁵ Eventually we are told that Daria 'ge-wende to gode folætenum gedwylde deoflicra biggenga' ('converted to God, abandoning the error of the worship of devils'; 120-21), and Upchurch observes that Daria 'exhibits the purity of body and belief modeled by Chrysanthus when she turns from paganism to Christianity. [...] Whereas the *Passio* reports simply that Daria believed (*credit*)', Ælfric's Daria imitates Chrysanthus when she turns from heathenism to Christianity.¹⁵⁶ After her conversion, Ælfric describes the 'true' marriage of Chrysanthus and Daria:

Hi wurdon þa *anræde* . and wunodon ætgædere gehiwodum synscipe . and gehaldenre clænnysse . oþþæt daria under-feng fulluht on god . and godes béc leornode æt þam glæredum cnihte . and hire mod gestrangode on mægðhade wunigende . Wurdon þa on fyrste fela men gebigde þurh heora drohtnunge fram deofles beggengum to cristes geleafan and tó clænum life . Cnihtas gecyrdon þurh crisantes lare . and mædenu þurh darian manega to drihtne forlætenum synscipe . and geswæsum lustum .

Then they were *anræde*, and dwelled together in the appearance of *synscipe* but with preserved chastity, until Daria received baptism in God, and learnt God's book from the learned youth and strengthened her heart, abiding in virginity. Some time after, many men were converted from the devil's worship to faith in Christ and to the chaste life, by means of their [Chrysanthus's and Daria's] way of life. Youths converted because of Chrysanthus's exhortation, and maidens because of Daria's, many to the Lord, forsaking *synscipe* and pleasant lusts. (122-32)

¹⁵⁵ Upchurch, 'Chrysanthus and Daria', p. 262.

¹⁵⁶ Upchurch, 'Chrysanthus and Daria', p. 262.

Ælfric firstly establishes Chrysanthus's and Daria's marital compatibility by asserting that they (*hi*; 122), as a couple were *anræde* (122). *Anræde* has two main senses, both of which are appropriate to Chrysanthus's and Daria's context, and which capture the essence of their 'true' marriage. Firstly, *anræde* has the sense of 'in agreement', and, when referring to people, can indicate that they are 'harmonious' or 'have a single aim';¹⁵⁷ secondly, it may also take the sense of 'constant', 'resolute' and 'steadfast'.¹⁵⁸ In the first sense, *anræde* indicates that Chrysanthus and Daria are harmonious: they are united together in their faith and in agreement over the 'true' marriage which they will share. The second sense of *anræde*, then, emphasises the resoluteness which with they have committed themselves to Christ and to each other.

Upchurch notes that 'although we are told that Chrysanthus refused to marry and that the couple 'lived together' [...], we cannot be sure that Chrysanthus and Daria ever married':¹⁵⁹ Ælfric simply states that they 'wunodon ætgædere gehiwodum synscipe and gehaldenre clænnysse' ('dwelled together in the appearance of *synscipe* but with preserved chastity'; 122-23). Whilst it is true that Ælfric does not make it explicit that Chrysanthus and Daria have married, the context implies that they have done so. If we accept that Ælfric uses *synscipe* to refer only to 'carnal' marriage, as argued above,¹⁶⁰ then these lines indicate that Chrysanthus and Daria live together, in the appearance of a 'carnal' marriage, but with preserved chastity: that is, they are 'truly' married.¹⁶¹ Since Ælfric has painstakingly constructed Polemius as the villainous antagonist who is insistent upon his son's 'carnal' marriage, it seems unlikely that Polemius would have allowed Chrysanthus to remain unmarried, and Polemius's characterisation provides the reason for

¹⁵⁷ *DOE*, s. v, 'anræde' (I; I.a; I.b.iii.a).

¹⁵⁸ *DOE*, s. v, 'anræde' (2; 2.a)

¹⁵⁹ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', p. 144.

¹⁶⁰ See discussion above, pp. 329-30.

¹⁶¹ This example indicates that Ælfric considered *synscipe* to be 'carnal' marriage, since he qualifies his designation of Chrysanthus's and Daria's marriage as *synscipe* with the qualification that their marriage is virginal.

Chrysanthus's and Daria's secrecy: they cannot openly participate in 'true' marriage because such a marriage contravenes Polemius's fundamental reason for forcing Chrysanthus to marry in the first place – physical procreation.

Since Chrysanthus and Daria are 'truly' married, Ælfric emphasises their unity by asserting that they dwell *together* ('wunodon ætgædere'; 122), and draws attention to their chastity (*clænnys*, *mægðhad*; 123, 126). They are recognisably participating in Ælfric's 'true' marriage because of their spiritual fecundity, an aspect emphasised in all the *Lives* of Agnes, Julian and Basilissa, and Cecilia and Valerian. They procreate spiritually by converting youths and maidens to Christ. However, Ælfric puts especial emphasis on Chrysanthus's and Daria's spiritual procreation by providing motivation for the youths' and maidens' conversion *beyond* Chrysanthus's and Daria's exhortations (*lar*; 130): many men were converted to Christianity by means of Chrysanthus's and Daria's *drohtnung* (128). *Drohtnung* means 'way of life'; according to the *Dictionary of Old English*, it describes 'a way of life according to a rule, a teaching, a principle' and the 'conduct of life (manner of living), describing usually a virtuous way of life'.¹⁶² Undoubtedly the principle upon which their (*heora*; 128) life is founded is 'true' marriage: a union of faith and souls in love. 'True' marriage as a way of life converts many people, and is thus bountiful. Ælfric's recommendation of their way of life is further accentuated by his assertion that the young converts, following their converters, forsake 'carnal' marriage (as indicated by *sinscipe*) and the enticement of lust (132). That the new converts forsake 'carnal' marriage does not preclude their participation in 'true' marriage in imitation of their converters, Chrysanthus and Daria. In the Latin *Passio*, these chaste converts provoke anarchy in Rome; Ælfric 'silences the pandemonium [...]'. In his calmer retelling, Chrysanthus's and Daria's chaste marriage is a catalyst not for deep social division but for wide-spread conversion'.¹⁶³ In other words, Ælfric consolidates his vision of 'true' marriage in this passage: it is chaste and virginal; it is companionate, since Chrysanthus and Daria live and

¹⁶² *DOE*, s. v, 'drohtnung' (1, 1.a, 2)

¹⁶³ Upchurch, 'Chrysanthus and Daria', pp. 259–60.

teach together; it is faithful, and it is spiritually fecund. Remarkably, Ælfric further deviates from his Latin source by omitting the scene found in the *Passio* in which Daria takes the veil: Daria's commitment to 'true' marriage is perpetual, and Ælfric chooses not to separate her from Chrysanthus and not to undermine the fundamental and Christian good that their marriage embodies by 'monasticising' Daria. Further, this 'true' marriage is in sharp juxtaposition with the 'carnal' marriage, based on outward beauty, seduction and physical embraces, and emphatically detrimental to Christians, that Polemius and his kinsmen imagine in the opening to this *Life*.

In the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*, Ælfric seems particularly concerned to emphasise the companionship inherent in 'true' marriage. In a deviation from his other married saints' lives, then, both Chrysanthus and Daria are captured together (*samod*; 137). Whilst they are initially separated by their captors, Ælfric reiterates their unity and togetherness in line 242 when the Emperor commands that Chrysanthus, with Daria ('þæt he mid darian'; 242) be martyred. Whilst their physical proximity is not clear, Ælfric makes obvious that they are two bodies united by one soul and by their faith in God ('drihtnes ge-leafan'; 242). Indeed, one of the manifold tortures (243) which these saints must endure is their separation: Ælfric tells us that 'Daria seo eadiga fram þam arwurþan wæs on-sundran gehæft' ('the blessed Daria was imprisoned apart from the worthy one [Chrysanthus]'; 246-47). It becomes clear, however, that physical separation is no torture to these spiritually united saints: Ælfric unites their names again in line 309 and although they are clearly physically separated they are united by their transcendental marital harmony. It is of particular significance, then, that Ælfric chooses to dwell on their actual deaths: Emperor Numerianus commands men

lædan buta þa halgan togædere to anum sand-pytte . and setton hí þær-ón and be-wurpan mid eorþan . and mid weorc-stanum . Hí wurdan þa buta bebyrigde swa cuce . swa swa se casere hét . and hí mid clænnysse ferdon of worulde to wuldre to wunigenne mid criste .

to lead both the saints together to one sand-pit, and to put them in there and to surround [them] with earth and with hewn stones. Thus they were then both buried

alive, just as the emperor had commanded, and they with chastity went from the world to glory, to dwell with Christ. (324-329)

In death, Chrysanthus and Daria are united as one: they are both (*butu*; 324) in one (*an*; 325) pit together (*togædere*; 324); they are both (*butu*; 327) buried alive. Ælfric underlines his most insistent message when he affirms that they (*hi*; 328), united together in their indissoluble bond of ‘true’ marriage, dwell with Christ ‘mid clænnysse’ (‘with chastity’; 328): we are reminded one final time that the perpetual union of ‘true’ marriage is ultimately contingent on *clænnys*:

The dissolution of the marriage bond with death was too harsh. If virginity was a vehicle for transcending the temporal realm and experiencing something of eternity, it could likewise be used to purify and transform the marriage bond into something eternal.¹⁶⁴

Most importantly, Ælfric explicitly and specifically recommends ‘true’ marriage in his ending to this *Life*: he says that the saints do not need praise, ‘ac us sylfum fremað þæt þæt we secgað be him ærest to gebysnunge þæt we þe beteran beon’ (‘but that which we speak about them benefits ourselves, firstly as an example so that we may be the better’; 342-43). In other words, the saints are examples, lessons for proper Christian behaviour; emulating the saints makes ‘us’ better Christians. Ælfric chooses to include this sentiment at the end of Chrysanthus’s and Daria’s *Life*, a *Life* which glorifies ‘true’ marriage as a chaste, eternal and companionate union transcending bodily ‘carnal’ marriage, and in which these saints are examples not only to their converts, but also to ‘us sylfum’ (‘ourselves’; 342).

¹⁶⁴ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, pp. 69-70.

4.2 *Within and Beyond the Lives of Saints: Contextualising the Married Saints*

4.2.1 *Marriage in Other Lives of Saints*

Whilst Ælfric's construction of 'true' marriage in his *Lives of Saints* is most prominent in the married saints' lives discussed, he does treat marriage elsewhere in the collection. His most developed treatment, apart from the *Life of St Agnes*, the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, the *Life of St Cecilia*, and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*, is found in the *Life of St Æthelthryth*, which, strictly speaking, is also a married saint's life since St Æthelthryth is married.¹⁶⁵ However, I will argue that Æthelthryth's marriages are not 'true', despite the fact that they are virginal, and that the *exemplum* of the married thane found at the conclusion to her *Life* both qualifies Æthelthryth's marriages, and complements Ælfric's other married saints' lives.

Ælfric's inclusion of the *Life of St Æthelthryth* in his collection is not unexpected. As Peter Jackson summarises:

Æthelthryth was [...] an inescapable figure for him [Ælfric]. She was inescapable because her cult – which, despite Bede's, Alcuin's and the Old English Martyrologist's celebration, had been relatively insignificant for centuries – had been vigorously developed in the late tenth century by Ælfric's mentor Æthelwold, who had refounded Ely as a monastery for men only in 970 and (according to tradition) translated the saint's body in the same year.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ As is the non-Ælfrician *Passion of St Eustace and his Companions* (ÆLS.30 [Eustace], pp. 190-219), which (as it was not written by Ælfric) will not be considered here. Of the *Passion of St Eustace*, Hugh Magennis states: 'if the celibacy of St Æthelthryth and her two husbands and of SS Chrysanthus and Daria (to mention examples celebrated in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*) is too extreme, the familial virtue of St Eustace and his wife might provide an ideal for Anglo-Saxon readers' (*Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 18 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 37).

¹⁶⁶ Peter Jackson, 'Ælfric and the Purpose of Christian Marriage: A Reconsideration of the "Life of St Æthelthryth", lines 120-30', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 29 (2000), 235-60 (p. 252).

The two illuminations of St Æthelthryth in Æthelwold's *Benedictional* (f. 2^r and f. 90^v) embody 'the high esteem in which her feast was held by Æthelwold'.¹⁶⁷ Since Ælfric persistently styled himself as Æthelwold's and Winchester's pupil,¹⁶⁸ he must have been 'vividly aware of Æthelthryth and her cult',¹⁶⁹ and indeed of his duty to include her *Life* within his collection given his reform context. Nevertheless, I agree with Peter Jackson that Ælfric was uncomfortable with Æthelthryth's legend. His treatment of it, along with his inclusion of the *exemplum* (a 'puzzling and seemingly gratuitous addition: a brief exemplum, not found in his source, concerning a pious layman and his marriage'),¹⁷⁰ suggests that Ælfric was specifically concerned about Æthelthryth as a spousal model: 'he was to some extent uneasy with Æthelthryth as a paradigm of sanctity within marriage and inserted the exemplum to act as a correction or counterweight'.¹⁷¹ Hollis elaborates on Jackson's assertion:

as a hagiographic celebration of a married woman rejecting both the power of a husband and the marriage bond itself, the exemplary thrust of the life of Æthelthryth is in direct opposition to ecclesiastical ambitions regarding the institution of marriage. Somewhat irregular in relation to the orthodoxy of the time in which it was formulated, the life of Æthelthryth became increasingly awkward as an *exemplum*.¹⁷²

For Ælfric, Æthelthryth's marriages were not 'true' and did not conform to his formulation of spiritual marriage; he was nevertheless obliged to recount Æthelthryth's legend in light of Æthelwold's revivification of her cult.¹⁷³

It is a feature of Ælfric's 'true' marriage that the married couple be compatible. The commitment to remain chaste is always agreed upon by both parties, and although one

¹⁶⁷ Andrew Prescott, *The Benedictional of St Æthelwold: A Masterpiece of Anglo-Saxon Art, A Facsimile* (London: The British Library, 2002; first publ. The Folio Society, 2001), p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ For example, as he does in his *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*, in which he introduces himself as 'Ælfricus abbas, Wintoniensis alumnus' (printed as Appendix A in Wulfstan of Winchester, *The Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom [Oxford: Clarendon, 1991], pp. 70-80 [p. 71 §1]).

¹⁶⁹ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 254.

¹⁷⁰ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 236.

¹⁷¹ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 238.

¹⁷² Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 73.

¹⁷³ Jackson further argues that the queen mother, Ælfthryth, may have bought her influence to bear on Ælfric to include Æthelthryth's *Life* ('Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 254).

partner (Basilissa, Valerian, Daria) may need to be taught the chaste foundation of ‘true’ marriage by the other partner, the decision to embrace ‘true’ marriage is always voluntary and mutual. Ælfric’s emphasis on the parallels between the married partners (they are both noble, or both saintly, or both intelligent) draws attention to their compatibility: they are suited to each other. This feature is notably missing from the *Life of St Æthelthryth*. Ælfric begins Æthelthryth’s *Life* by asserting that she ‘wæs mid twam werum and swa-ðeah wunode mæden’ (‘was with two husband, and yet remained a maiden’; 3). Although in the context of the married saints, marrying and remaining a virgin is not particularly surprising, Ælfric’s use of *swa-ðeah* (‘yet’, ‘nevertheless’) indicates that, contrasting the other married saints, Æthelthryth remained a virgin *despite* her marriages, not (as would be expected in ‘true’ marriage) *because* of them. In other words, Æthelthryth’s marriages are, from their introduction, not ‘true’ marriage in that they do not involve chastity. Ælfric’s treatment of Æthelthryth’s first marriage to Tondberht confirms that this marriage is not ‘true’. Whatley notes that Ælfric’s version of Æthelthryth’s *Life*, ‘derive[s] directly from Bede’s account’.¹⁷⁴ In Bede’s version, we are told simply that Æthelthryth marries Tondberht, who dies shortly afterward. In Ælfric’s retelling, these facts are supplemented by his assertion:

Ac hit nolde se ælmihtig god þæt hire mægð-had wurde mid hæmede adylegod . ac heold hi on clænnysse forðan þe he is ælmihtig god and mæg don eall þæt he wile . and on manegum wisum his mihte geswutelað .

But the Almighty God would not [allow] her virginity to be destroyed by means of *hæmed*, but preserved her in chastity because He is God Almighty and is able to do all that He desires, and in manifold ways makes His might manifest. (9-12)

Ælfric tells us that God protected Æthelthryth from *hæmed*, which denotes both ‘sexual intercourse’ and ‘marriage’, or, in Ælfric’s understanding, ‘carnal’ marriage.¹⁷⁵ This *Life* is not a typical married saints’ life because God (or Æthelthryth) does not convert Tondberht to ‘true’ marriage; rather, it is implied that God protects Æthelthryth *from*

¹⁷⁴ As does Bede’s entry in his *Martyrologium* and the account in the Old English *Martyrology* (Whatley, ‘Acta Sanctorum’, p. 48). See *HE*, Book IV; XIX (pp. 390-96); Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 53.

¹⁷⁵ See discussion above, Chapter 2, pp. 220-21.

Tondberht, and from his *hæmed* – his marital sexual expectations – but there is no implication of mutual chastity, or mutual choice. Tondberht is forced by God’s miracle, rather than by his own complementary and compatible choice, to maintain Æthelthryth’s (and his own) virginity. There is no suggestion of Tondberht’s harmonious agreement with his wife regarding their sexual relations. Perhaps more importantly, Ælfric’s emphasis on God’s role in the preservation of Æthelthryth’s virginity underplays Æthelthryth’s own agency in her chastity. Ælfric effectively justifies Æthelthryth’s refusal to pay the conjugal debt of ‘carnal’ marriage to Tondberht by citing God’s, rather than Æthelthryth’s, decision to preserve her chastity. Æthelthryth seems to have as little choice as Tondberht in the preservation of her chastity in this sequence; she is a vehicle through which God performs the miracle of preserving her chastity in the face of the expectations of a ‘carnal’ marriage. Such justification was necessary because Æthelthryth’s categorical refusal to brook marital intercourse, despite Tondberht’s contrary desire, was antithetical to Paul’s teaching that asexual marriage could only be entered into by the mutual decision of the two partners.¹⁷⁶

Ælfric then explains that after Tondberht’s death, Æthelthryth is married (*forgifen*; 14) to King Ecgfrith and that ‘twelf gear wunode unge-wemmed mæden on þæs cynincges *synscype*’ (‘twelve years abided as an undefiled maiden in the king’s *synscype*’; 15-16). Ælfric’s usage of *synscipe* here requires consideration: a few lines later, Ælfric defines clearly what *synscipe* means to King Ecgfrith, who wishes ‘þæt heo bruce his *synscipes*’ (‘that she [Æthelthryth] enjoy *synscipe* with him’; 23). *Synscipe* here cannot be referring simply to marriage with no sexual connotation, for Æthelthryth and Ecgfrith are already legally married. The only aspect of marriage that we are told explicitly that Æthelthryth will not enter into is sexual relations with Ecgfrith, and thus *synscipe* must refer to marital sexual intercourse. In the first example then, Ælfric’s use of *synscipe* has two implications: the first is that Æthelthryth remains a virgin whilst abiding in *Ecgfrith’s* marriage. Since, in

¹⁷⁶ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 57; 1 Corinthians 7: 1-5.

Ecgfrith's mind, his marriage to Æthelthryth is (or should be) a 'carnal' one, Ælfric here indicates that Æthelthryth's virginity is maintained despite her marriage to Ecgfrith, not because of it, and not because of his mutual renunciation of sexual relations; the second is that the miraculousness of Æthelthryth's virginity is emphasised since it sharply contrasts with the marriage (*sinscipe*) which her husband wishes, and expects, to be bodily. This second reading is confirmed since Ælfric immediately thereafter asserts that miracles (*wundor*; 16) have confirmed Æthelthryth's virginity. Indeed, Christ Himself preserved her chastity: Ælfric tells us (in another deviation from Bede's version) that Æthelthryth 'lifode þone hælend þe hi heold unwemme' ('loved the Saviour, who kept her undefiled'; 18). Again, Ælfric downplays the sense that Æthelthryth is causing matrimonial discord with the preservation of her virginity by making God the agent in Æthelthryth's decision. God, rather than Æthelthryth herself, keeps her virginity (implicitly against Ecgfrith). The effect of this new causality – Æthelthryth's virginity is preserved within two 'carnal' marriages because God wills it and is the active agent in its preservation – is that Æthelthryth herself is not directly held responsible for the marital disharmony that ensues; since God's active role in Æthelthryth's *Life* is Ælfric's innovation, it may indicate that Ælfric was anxious about the discordant marriage that the saintly Æthelthryth models.¹⁷⁷ Hers are not 'true' marriages, and the marital paradigm which she embodies – dissonance not harmony; antagonism not compatibility; individualism not mutuality – runs counter to Ælfric's 'true' marriage. God's role in Æthelthryth's actions diminishes her role as a marital paradigm and instead highlights her saintliness: in Ælfric's words 'his halgena wundra wurðiað hine. forþan þe he worhte þa wundra þurh hi' ('His saints' wonders honour Him because He performed those wonders through them'; *ÆLS [Pref]*: pp. 2-7, 57-58). The 'wonder' of her preserved chastity is a miracle performed by God through Æthelthryth.

¹⁷⁷ Given the reform ideology of kingship, Ælfric's anxiety may have been exacerbated by the fact that Æthelthryth's behaviour thwarts the will of a *king*: Ælfric constructs God as obstructing the king's will, since He is the only agent who could have (acceptably) effected such a manoeuvre (see discussion above, Introduction, p. 60).

Ecgfrith's wish for a worldly, 'carnal' marriage is in direct contrast to Æthelthryth's wish for a chaste, 'true' marriage: theirs is not a marriage founded in concord and compatibility but rather in discord and antagonism. The different perspectives are particularly evident in Ælfric's decision to follow his source and report that Ecgfrith promised Bishop Wilfrid 'mycel on lande and on feo' ('much in lands and in money'; 21-22) if Wilfrid, whom Æthelthryth loved the most ('swyðost lufode'; 20), persuaded her to enter into sexual relations with him ('þæt heo bruce his synscipes' ['that she enjoy 'carnal' marriage with him'; 23]). Ælfric is careful to introduce Wilfrid as a bishop and God's servant (19) and to acknowledge that Æthelthryth's love for Wilfrid stems from her love of God and His servants (18-19). Ecgfrith's offer of money and lands to Wilfrid reflects his earthly, physical preoccupation and contrasts Æthelthryth's spiritual love for Wilfrid: Ecgfrith's offer to Wilfrid of physical goods reflects his desire for a physical marriage; Æthelthryth's spiritual regard for Wilfrid reflects her interest in the discarnate and her desire for a spiritual marriage. Thus Ælfric again deviates from his source and reiterates that 'æðeldryð þurh-wunode unge-wemmed mæden þeah ðe heo wer hæfde' ('Æthelthryth remained an undefiled maiden *although* she had a husband'; 26-27).

Ecgfrith eventually ('þeah þe hit embe lang wære'; 34) permits Æthelthryth to take the veil and retire to Coldingham convent (35) and the remainder of her *Life* does not engage with marriage. Nevertheless, Ælfric's anxiety about Æthelthryth as a marital exemplar is evident since he ends her *Life* with an *exemplum* of a married thane. Æthelthryth's marriages are not 'true', even though they are chaste, and although chastity is the most important requirement, it is not Ælfric's only requirement for 'true' marriage. By means of his *exemplum*, Ælfric reiterates the other principles which constitute 'true' marriage:

Oft woruld-menn eac heoldon swa swa us bec secgað heora clænnysse on synscipe for cristes lufe swa swa we mihton reccan gif ge rohton hit to gehyrenne . We secgað swa ðeah be sumum ðegne . se wæs þryttig geara mid his wife on clænnysse . þry suna he gestrynde . and hi siððan buta ðrittig geara wæron wunigende butan hæmede . and fela ælmyssan worhton . oð þæt se wer ferde to munuclicere drohtnunge . and drihtnes englas common eft on his forð-siðe . and feredon his sawle mid sange to heofonum . swa swa us secgað bec . Manega bysna synd on bocum be swylcum . hu oft weras and

wif wundorlice drohtnodon . and on clænnysse wunodon . to wuldre þam hælende . þe
þa clænnysse astealde . crist ure hælend . þam is á wurðmynt . and wuldor on ecnysse.
AMEN .

Likewise, as books tell us, often men in the secular life have retained their chastity in *synscipe* for Christ's love, as we are able to narrate if you would care to hear it. Nevertheless, we will speak about a certain thane who lived with his wife in chastity for thirty years, he begat three sons, and afterwards they both dwelled without *hæmed* for thirty years, and performed many alms, until the husband entered the monastic way of life, and thereupon the Lord's angels came at his death, and, with song, carried his soul to heaven, just as books tell us. There are many such examples in books, how often husbands and wives have remarkably lived, dwelled in chastity, for the glory of the Saviour, who established chastity in them. Christ our Saviour, to whom there is honour and glory forever and ever, Amen. (120-35)

Ælfric's first concern in this *exemplum* is to establish the mutuality and companionability, along with the chastity, fundamental to 'true' marriage: the thane lived *with* his wife in chastity ('*mid* his wife'; 124); they *both* abided without intercourse (*buta*; 125); husbands *and* wives ('*we*ras *and* wif'; 132) dwell in chastity. Ælfric's repetition of the accord of these married couples contrasts with the discord of Æthelthryth's marriages: 'true' marriage, unlike Æthelthryth's marriages, is based in harmonious consonance as well as in chastity. Thus Ælfric contrasts the *hæmed* ('carnal' marriage) that Tondberht desires of the unwilling Æthelthryth (10) with the *hæmed* that the thane and his wife mutually renounce (126) in the *exemplum*. In essence, however, as Marc Glasser argues, Ælfric's 'exemplum has the same thrust that Clement's argument for marriage had many centuries earlier: the form of marriage that is pleasing to God is that of a sexually unconsummated relationship between the spouses';¹⁷⁸ and Ælfric's repeated reference to chastity in this *exemplum* (121, 124, 126, 133, 134) recalls that chastity (*clænnes*) is the fundamental principle upon which 'true' marriage is based. As Jackson contends, 'for Ælfric it is the layman and his wife who should really serve as a model to all married couples: not [...] Æthelthryth, for all her undoubted sanctity'.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Glasser, 'Marriage in Saints' Legends', p. 103; Gwen Griffiths, 'Reading Ælfric's Saint Æthelthryth as a Woman', *Parergon*, 10 (1992), 35-49 (p. 40); Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 259.

Ælfric has other agendas in including this *exemplum*, however. In his married saints' lives, Ælfric is demonstrably concerned to moderate the social disquiet likely to be caused by 'true' marriages by not reproducing the negative social responses to such marriages from his Latin sources (in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa* and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*) and insisting on the theme of mutual agreement. Nevertheless, his characterisation of Julian (and, to a lesser extent, Basilissa) indicates that Ælfric knew that Anglo-Saxon society expected marriage to be bodily and to involve sexual relations; he thus attempts to construct Julian's and Basilissa's marriage as integral and acceptable to Christian society, but this construction points towards his recognition that his 'true' marriage ran counter to Anglo-Saxon social expectations. This *exemplum*, then, responds to this concern. The thane's marriage is not absolutely 'true' in that it is procreative and thus 'carnal': the thane and his wife beget three sons (125). Yet, after they have procreated, the couple 'convert' to a 'true' marriage in their thirty years of chaste companionship. Ælfric denotes this relationship as the retention of chastity (*clænnes*; 121) in 'carnal' marriage (*sinscipe*; 121): the marriage itself is not unconditionally 'true' (and thus it is designated *sinscipe*) because the thane and his wife do procreate, yet it is the closest possible reflection of 'true' marriage for those who wished to have, or already had, children. Importantly however, the thane's marriage to his wife, their very nearly 'true' marriage, is physically procreative: it fulfils the social expectation of marital parturition.

The issue of procreation introduces a corollary concern evident in this *exemplum*. The married saints' lives discussed in this chapter, including the *Life of St Æthelthryth*, are *saints'* lives: despite Ælfric's attempted situational realism and humanisation of Julian and Basilissa in their *Life*, it is undeniable that Ælfric's models for 'true' marriage are saints. In this sense, they (and their 'true' marriages) are the ultimate ideal, presenting 'an idealized picture of [...] virginity within marriage', which did not represent 'the views or actions of the average layperson, nor do they seem likely to have appealed to them.'¹⁸⁰ Thus in his

¹⁸⁰ McGlynn and Moll, 'Chaste Marriage', p. 103.

exemplum, Ælfric is particularly concerned to emphasise that the thane and his wife, as well as the other many examples ('manega bysna'; 130) of similar couples, are *woruld-menn* (120), literally 'men of the secular life' or 'men of the world', who 'demonstrate that chastity is attainable by those "in every condition of human life" – by rich and poor alike, by the married as well as the celibate, and by men as well as women'.¹⁸¹ In other words, these married couples are not saints, nor are they simply laymen (*læwed*): these are people who are explicitly designated of the 'world' and who have remarkably renounced their worldliness for Christ. The 'true' marriages of Julian and Basilissa, Cecilia and Valerian, and Chrysanthus and Daria embody Ælfric's ultimate ideal for marriage; these saintly spouses live out Christ's ideal as exemplified in his marriage to Agnes in her *Life*. It has already been noted that it is unlikely that Ælfric would have expected his ideal 'true' marriage to be reflected in the lives of the majority of his audience. The *exemplum* in Æthelthryth's *Life*, then, is Ælfric's practical interpretation of his ultimate ideal: he does not undermine 'true' marriage by his inclusion of the *exemplum* but rather interprets it in his Anglo-Saxon social context. Whilst his most emphatic recommendation is for 'true' marriage, discarnate and loving, epitomised by the saints' marriages, he is similarly concerned that 'carnal' marriage imitates 'true' marriage as absolutely as possible. If one must marry carnally, then that 'carnal' marriage should reflect as many of the ideals of 'true' marriage as possible. The *exemplum* may also be explained by the fact that Æthelmær, the founder of Eynsham and Ælfric's patron, was probably married and had 'expressed his intention of living there [at Eynsham] with the monks':¹⁸² the *exemplum* can be read as a specific message for Æthelmær, who had married 'carnally', but to whom Ælfric exhorted the replication of 'true' marriage as illustrated in the *exemplum*.

¹⁸¹ Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', p. 241.

¹⁸² Mary Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon Themes*, ed. by Roberts and Nelson, pp. 65–88 (p. 69).

Ælfric's use of *clænnes* in his *exemplum*, then, is not directly parallel to his use of it in his married saints' lives, where it denotes virginity and emphasises the discarnate nature of the 'true' marriages. As Elliott notes:

a reference to matrimonial chastity does not necessarily mean that absolute chastity is observed in marriage. It may just mean that the couple practised sexual fidelity [...] It may also signify that during the extensive penitential periods of the church, sexual continence was observed. Or it could indeed mean that the couple in question had mutually agreed to forgo sexual relations perpetually.¹⁸³

Indeed, in his homilies, Ælfric is concerned that marital sexual relations, if they had to occur at all 'ought to be limited in frequency and duration'.¹⁸⁴ It is likely that his *exemplum* is meant to remind his Anglo-Saxon audience that 'carnal' marriage did not imply *carte blanche* sexual relations: if one had to participate in 'carnal' rather than 'true' marriage, rules of *clænnes* still applied. To Ælfric, 'carnal' marriage, regrettably, did not mean total abstinence, but *chaste* (*clæne*) 'carnal' marriage required the proper observation of periods of abstinence and engaging in intercourse for procreative purposes only.¹⁸⁵

Ælfric touches on marriage, both 'carnal' and 'true', in his references to the *sponsa Christi* motif, as discussed in Chapter 2, and in the *Lives* discussed in this chapter – Julian's and Basilissa's, Cecilia's and Valerian's, Chrysanthus's and Daria's, and Æthelthryth's. References to marriages occur in other *Lives*, and some of these have already been examined in my analysis of Ælfric's use of *gebedda*. Ælfric's virgin martyrs, such as Agnes, Basilla (in the *Life of St Eugenia*), Agatha, Lucy, and Petronilla and Felicula (in the *Chair of St Peter*) have earthly, heathen suitors who offer them marriage. These marriages, however, are constructed as worldly, bodily and 'carnal', following the pattern found in the *Life of St Agnes*. Whilst this summary represents the bulk of Ælfric's treatment of

¹⁸³ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 91–92.

¹⁸⁵ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150–1300: Virginity and Its Authorizations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 47. See also Smith's excellent and extensive discussion on the semantics of Ælfric's use of *virginitas*, *castitas*, *mægðhad* and *clænnes* (Liesl Ruth Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints in Ælfric's "Lives of the Saints": The Translation of an Ideal' [unpublished doctoral thesis, the University of Toronto, 2000], pp. 18–54; 84–102).

marriage, some other anomalous instances deserve consideration. In the *Life of St Basil* (*ÆLS.3 [Basil]*: pp. 50-91), Ælfric reports the story of Anastasius, a venerable mass-priest ('awurþe mæsse-preost'; 466) whom Basil encounters. Anastasius is undoubtedly a holy man: he is visited by the Holy Spirit (472), he fasts constantly (479), and he is charitable and compassionate, caring for a leper (480). Ælfric also tells us that:

Mid þam wunode án mæden mærlíce drohtnigende . geond feowertig geara fec fægre
gehealden . Heo wæs mannum geþuht swylce heo his *gemæcca* wære .

A maiden dwelled with him over a space of forty years, conducted her life gloriously,
preserved [herself] splendidly. It seemed to people as if she was his *gemæcca*. (468-70)

It is firstly obvious that Ælfric does not condemn the holy Anastasius and his virgin companion. It is secondly obvious that, whilst Anastasius and his virgin may not be technically married (Ælfric does not make their marriage explicit), they participate in something approximating a 'true' marriage, indicated by the longevity of their relationship, which presages the eternal union of 'true' marriage; by the chastity and holiness of the union, and by Ælfric's use of *gemæcca* ('companion'). It does not seem to people that Anastasius's virgin is his *wif* ('wife') or his *gebedda* ('sexual spouse'), but rather that she is Anastasius's companion-wife: she is to Anastasius what Basilissa is to Julian, a companionate and asexual partner. Ælfric concludes the Anastasius digression by saying that 'þus wearð geopenad sé árwurðe mæsse-preost and þæt halige mæden þe his huses gymde' ('thus became manifest the venerable mass-priest and the holy maiden who took care of his house'; 490-91). Indeed, Ælfric's interest in chaste relationships founded in chastity and companionship is equally manifest in his inclusion of this interpolation in Basil's *Life*.

In his version of the *Chair of St Peter*, Ælfric includes a lengthy digression on Peter's marital status, and this digression is particularly revealing. Ælfric notes that Peter had a daughter, Petronilla, by his wife before he was converted to Christianity (202-3),

Ac he wiþ-cwæð siððan woruldlicum gewilnungum . and wifes neawiste . forþan þe crist
astealde clænnysse on worulde . and ealle his folgeras ferdon on clænnysse .

But after [his conversion] he rejected worldly desires and cohabitation with his wife, for the reason that Christ established chastity in the world and all of his disciples acted in chastity. (203-6)

Ælfric here aligns the ‘carnal’ marriage that Peter once had with his wife with worldly desires; such worldly desires are antithetical to Peter’s Christian faith, and thus ‘carnal’ marriage is antithetical to Christianity. According to this representation, Christ is the architect of chastity and requires it of his followers; ‘carnal’ marriage is consequently implicitly denounced as anti-Christian, much as it is in the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*. Ælfric goes on to explain that:

On aginne middan-eardes . cwæð se ælmihtiga god . beoð gemenig-fylde . and ge-fyllað þas eorðan . and crist wolde on his to-cyme clænnysse aræran . and his halgan hired . heold on clænnysse .

In the beginning of the world, the Almighty God said, ‘be multiplied and populate the earth’, but at His coming, Christ wished to establish chastity and preserved His saintly company in chastity. (211-14)

He clarifies this statement by comparing Old Testament law to New Testament law: in the Old Testament, men married their kinswomen but now (*nu*; 217) that is forbidden; then (*þa*; 222) under Moses’s law, bishops could marry and their sons could inherit their bishoprics (218-224) but Christ ensured that bishoprics are no longer patrilineal (225-28). Moreover, Christ ‘geceas þa clænan to his clænum þeow-dome [...] ac seo halige gelaðung lufað þa clænan and crist wile habban þa þe him clænlice þeniað’ (‘chose the chaste for His chaste service [...] but the holy church loves the chaste and Christ will have those who serve Him chastely’; 226-30).¹⁸⁶ Whilst none of these statements directly relates to marriage, it is interesting that Ælfric notes that Peter abandoned his ‘carnal’ marriage within the context of insisting that Christ instituted and required chastity of His followers: Peter’s ‘carnal’ marriage is so starkly juxtaposed to Christ’s repeated call to chastity that ‘carnal’ marriage is, fundamentally, not Christian and in contravention of Christ’s law. Ælfric deeply undermines ‘carnal’ marriage in this digression, and such

¹⁸⁶ Ælfric’s position is reiterated in his Letter to Sigefyrth (Assmann §2), especially with regard to the differences between Old Testament law and New Testament law on chastity; see esp. lines 58-107.

destabilisation of ‘carnal’ marriage can be understood as contributing to his promotion of ‘true’ marriage. The case of Migdonia in the *Life of St Thomas* has already been mentioned above,¹⁸⁷ but it has distinct resonances with Peter’s *Life*. Migdonia is already, ‘carnally’ married when she is converted to Christianity. At this time, she refuses any further sexual relations with her husband, although she remains married to him. Whilst we are reminded of the marital discord of Æthelthryth’s marriages, Ælfric ensures that we understand the sexual relations of Migdonia’s marriage are antithetical to her Christianity: she cannot be a good Christian and also be sexually active with her husband. To Ælfric, sexual relations were antithetical to ultimate faith, and it is against such polarisation that we should read his married saints’ lives as examples of marriage in its ‘true’, discarnate form, perfectly in accord with Christian faith and, indeed, with Christ Himself.

Sexual relations are again at issue in the *Memory of Saints* (ÆLS.16 [*Memory of Saints*]: pp. 336–63), in which Ælfric details the deadly sins and redemptive virtues. One such sin is *forligr*, or *fornicatio* (‘fornication’; 277), which ‘macað of cristes limum myltestrena limv’ (‘makes Christ’s members, members of prostitutes’; 278). Whilst marriage is not mentioned here, and it should be recalled that *fornicatio* usually denotes unlawful sexual relations,¹⁸⁸ Ælfric consistently makes sexual relations parallel to sinfulness. He then asserts that the second virtue is *castitas* or *clænnyss* (‘chastity’; 321). Somewhat prefiguring his *exemplum* in the *Life of St Æthelthryth*, Ælfric differentiates between the chastity required of a layperson, and that required of an ecclesiast:

Se læweda hine healde buta forligre on rihtum synscipe mid gesceadwisnyssse . and se gehadoda godes ðeowa healde his clænnyssse . þonne bið ofer-swyðed swa eac seo galnyss .

Let the layperson preserve himself without fornication in lawful marriage with discretion, and the ordained servant of God preserve his chastity; thus, then lust will be vanquished also. (322–25)

¹⁸⁷ See discussion above, pp. 323–24.

¹⁸⁸ See discussion above, Chapter 1, p. 127, n. 411.

Ælfric's point here, I would argue, is not to recommend *sinscipe* ('carnal' marriage) to laypersons, but rather to regulate those already in 'carnal' marriages. It has already been noted that despite his primary concern to recommend 'true' marriage, Ælfric was concomitantly concerned to regulate sexual intercourse in 'carnal' marriages, which he must have known would continue to be practised, despite his wish otherwise. 'Carnal' marriage might be legal (*riht*), but it is nevertheless bodily and sexual; if a layperson insisted on such a 'carnal' marriage then it must be with discretion (possibly referring to abstention times and procreative purposes) and monogamous.

4.2.2 Marriage in Homilies and Letters

Since Ælfric 'required of himself consistency, clarity, and strict orthodoxy as opposed to the confusion and heterodoxy he found',¹⁸⁹ it is not unreasonable to expect that his conception of 'true' marriage would find support in his works outside of the *Lives of Saints*. It is important, then, to contextualise briefly Ælfric's understanding of 'true' marriage within his other writings; this task has been undertaken at length by Upchurch, Smith and Jackson in their respective works on chastity and marriage.¹⁹⁰ I will argue that Ælfric's discussions of marriage in his homilies and letters support the understanding of marriage he presents in his *Lives of Saints*. Ælfric's arguments regarding marriage in his homilies and letters can be classified into three broad categories: allegorical exegeses (including the *ecclesia sponsa Christi* motif),¹⁹¹ shorter exhortations to chastity,¹⁹² and

¹⁸⁹ Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 103.

¹⁹⁰ Upchurch, 'Hagiography of Chaste Marriage', pp. 13-43; Smith, 'Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints', pp. 81-124; Jackson, 'Purpose of Christian Marriage', pp. 241-50.

¹⁹¹ Examples of this category are: *CHI.33 (Dominica XVII Post Pentecosten)* (pp. 459-64; 19-27); *CHI.35 (Dominica XXI Post Pentecosten)* (pp. 476-85; 40-46); *CHII.1 (De Natale Domini)* (pp. 3-11; 91-120); *CHII.4 (Dominica II Post Aepiphania)* (pp. 29-40; 25-36); *CHII.39 (In Natale Sanctarum Uirginum)* (pp. 327-34; 78-92).

¹⁹² Examples of this category are: *CHI.9 (In Purificatione Sanctae Mariae)* (pp. 249-57; 157-60); *CHI.10 (Dominica in Quinquagesima)* (pp. 258-65; 169-73); *CHI.11 (Dominica I in Quadragesima)* (pp. 266-74; 196-202); *CHI.25 (Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae)* (pp. 379-87; 161-69); *CHII.7 (Dominica I In Quadragesima)* (pp. 60-66; 22-26); *CHII.12 (Dominica in Media Quadragesime)* (pp. 110-26; 357-64);

developed arguments on the marital institution. It is the last category with which I am concerned.

Jackson argues that Ælfric saw absolute celibacy as the domain of the priests and monks and inappropriate to laypeople.¹⁹³ This argument is in opposition to my claim that Ælfric recommended celibate, ‘true’ marriage to his lay, noble audience. In *CHI.9 (In Purificatione Sanctae Mariae)* (pp. 249–57), Ælfric states:

Þry hadas syndon. þe cyðdon gecyðnyse be criste. þ is mægð-had 7 wudewan had. 7 *riht sinscipe*, [...] þas þry hadas sindon gode gecweme. gif hi rihtlice lybbað. Mægðhad is ægðer ge on wæpmannum ge on wimmannum; þa habbað rihtne mægðhad. þa ðe fram cyldhade wuniað on clænnysse: 7 ealle galnyssa on him sylfum forseoð. æigðer ge modes ge lichaman. þurh godes fultum; þonne habbað hi æt gode hundfealde meðe. on þam ecan life; Wudewan beoð þa ðe æfter heora gemacan on clænnysse wuniað. for godes lufon: hi habbað þonne sixtifealde mede. æt gode. hyra geswines; Ða þe rihtlice healdað hyra eawe. 7 on alyfedum timan for bearnes gestreone, hæmed begað: Hi habbað þrittigfealde mede: for hyra gesceadwisnesse; [...] be ðisum tæhte se apostol paulus; þa ðe wife habbað. beon hi swilce hi nan næbbon;

There are three conditions which bear witness to Christ: that is virginity, and widowhood, and *riht sinscipe* [...] These three conditions are acceptable to God, if one lives in them virtuously. Virginity is both in men and in women. Those have righteous virginity, the ones who from childhood abide in chastity, and renounce all lust in themselves, both in mind and in body, by means of God’s support. Then they shall have from God a hundredfold reward in the eternal life. Widows are the ones who, after [the deaths of] their spouses, abide in chastity for God’s love. They shall have a sixtyfold reward from God for their effort. Those who rightly hold to their marriage, and at permitted times for the procreation of children, have carnal intercourse, they shall have a thirtyfold reward for their discretion. [...] Concerning this, the apostle Paul taught, ‘Let the ones who have wives be just as if they had none’. (198–215).

Ælfric here repeats the traditional tripartite division of virginity, widowhood and marriage which is often found in patristic writings.¹⁹⁴ His description of virginity is carefully generalised: virginity, he asserts, is a state generally belonging to both men and women; its requirement is dedication to it from childhood and the total renunciation of lust. That is, according to Ælfric, virginity is proper to *all* Christians, and he is careful not to

CHII.15 (In Die Pascae) (pp. 150–60; 303–306); *CHII.23 (Dominica III Post Pentecosten)* (pp. 213–220; 71–76).

¹⁹³ Jackson, ‘Purpose of Christian Marriage’, p. 247, p. 257.

¹⁹⁴ On which, see above, Introduction, p. 38, n. 180.

preclude the laity from his formulation of virginity. Importantly, this generalisation also does not preclude those in ‘true’ marriage; indeed, Ælfric’s requirement of the virgin to renounce all the lusts of the flesh perhaps foreshadows the temptations that Julian, Basilissa, Valerian, Chrysanthus and Daria face in their *Lives*. His description of the married, to whom is due a thirtyfold reward, is of those who dwell in *riht sinscipe*. Ælfric’s usage of *riht sinscipe* is significant in the context of his usage of *sinscipe* in his *Lives of Saints*; his description of *riht sinscipe* here parallels the reference to it in his *Memory of Saints* (323) since both are exhortations to proper sexual relations in ‘carnal’ marriage.¹⁹⁵ That is, sexual relations in ‘carnal’ marriage must be regulated by procreative purpose and periods of abstinence. The ‘carnal’ marriage, whilst not sharing in the hundredfold reward of the virginal ‘true’ marriage, is, in its discretion (*gesceadwisnes*) and like the thane’s marriage in the *exemplum* in the *Life of St Æthelbryth*, not devoid of morality: it imitates ‘true’ marriage in its observance of regulated sexual relations, but it is nevertheless ‘carnal’. Ælfric’s citation of the Pauline doctrine recommending those who have wives to live as if they had none should be read in this immediate context of an exhortation to marital chastity and virginity, and thus it is possible that Ælfric is subtly advocating a position that those who are married should be married spiritually (as if they had no physical wife with whom to procreate), rather than physically.

In *CHI.9*, Ælfric contends that virginity is appropriate to every Christian since it is the ultimate Christian ideal. This point is made more explicit in Ælfric’s homily on the *Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*:

Se mægðhad is gemæne ægþrum, cnihtum and mædenum, þe clænlice lybbað æfre fram cildhade oð ende heora lifes for Cristes lufon, *swa swa* þa clænan munecas doð and ða clænan mynecena on mynstrum gehwær wide geond þas woruld, *swa swa* hit awriten is on *Vitas Patrum* and on fela bocum be manegum þusendum on mynstrum and on westenum.

Virginity is common to both, to male youths and to maidens, who live chastely perpetually from childhood until the end of their lives for Christ’s love, *just as the*

¹⁹⁵ In his Letter to Sigefyrth, Ælfric reiterates this tripartite hierarchy (see Assmann §2, 138–52).

chaste monks do, and the chaste cloistered women, in monasteries everywhere far and wide throughout this world, as it is written in the *Vitas Patrum* and in many books regarding the many thousands in monasteries and in the deserts. (224-31; my emphasis)¹⁹⁶

Ælfric here reiterates that virginity (*mægðhad*) is *gemæne*, a word which denotes ‘common’, ‘general’, ‘universal’; his representation of virginity as a state which is potentially common to any Christian emphasises that Ælfric is concerned to incorporate the laity in his vision of virginity. Most illustratively, Ælfric *compares* the virginity lived by the chaste from childhood to death to the virginity held by monks and cloistered women: *swa swa*, indicating ‘just as’, implies that the virginity to which Ælfric initially refers is held by those *other* than the monasticised virgins to whom they are compared, possibly the laity.¹⁹⁷

In his *CHII.6 (Dominica In Sexagesima)* (pp. 52-59), Ælfric repeats the trope of the thirtyfold reward:

Geleaffulle læwede menn þe on rihtum sinscipe lybbað agifað þritigfealdne wæstm. góðra weorca. gif hí heora æwe æfter boclicum gesetnyssum healdað. þæt is þæt hí for bearnes gestreone on alyfedum timan hæmed began. and bearneacnigende wíf. and monaðseoc forbugan. and ðonne heo leng tyman ne mæg. geswican hí hæmedes.

Believing laymen, who live in *riht sinscipe*, yield thirtyfold benefit of good works, if they preserve their marriage according to the written decrees: that is, that they, for the procreation of children at permitted times, perform intercourse, and abstain from a pregnant or menstruous wife, and when they are no longer able [to procreate], cease from their sexual intercourse. (118-23)

Once again, those who participate in *riht sinscipe* – that is, ‘carnal’ marriage (*sinscipe*) that is governed by periods of abstinence and performed for procreative reasons (*riht*) – are given thirtyfold reward. Ælfric delineates the proscriptions and prescriptions which make ‘carnal’ marriage *riht* as sexual relations having the sole purpose of procreation; abstinence from sexual relations during pregnancy and menstruation, and the total renunciation of sexual

¹⁹⁶ Assmann §3.

¹⁹⁷ Ælfric’s *Letter to Sigefyrth* (Assmann §2) emphasises that virginity is a calling for anyone: although virginity is most often found in those in religious orders, it is found in both women and men in all situations. Whilst Ælfric may not have expected many of the laity to adhere to ‘true’ marriage, his pronouncements on virginity are careful never to preclude the laity from inclusion if the layperson was so called. See also Smith, ‘Virginity and Married-Virgin Saints’, p. 91.

relations after menopause: these regulations correlate to the moral ‘carnal’ marriage to which the married thane adheres in the *Life of St Æthelbryth*. A few lines later, however, Ælfric states that ‘gifta ne sind gesette for nanum ðinge buton for bearnteame’ (‘marriage is ordained for nothing but the procreation of children’; 130–31). Seemingly, this statement undermines Ælfric’s interest in ‘true’ marriage, but it must be noted that his usage of *gifta* here is problematic. *Gifta* is a particularly unusual word-choice; Ælfric only uses *gifta* twice (once here) to designate a ‘marriage’ (compared to *sinscipe* which he uses forty times).¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, Ælfric regularly uses *gifta* to designate a ‘wedding’. In fact, Ælfric uses *gifta* (‘wedding’) forty-three times; his next most popular noun for ‘wedding’, *wifung*, is only used four times.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, *gifta* was ‘the general word for “wedding” in late (West Saxon) O[ld] E[n]glish’;²⁰⁰ in Anglo-Saxon England, the consummation of the marriage on the wedding night both concluded the wedding ceremony and ‘marked the beginning of the state of marriage’.²⁰¹ Ælfric’s use of *gifta* here, then, has two potential meanings. If *gifta* means ‘wedding’, he was regulating the wedding night itself by insisting that it, too, was for procreative purposes, and perhaps reminding his audience that, even on their wedding night, sexual relations were still governed by church decrees. Alternatively, if Ælfric is using *gifta* to signify ‘marriage’, then it (like *sinscipe*) has sexual connotations as the most common word to denote the wedding ceremony with its sexual consummation. ‘Carnal’ marriage, Ælfric says here, has no purpose but procreation.

Jackson sees this homily (*CHII.6*) as justification for thinking that Ælfric was not interested in recommending chaste marriages to the laity,²⁰² quoting Ælfric’s statement:

Þæt is þæs læwedan mannes clænnys. þæt he his æwe healde. and alyfedlice, for folces eacan, bearn gestreone; Þæt is ðæs gehádodan mannes clænnys þæra ðe gode þeniað.

¹⁹⁸ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 143.

¹⁹⁹ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 142.

²⁰⁰ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 44.

²⁰¹ Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage*, p. 22.

²⁰² Jackson, ‘Purpose of Christian Marriage’, p. 246.

þæt hi eallunge fram flæsclicum lustum hi forhabbon, and him gedafenað þæt hi gode gestrynon ða cild þe ða læwedan menn to ðysere worulde gestryndon.

The chastity of a layman is, that he hold to his marriage, and lawfully, for the increase of people, beget children. The chastity of a man in orders, of those who serve God, is, that they wholly abstain from fleshly lusts, and it is befitting them that they beget to God the children which laymen have begotten to this world. (137-42)²⁰³

According to Jackson this quotation indicates ‘the clearest possible distinction between the “chastity” appropriate to the laity – intercourse within marriage for the purpose of procreation – and the quite different and incompatible “chastity” – lifelong abstinence – that is the preserve of priests and religious’.²⁰⁴ However, if we consider the broader context within which Ælfric makes this statement, it is clear that the categorical division which Jackson identifies is tempered. Firstly, in the section which precedes this statement, Ælfric argues that the hundredfold reward is given to virgins and that ‘þes stæpe belimpð *swiðost* to godes ðeowum and ðineum’ (‘this grade belongs *especially* to God’s male servants and handmaidens’; 133). Whilst Ælfric aligns virginity with those in religious orders, his use of *swiðost* (‘especially’, ‘chiefly’) indicates that virginity can be found in some people who are *not* in religious orders, since *swiðost* does not denote ‘solely’ or ‘exclusively’:²⁰⁵ such occurrences of lay virginity may be rare, but Ælfric does not absolutely exclude the laity from the state of virginity, nor does he prohibit them from attempting to achieve this state. Secondly, Ælfric introduces the lines which differentiate the chastity of laymen from that of ecclesiasts by asserting that ‘*ælcum menn gedafenað clænys and swiðost gehádodum godes ðeowum*’ (‘*chastity is appropriate for all men, and especially for the ordained servants of God*’; 136-37, my emphasis). Ælfric’s basic assertion here is that chastity is appropriate for all (*æl*) people; his qualification that it is especially (again *swiðost*) appropriate for those in religious orders indicates that the chastity (*clænnes*) to which he refers here is absolute celibacy. He then goes on to qualify what *clænnes* means

²⁰³ Jackson uses Thorpe’s translation, which is reproduced here (*The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: The First Part Containing the Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. and trans. by Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols [London: The Ælfric Society, 1844-46; repr. Georg Olms Verlag, 1983], II, 95).

²⁰⁴ Jackson, ‘Purpose of Christian Marriage’, p. 246.

²⁰⁵ See BT, s. v, ‘swiþ’, II.a.

to a layman, as cited above (137-42). In other words Ælfric twice asserts that virginal chastity befits all people, although it is found chiefly in the ordained, before he defines what a layman's chastity involves (that is, regulated sexual marital relations): to Ælfric, virginity is the ideal for which *all* people should strive; if laymen are unable to achieve the virginal state, then their *clænnes* involves the preservation of their 'carnal' marriage according to decrees.²⁰⁶ In terms of his proscriptions regarding 'carnal' marriage, then, it is possible to envisage Ælfric, like Paul to the Corinthians, speaking of a concession to his audience, and not prescribing sexual relations: 'hoc autem dico secundum indulgentiam non secundum imperium' ('but I speak this by indulgence [that is, by a condescension to your weakness by indulgence], not by commandment'; I Corinthians 7.6). To Ælfric, 'carnal' marriage is regulated by the decrees for sexual relations, but 'true' marriage is ultimately preferable. As Gatch notes, 'Ælfric's homiletic effort, based on the monastic homiliary, was to a great degree inspired by the desire to share with the laity the devotional riches of the reformed monastic life',²⁰⁷ including virginal chastity.

In *CHII.19 (Feria Secunda Letania Maiore)* (pp. 180-89), Ælfric foreshadows the marriage of Chrysanthus and Daria, stating:

Ðam ðe lufiað swiðor. ða healican clænnysse. þonne ða hóhfullan galnysse [...] hí magon on scinscipe. hí sylfe bedyglian. and hæmed forgán. gif him swa god gewissað;

To those who love sublime chastity more than anxious lust [...] they may hide themselves in *sinscipe*, and forgo sexual intercourse, if God so instructs them. (166-69)

In this statement, Ælfric's description of Chrysanthus's and Daria's marriage is prefigured: they 'wunodon ætgædere gehiwodum synscipe and gehaldenre clænnysse' ('dwelled together in the appearance of *synscipe* and with preserved chastity'; 122-23). Chrysanthus and Daria, then, live out Ælfric's recommendation in *CHII.19*: pious and devout couples may conceal themselves in 'carnal' marriage (*sinscipe*) and not have intercourse. In this homily, Ælfric explicitly advocates and commends 'true' marriage, like that of Chrysanthus

²⁰⁶ This sentiment is echoed in *CHII.12 (Dominica in Media Quadragesime)* (pp. 110-26; 542-52).

²⁰⁷ Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, p. 56.

and Daria, to the laity. His statement in this *CHII.19* is the most explicit example we have, outside the *Lives of Saints*, of such recommendation to embrace ‘true’, discarnate marriage, and it is striking that Godden can identify no source for this sentiment: it is *Ælfric’s* own counsel.²⁰⁸ It is finally worth noting that *Ælfric’s* statement here reveals his knowledge that his ‘true’ marriage would not have been uncomplicatedly assimilable into late Anglo-Saxon society: *Ælfric’s* advice that such couples *hide* themselves in *sinscipe* acknowledges the social resistance which ‘true’ marriage would have faced. I will return to this point in the conclusion. *CHII.19* then proceeds to describe the ‘carnal’ marriage which most closely imitates ‘true’ marriage: those whom God does not call to the ‘true’ marriage which *Ælfric* recommends in lines 166-69 should hold ‘carnal’ marriage which emulates ‘true’ marriage.²⁰⁹ Thus, moral ‘carnal’ marriage is for procreation only (173) and once the woman is unable to bear children all sexual relations should cease (174-75).²¹⁰ This concession to procreative relations is repeated in *Ælfric’s* homily, *De Doctrina Apostolica*.²¹¹

Jackson concedes that ‘though in these discussions *Ælfric* in no way claims that lifelong virginity is impossible for the laity, he does tend to view it as the special prerogative of priests and monastics’.²¹² I would rather argue that, though *Ælfric* prescribed celibacy for priests and monastics and thus exhorted them to celibacy, his formulation of virginity did not preclude the laity from being included in the ranks of the virginal. *Ælfric’s* emphasis on virginity for clergymen and monastics can be traced to his reform interest in promoting chastity among all religious, a pursuit most vocally articulated in his *Letter to Sigefyrth* (Assmann §2). However, he simultaneously constructs virginity as an ideal that is potentially attainable by any Christian, lay or otherwise; since ‘true’ marriage is virginal,

²⁰⁸ *ÆCH: Introduction*, p. 525. Godden states that for this ‘extended discussion of marital relations [166-85; *CHII.19*] I know of no sources or relevant parallels’.

²⁰⁹ Upchurch, ‘Chrysanthus and Daria’, pp. 253-54.

²¹⁰ John, ‘World of *Ælfric*’, p. 308.

²¹¹ *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by John C. Pope, EETS 259, 260, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967-1968), §19 (pp. 613-37; 111-15).

²¹² Jackson, ‘Purpose of Christian Marriage’, p. 246.

then it, too, is an ideal for which the laity should aim and which all laymen may potentially achieve. For those married laymen who are unable to achieve the ultimate ideal of 'true' discarnate relations, their 'carnal' marriage must be governed by the regulations stipulating proper and moral sexual relations. 'Carnal' marriage is less ideal than virginal 'true' marriage, but the former can imitate the latter through the strict observation of sexual abstinence. In his *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric represented 'true' marriage through the relationships of the married saints as the ultimate ideal; in his married thane *exemplum* in the *Life of St Æthelthryth*, he represented the ways in which 'carnal' marriage may emulate 'true' marriage and thus achieve a degree of goodness and, indeed, the thirtyfold reward; his construction of virginity and marriage in his *Lives of Saints* develops his inclusive stance on the virginal potential of the laity found in his homilies. Rather than excluding the laity from celibacy, Ælfric's homilies and letters establish an inclusive context for his construction of celibate marriage in his *Lives of Saints*.²¹³

4.3 Conclusion

It has been noted that I have assumed Ælfric's audience to be the only one that he explicitly articulates: a noble, devout, lay audience, represented by Æthelweard and Æthelmær. I have also alluded to the point that Ælfric's 'true' marriage ran counter to Anglo-Saxon social expectations, and indeed to customary law. Although Ælfric's conception of marriage prefigured the ideal of the later church,²¹⁴ it was subversive and confronting in his immediate Anglo-Saxon social context. The question thus arises as to what message his audience may have taken from his account of marriage: how would

²¹³ See Peter Clemoes, 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works', *Old English Newsletter*, Subsidia 5 (1980), 2-37 (first publ. in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. by Peter Clemoes [London: Bowes and Bowes, 1959], pp. 212-47).

²¹⁴ Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 15-16. Indeed, a version of Ælfric's 'true' marriage can be seen in the barren marriage of Edward the Confessor and Edith Godwin. In Edward's *Life*, commissioned by Edith (written c. AD 1065-67), there are repeated references to marital chastity (see *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster: Attributed to a Monk of Saint-Bertin*, ed. and trans. by Frank Barlow, 2nd edn [Oxford: Clarendon, 1992], pp. 90-93).

Ælfric's married saints have been received by Æthelmær and his contemporaries? The tension between Ælfric's 'true' marriage and Anglo-Saxon perceptions of marriage is especially true in three specific instances. Firstly, Anglo-Saxon social customs regarding marriage, as indicated by the discussion in the Introduction, were concerned with the maintenance of property, especially among the nobility.²¹⁵ Ælfric was conversely concerned to weaken traditional patterns of patrimonial inheritance and instead to promote ecclesiastical or monastic endowments. In essence, Ælfric's exhortation to virginity promoted ecclesiastical endowments, exemplified by those made by Julian and Basilissa, and Cecilia. Those participating in a 'true' marriage would be physically heirless, that is, without an heir to inherit their property and, most importantly, lands. Yet, the spiritual fecundity which Ælfric's married saints demonstrated, and which was 'true' marriage's counterpart to the physical fecundity of 'carnal marriage', was partly dependent upon (or at least facilitated by) the saints' endowments of monasteries. During the late tenth century, endowments to monasteries were being made on an 'enormous scale' and 'a high proportion of the sixth of the landed value of England which was in monastic hands by 1066 was gained in the late tenth century'.²¹⁶ Moreover, it is likely that Ælfric's position would have appealed to noble or royal women, as well as men, and in this context, it should be recalled that women were also patrons of reform through donations of land.²¹⁷ Ælfric's call to 'true' marriage may be understood as a contribution or buoy to an already thriving culture of endowments. Directed to the wealthy, noble and landed laity, Ælfric's 'true' marriage inculcated the principles of endowments of land to the reformed church.

Secondly, Anglo-Saxon customary law, as evidenced by the document entitled *Be wifmannes beweddunge*, expected the kin of the bride and the bridegroom to approve of and play a role in a marriage, even when the personal consent of the couple was required in the

²¹⁵ Marc A. Meyer, 'Land Charters and the Legal Position of Anglo-Saxon Women', in *The Women of England: From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present, Interpretive Bibliographical Essays*, ed. by Barbara Kanner (London: Mansell, 1980), pp. 57-82 (pp. 63-65).

²¹⁶ James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York: Hambledon, 2000), pp. 159-60.

²¹⁷ See Marc A. Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform', *Revue Bénédictine*, 87 (1977), 34-61; see also above, Introduction, p. 51, n. 10.

later Anglo-Saxon period.²¹⁸ Ælfric attempted to usurp the primary role of the family in marriages and concurrently to locate the marital institution within the ecclesiastical domain. In doing so, Ælfric was anticipating by at least a century the church's concerted effort to realise its own, rather than the family's, dominion over the marriage institution and 'to bring the whole area of marriage safely within the jurisdiction of church courts'.²¹⁹ Moreover, Ælfric's married saints' lives promoted personal consent above familial considerations. The effort of both church and king to enforce personal consent as a defining feature of a legitimate marriage is attested in law and charter evidence of the late Anglo-Saxon period.²²⁰ Ælfric's contribution to these efforts can be witnessed in his re-writing of the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, in which Julian does not marry because of parental compulsion, but because he personally and directly consents to do so, as directed by his faith, not his kin.

Lastly, Anglo-Saxons saw marriage as a carnal union: on the one hand, marriage was the only legitimate relationship in which sexual relations could occur; on the other, marriage itself was legitimised by the sexual relations of the couple.²²¹ The Anglo-Saxons 'considered sexual relations essential to the definition of marriage' and this assertion is

²¹⁸ The role of the kin in the marriage is attested to in the first clause of *Be wifmannes beweddunge*: '1. Gif man mæden oððe wif weddian wille, 7 hit swa hire 7 freondan gelicige, ðonne is riht, ðæt se brydguma æfter Godes rihte 7 æfter woroldgerysnum ærest behate 7 on wedde sylle ðam, ðe hire forsprecan synd, þæt he on ða wisan hire geornige, ðet he hy æfter Godes rihte healdan wille, swa wær his wif sceal; 7 aborgian his frind ðæt' ('1. If a man intends to betroth a maiden or a widow, and it so pleases her, and her relatives, then it is right that the bridegroom, following God's law and following secular customs should first promise and give with a pledge to those who are her speakers, that he desires her in such a way that he, following God's law, will maintain her as a husband should his wife; and his kinsmen are to be surety for that').

²¹⁹ McGlynn and Moll, 'Chaste Marriage', p. 108. See also James A. Brundage, 'Concubinage and Marriage in Medieval Canon Law', in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York: Prometheus, 1982; repr. 1994), pp. 118–28.

²²⁰ See the law code II Cnut (chapter 74, in *Gesetze*, pp. 360–61), and 'A Worcester Marriage Agreement' and 'A Kentish Marriage Agreement'. The Worcester agreement is made between Wulfric and Archbishop Wulfstan, regarding Wulfstan's sister; the Kentish agreement is made between Godwine and Brihtric, regarding his daughter. Printed as LXXVI (Sawyer, 1459) and LXXVII (Sawyer, 1461) respectively, in *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. by A. J. Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 148–51; see also *The Electronic Sawyer: An Online Version of the Revised Edition of Sawyer's Anglo-Saxon Charters, Section One [S 1–1602]*, ed. by S. E. Kelly and S. M. Miller, rev. edn (available at: <<http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/eSawyer.99/eSawyer2.html>> [accessed October 2005]).

²²¹ See discussion above, Introduction, p. 23.

borne out by the vocabulary discussed in Chapter 2.²²² Contrarily, Ælfric saw the institution as ideally discarnate, in which procreation was spiritual, and which did not require the authorisation of sexual intercourse. His recommendation of ‘true’ marriage was thus, simultaneously, an exhortation to chastity directed to the laity. Upchurch argues that a motivating factor for Ælfric in his elevation of celibacy in marriage is the latter’s intention to drive ‘a wedge between the married clergy and their congregations as well as enlisting the laity’s support for the monastic priesthood championed by Ælfric’.²²³

Upchurch contends that

by incorporating the laity as fully as possible into an ideology of virginity in which absolute chastity is valued above all else, he [Ælfric] is able to undercut the authority of the married clergy among the laity. In this and other sermons that discuss literal chaste marriage, he offers married couples a model of asceticism that drastically reduces the differences between the pious husband and wife and the married priest.²²⁴

That married clergy co-existed with celibate clergy in the late Anglo-Saxon period is attested by such texts as the *Northumbrian Priests’ Law*,²²⁵ and Ælfric is undeniably concerned with the sexual behaviour of the married clergy. Anne Llewellyn Barstow notes that ‘in Anglo-Saxon England the reform [...] aimed its wrath at the canons who lived with their wives in cathedral centers’.²²⁶ Ælfric’s concomitant concern with clerical marriage is reflected in his Second Old English *Letter to Archbishop Wulfstan*, in which he argues that neither bishop, masspriest, deacon or priest of a minster or church should maintain any woman (other than his mother or sister) in his household, or else relinquish his religious office; children of priests should be spiritual not physical.²²⁷ He condemns the married clergy in his Old English *Letter to Bishop Wulfsig* (for the clergy) and in his

²²² Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, pp. 135–36.

²²³ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 161.

²²⁴ Upchurch, ‘Hagiography of Chaste Marriage’, p. 43.

²²⁵ See, for example, chapter 35.

²²⁶ *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-Century Debates*, Texts and Studies in Religion, 12 (New York and Toronto: Edwin Meller, 1982), p. 44.

²²⁷ *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in Aletenglischer und Lateinischer Fassung*, ed. by Bernard Fehr (Hamburg, 1914; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966, with a supplement by Peter Clemoes), §5, pp. 146–221 (p. 102 and p. 176, respectively).

First Old English *Letter to Archbishop Wulfstan*,²²⁸ and his *Letter to Sigefyrth* (Assmann §2) is a treatise against clerical marriages. In his *Letter to Archbishop Wulfstan* Ælfric acknowledges, somewhat ruefully, that he is reliant upon exhortations, rather than legislation, to regulate the sexual lives of the married clergy (Fehr §4, p. 104-5). Upchurch's theory that Ælfric wished to promote celibacy among the laity, to undermine the spiritual authority of the married clergy, and to promote concurrently the spiritual authority of chaste monastics, thus seems reasonable and convincing. As McNamara argues, 'the idea of ['true'] chaste marriage [...] was used to disparage traditional ['carnal'] marriage':²²⁹ to Ælfric the chastely married laity, then, had spiritual superiority over the carnally married clergy and he may have hoped that the laity would perceive this imbalance and thus destabilise the influence of the married clergy. It should perhaps also be noted, however, that 'chaste marriage was promoted as a perfect solution to the problem of a married clergy in a[n ecclesiastical] world that looked with suspicion on sexual relations',²³⁰ and perhaps Ælfric's married saints' lives would have provided the married clergy with an appropriate sexual paradigm to emulate if they refused to renounce their marriages. Lastly, Barlow notes that, in the tenth century, although the 'main objection to clerical marriage [...was] that of sexual impurity, the widespread holding of church office by men with families raised the further issue of loss of church income and property to the needs of the clerics' wives and children'.²³¹ This point is an interesting one when considered in the context of Ælfric's concern with ecclesiastical endowments: by destabilising the authority of the married clergy by means of his prescription of 'true' marriage to the laity, Ælfric may have hoped to insist upon clerical celibacy and thus minimise the proprietary interests of the clerics' families; on the other hand, if the

²²⁸ Fehr, *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, §1, pp. 1-34; §4, pp. 68-145, respectively.

²²⁹ Jo Ann McNamara, 'Chaste Marriage and Clerical Celibacy', in *Sexual Practices*, ed. by Bullough and Brundage, pp. 22-33 (p. 28).

²³⁰ McNamara, 'Clerical Celibacy', p. 25; see also Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages*, Routledge Research in Medieval Studies, 2 (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 5.

²³¹ Barstow, *Married Priests*, p. 37.

married clergy accepted his redefinition of marriage as discarnate, they would have no families to support and thus the issue would be moot.

Ultimately, Ælfric derived his ideal of 'true' marriage from on his patristic sources. On the one hand, he took from Augustine the belief that

the institution of marriage itself cooled the fires of lust. He [Augustine] said marriage '... usually abates the concupiscence of the flesh and imposes moderation on its reins' [...] In many ways, then, marriage would ameliorate lust and permit a sexual relationship that approximate as closely as possible to prelapsarian intercourse. Such 'conjugal chastity' would involve intercourse as passionless as possible, a joining together in a spirit of friendship rather than lust.²³²

On the other, he accepted Gregory the Great's recommendation for married couples to revoke sexual relations altogether.²³³ 'True' marriage, then, was just as Augustine formulated, but had its foundation in a spiritual rather than a bodily union, as Gregory had insisted. Ælfric's definition was made doctrinally valid by the fact that 'patristic writers assumed [...] that consent made marriage. They rejected the notion that consummation was an essential part of marriage. It made no difference whether a couple ever went to bed together'.²³⁴ Dyan Elliott summarises the 'true' marriage found in the married saints' lives thus:

the emphasis on chastity [in 'true' marriage] should not eclipse the fact that these stories are primarily about marriage. Furthermore, because they are richly encoded with the church kerygma to that effect, their didactic possibilities are immense. The virginal marriage realizes some of the most ambitious expectations that St. Paul placed upon the married. It complies with his injunction to have wives as if you had them not (1 Cor.7.29), and reflects the brother-sister relationship that the apostles theoretically achieved with their wives (1 Cor.9.5). The instigator also fulfills St. Paul's expectation that the unbelieving spouse would be sanctified by the believing (1 Cor.7.14), without contravening the right to the conjugal debt. [...] Most notably, virginal marriage demonstrates how the couple in question could become two in one flesh (Eph. 5.31-32) on the basis of consent to marry as opposed to the commingling of bodies, and this union is represented as indissoluble.²³⁵

²³² Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 48

²³³ McNamara, 'Clerical Celibacy', p. 25.

²³⁴ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 92.

²³⁵ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 67.

All of these aspects are evident in Ælfric's retelling of the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*, the *Life of St Cecilia*, and the *Lives of SS Chrysanthus and Daria*: they are exemplary marriages characterised as a perpetual union, discarnate and spiritually fecund. Elliott further argues that it should not

surprise us that such unions, shorn of concupiscence, are among the most positive portrayals of marital unity and concord over the entire course of the Middle Ages. [...] We find the belief in a profound intimacy and companionship between the sexes that is in no way contingent on sexual intercourse.²³⁶

Ælfric's depiction of ideal 'true' marriage suggests that marital morality extended well beyond the proscriptions regarding sexual relations: to him, moral marriage was one which was founded on love and companionship, and understood as a union which invited friendship and profound knowledge of God.

²³⁶ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, p. 73.

Conclusion

I noted in the Introduction that marriage was a ‘live issue’ in late Anglo-Saxon England, and that responses to, and attitudes towards, marriage were individual, subjective and developing, rather than static. The opinions expressed regarding marriage in the texts examined in this thesis require the acknowledgement that marriage, as an institution, was diversely appreciated and constructed in late Anglo-Saxon England: to approach critically marriage as a homogenous constant is to oversimplify vastly the state of affairs in the period. The compiler of MS 201 (C) was particularly interested in the definition of lawful marriage and the morality and legalities of extra-marital sexual relations, devoting considerable space to laws and penitentials which engaged with this problematic. *Apollonius of Tyre* ‘fits’ into its manuscript context on many counts, one of which is its marital morality which echoes the proscriptions and prescriptions of the C texts more generally. The *Exeter Book* riddler had a particularly Pauline vision of Anglo-Saxon marriage: *EBR 20* (solution: sword) demonstrates the perception that marriage was constituted by sexual relations, and identifies the potential joy which marriage will bring; *EBR 61* (solution: helmet) reveals a concern for the payment of the conjugal debt and for marital obedience. The riddler’s concept of marriage, then, was informed by Paul’s vision of a joyous and rewarding marriage in Ephesians, and by his concentration in the Corinthians on the mutual payment of the conjugal debt and on wifely compliance. Ælfric, on the other hand, radicalised marriage: building on the works of Augustine of Hippo and Gregory the Great he made it an almost abstract construct in his insistence on its true, discarnate nature. In his promotion of spiritual marriage, Ælfric undermined the authority and desirability of the carnal marriage which the *Exeter Book* riddler conceptualised and advised.

Similarly heterogeneous, the processes by which particular individuals attempted to regulate the marital morality of those people with which they were concerned, varied greatly. The compiler of C, and indeed Wulfstan, was concerned with morality on a comprehensive national level; the diverse strategies by which these men chose to regulate morality included preaching, legislation and confession. Importantly, each of these regulatory methods interacted with, and complemented, each other: the connections between homilies and law codes, law codes and penance, penance and homilies indicate a cohesive response to the task of regulating morality. Deploying a different method, the *Exeter Book* riddler chose to inscribe moral prescriptions and proscriptions in riddle form by embedding moral sentiment into particular riddles. Finally, Ælfric chose the prescriptive genre of hagiography to construct and recommend certain kinds of marital conduct as moral.

Despite the variety of attitudes towards marriage, and of processes of moral regulation, points of connection exist between these texts – laws, penitentials, romance, riddles, hagiography – and *Apollonius of Tyre* provides a basis from which such connections can be witnessed. The thematic connections between the laws and the ‘Handbook’, and *Apollonius* were discussed in Chapter 1: *Apollonius*, like the legal and confessional texts, was concerned to condemn incest, to promote consensual marriage, to dissuade remarriage, and to promote chastity. There are two primary connections between *Apollonius* and the *Exeter Book* riddles: both use the riddle form to impart regulation; and Arcestrate’s wifely obedience corresponds with the riddler’s concern for such behaviour. Regarding the first point, King Antiochus poses a riddle to his daughter’s potential suitors: solving the riddle results in marriage to her; failure to solve it, in beheading. It is interesting that the solution to the riddle – the incestuous relationship Antiochus enjoys with his daughter – is, like the *EBR*, never explicitly solved. *Apollonius* posits an answer which, whilst suggestive of the solution, is also a riddle in itself. To the initial riddle,

‘scylde ic þolige moddrenum flæsce ic bruce’ (‘I suffer sin, I partake of the flesh of mothers’; 132 [IV]), Apollonius answers:

Ymbe þæt þu cwæde . þæt þu scilde þolodest ne eart ðu leogende on ðam. beseoh to ðe silfum. And þæt þu cwæde moddrenum flæsce ic bruce ne eart ðu onðam leogende. beseoh to þinre dohtor.

‘About what you said – that you suffer sin – you are not lying in that: look to yourself. And [about] what you said – that ‘I partake of the flesh of mothers’ – you are not lying in that: look to your daughter.’ (133 [IV])

It is not the solution to the riddle in *Apollonius* which is significant; rather, like the *EBR*, the riddle form facilitates a deeper contemplation of the immorality which the text is proscribing. Antiochus himself makes a moral judgement on his own behaviour in this riddle – it is a sin, a crime. By giving the moral value of ‘sinful’ and ‘criminal’ to incest, Antiochus’s riddle proscribes his own behaviour, just as the alcohol riddles discussed in Chapter 2, proscribe drunkenness by giving the moral value of ‘foolish’ to drunkards. Secondly, as Riedinger argues, Arcestrate is the definitively obedient wife.¹ According to Riedinger, Arcestrate’s silent acquiescence to Apollonius’s decisions after their reunion implies the latter’s marital obedience, and Arcestrate’s ‘total compliance with authority seems to meet with the Old English translator’s approval, for he further emphasizes it by adding to the Latin text, *Da dide þæt mæden swa hyre beboden wæs* “The maiden then did as she was bade”.² Arcestrate’s obedience agrees with the wifely obedience recommended in the conduct of the *EBR* 61 wife, who, also silently, acquiesces to her husband’s desire.

Arcestrate is also, however, insistently a companionate wife, and thus she invites parallels to be drawn with the hagiographic heroines of Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*. When Arcestrate and Apollonius are reunited, the narrator adamantly reiterates that Apollonius acts, travels, and lives, ‘mid his wife’ (‘with his wife’). In the first place we are told that Arcestrate travels ‘mid hire were’ (‘with her husband’; 144 [XLIX]) out of Ephesus; when

¹ Anita Riedinger, ‘The Englishing of Arcestrate: Women in *Apollonius of Tyre*’, in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 292–306 (p. 301).

² Riedinger, ‘Englishing of Arcestrate’, p. 296.

Apollonius travels to Tarsus, it is ‘mid his wife’ (‘with his wife’; 144 [L]); when Apollonius rewards the fisherman for his previous generosity, it is ‘tofaran þare cwene’ (‘before the queen’; 145 [LI]); when Apollonius has a son, it is explicitly ‘be his gemæccan’ (‘by his wife’; 145 [LI]), and he lives for seventy-seven years ‘welwillendlice [...] mid his gemæccan’ (‘lovingly [...] with his wife’; 145 [LI]). The companionate use of *gemæcca* recalls its similar utilisation in the *Lives of SS Julian and Basilissa*: as a paradigmatic and archetypical woman, Arcestrate is deemed a companionate wife in almost Ælfrician terms. Certainly, Ælfric’s concern to promote companionship between wife and husband is evident here in *Apollonius*, even if his discarnate manifestation of that companionship is not.

Whilst Arcestrate is obviously not virginal, having borne two children, her chastity is of great importance to the Old English translator, and in this aspect, too, she is almost hagiographical in her construction. She is repeatedly called *mæden* (‘maiden’), and is also described as *scamfæst fæmne* (‘modest virgin’; 141 [XX]), a lover of *clænnes* (143 [XLVIII]), and Apollonius addresses her as *eadige cwen* (‘blessed queen’; 145 [LI]). That is, like Ælfric, the Old English translator of *Apollonius* has a concern for chastity; where Ælfric’s models for chaste behaviour are virginal saints, the translator’s is more akin to the men and women whom Ælfric describes as conducting moral marriage in his homilies, and in the *exemplum* to his *Life of St Æthelthryth*. It is thus noteworthy that in the only direct speech given by Arcestrate after her reunion with Apollonius, she exclaims to her husband, ‘þu eart se forliden a man ðe ic lufode . na for galnesse ac for wisdom’ (‘you are the shipwrecked man, who I loved, not on account of lust, but on account of wisdom’; 143 [XLIX]):³ ‘unlike Antiochus, Arcestrate loves from wisdom, not lust’.⁴ In her love, Arcestrate is aligned with Ælfric’s saints, who similarly love, not for bodily gratification, but for spiritual fulfilment. In this context, it is interesting that the Old English translator

³ See also Riedinger, ‘Englishing of Arcestrate’, p. 296.

⁴ Clare A. Lees, ‘Engendering Religious Desire: Sex, Knowledge, and Christian Identity in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 27 (1997), 17–45 (p. 38).

earlier in the tale ‘deletes a long passage in which the Latin heroine suffers a lovesickness so extreme that doctors are required’.⁵ In the light of Agnes’s suitor’s bodily love-sickness, a manifestation of his physical lust in contrast to Christ’s spiritual love for Agnes, this deletion in *Apollonius* may have had a pointed purpose: Arcestrate’s love for Apollonius is not bodily but rather spiritual so its manifestation as physical sickness was inappropriate. Arcestrate’s love for Apollonius juxtaposes Antiochus’s lust for his daughter: just as Christ’s love for Agnes is diametrically contrasted to her suitor’s through ‘verbal parallelism’,⁶ so, too, Arcestrate is in ‘diametric contrast’ to Antiochus through verbal parallelism. We are told that Antiochus ‘gefeol his agen mod on hyre lufe’ (‘in his own mind fell in love with her [his daughter]’; 131 [I]); we are similarly told that Arcestrate ‘gefeol hyre mod on his lufe’ (‘in her mind fell in love with him [Apollonius]’; 139 [XVII]). Such verbal parallelism acts as it does in Ælfric’s *Life of St Agnes*: it fundamentally disassociates the proper, martial and spiritual love which Arcestrate feels for Apollonius, from the incestuous and wicked love which Antiochus feels for his daughter.

Stephen Morrison comments that:

Old English poetry has been described as largely ‘asexual’; love, as a poetic theme, is said to have been alien to the Germanic mind. The vast majority of surviving prose is overtly homiletic and didactic and even in the rare examples of secular prose, the product of translation, there is a marked tendency to suppress the more forceful references to and descriptions of sexual activity.⁷

According to Morrison, ‘homiletic and didactic’ prose has no interest in sexual activity; secular prose suppresses it, and poetry is asexual and passionless. This thesis has demonstrated that such contentions are unfounded. *Apollonius*, as secular prose engages at length with incest (surely a description of sexual activity), and is clearly concerned to establish a marital morality. Indeed, the law codes are forms of secular prose, and these

⁵ Riedinger, ‘Englishing of Arcestrate’, p. 298.

⁶ Margaret Enid Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, *Anglistica*, 22 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1984), p. 113.

⁷ Stephen Morrison, ‘The Figure of “Christus Sponsus” in Old English Prose’, in *Liebe – Ehe – Ehebruch in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. by. Xenja von Ertzdorff and Marianne Wynn, *Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie*, 58 (Geissen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1984), pp. 5-12 (p. 5).

address sexual activity with moderate descriptiveness. The *'double entendre'* riddles have long been recognised as examples of sexually-charged poetry; it has been further demonstrated here, however, that some of them incorporated love as a theme, a theme which is additionally evident in other *Exeter Book* poems. Perhaps most surprisingly, the undoubtedly 'homiletic and didactic' religious prose represented by the 'Handbook' and by Ælfric's hagiography is possibly the fullest example of a late Anglo-Saxon treatment of sexual activity and marriage. Indeed, these are issues with which the penitential material, as well as Ælfric's hagiography and homilies, engage at length and repeatedly. Despite the diversity of approaches to the marital institution, then, the unifying element in all of the texts studied is their persistent and extensive interest in marriage, its manifestations, and its morality.

Appendix I

Description of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201 (Part I)

Reference: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201, Part I, pp. 1-178 ('C')

Author/Text: Various in Old English and Latin

Origin, Date and Provenance: C is a composite manuscript, consisting of two parts: Part I (comprising two interleaved sections, Section A: pp. 1-7, 161-67, and Section B: pp. 8-160, 167-76) and Part II (pp. 179-272, *Capitula of Theodulf* and homily, in Latin and Old English). Part I is predominantly written in English (dialect: Southern/South-Eastern); s. xi^{in-med}. Part II was probably written at Exeter, under the guidance of Bishop Leofric, s. xi^{med}. Part II was once joined with Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MSS 191 and 196. Scribe 1 copied Part I, Section A (*Regularis Concordia*, pp. 1-7 and verse pp. 161-67). Pages 1 and 161 both begin a new quire. The principal scribe of Part I, Section B (verse, homilies and laws, and confessional texts) added text to p. 167 (end Section A), 'apparently taking advantage of the available leaves of ready-made and already ruled quires'.¹

¹ Mildred Budny, David Wilson and R. I. Page, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue*, 2 vols (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), p. 477.

According to Budny, the Wulfstanian collection derives from the exemplar London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A. i, ff. 70-177, meaning that C was either copied in the North, or drew on Northern exemplars.² Wanley suggests Worcester, or a dependent house.³ Bethurum thinks the manuscript is connected to Worcester or York,⁴ and that 'Wulfstan himself was responsible for this collection of laws' contained in the manuscript.⁵ Fowler and others disagree, stating that the manuscript was definitely *not* of Worcester origin.⁶ Budny believes the manuscript was produced in stages, possibly in more than one centre.⁷ It is possible that Budny is correct in assuming the manuscript was produced in different centres; however, the scribes compiling the manuscript 'had access to a wide range of texts and to a fairly high standard of book production',⁸ which supports a suggestion of Winchester.⁹ Budny says Section B is 'datable, at least in part, after 1016, and probably after 1018'.¹⁰ In Section B, an Æthelræd law is dated to 1014, and this part of the manuscript at least must have been written post-1016, after Cnut's ascendancy; there is a probable reference to a 1018 peace treaty. The manuscript was enlarged, possibly at

² Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 478.

³ Humphrey Wanley cited in Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Vol. 1: Nos 1-250* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 485. Also in support of a Worcester origin are Cuthbert H. Turner, ed. by J. M. Wilson, *Early Worcester Manuscripts: Fragments of Four Books and a Charter of the Eighth Century Belonging to Worcester Cathedral* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1916), p. lvii; *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by E. van K. Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp. lxix-lxxx; *Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, 3rd rev. edn (London: Methuen, 1963; repr. 1967), p. 2; *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), p. 2; *The Old English Poem 'Judgment Day II': A Critical Edition with editions of 'De die iudicii' and the Hatton 113 Homily 'Be domes dæge'*, ed. by Graham D. Caie, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 2 (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 7-10. See also 'Orthography' below, p. 407.

⁴ Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 2. Also in support of a York origin is Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos*, p. 2, pp. 22-31; Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Vol. 1: Legislation and Its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999; repr. 2000), p. 208.

⁵ Bethurum, *Homilies*, p. 2.

⁶ See 'Handbook', p. 2; see also *Handlist*, p. 34. Fowler's manuscript siglum for MS 201 is 'D' (cf. 'C' here); in using 'C' I follow Bethurum, *Homilies*.

⁷ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 477.

⁸ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 478.

⁹ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 478.

¹⁰ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 475.

the New Minster, s. xi^{med}, with the additions of the last leaves, pp. 170-76.¹¹ The hand of the scribe of this added section appears in other manuscripts of s. xi^{med}.

Part I (pp. 1-178) was probably owned by the alchemist Edward Cradock (Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, 1565-94). It was then owned, annotated, and paginated by Matthew Parker, who had acquired it by 1571, perhaps from Cradock. Part I was partly misbound (this had occurred by Parker's time) so that pp. 171-74 should follow p. 176. C was then annotated by John Joscelyn, Parker's Latin secretary, and it was altered by, or for, Parker. These alterations consisted of: firstly, the joining of Parts I and II (pp. 179-262), including the necessary separation of Part II from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 191 to which it was then joined; secondly, the pagination of both parts (the Parkerian pagination in Part II is misnumbered); thirdly, the erasure of most of the first extant page of Part I and the insertion (over the erasure) of a ruled contents list (entitled *Miscellanea quedam saxonice*; incomplete and incorrect) in red crayon (possibly by Parker himself); fourthly, the rebinding of the manuscript with sixteenth century pastedowns and endleaves. C had reached Corpus Christi College, Cambridge by 1600. Thence it was annotated variously by Abraham Whelock (1593-1653), William Stanley (1647-1731), and possibly David Wilkins (1685-1745).

Script: Anglo-Saxon minuscule for Old English, English Caroline minuscule for Latin, with the use of rustic capitals for titles and decoration. Written by several scribes. The general upright *ductus*, the wedged ascenders, and use of affectations, such as serifs on the minims and hairline cross-strokes on *e*, gives the impression of a square, regular and carefully formed script throughout the manuscript. Most hands are fine, clear examples of Anglo-Saxon minuscule. Some letter forms vary between Latin (English Caroline minuscule) and Old English (Anglo-Saxon minuscule), most notably the use of short *r* in Latin texts and long *p* in Old English texts. Closed bowl *g* and open *z* are used

¹¹ The manuscript is paginated rather than foliated, and thus pages numbers will be referred to here.

interchangeably, as are *d* and *ð*, *f* and *ƿ*, low *ɾ* and tall *ʃ* (with some use of Roman *s* in Latin texts). Anglo-Saxon minuscule *τ* and *ȝ* are used consistently. The runic letter forms for ash (*Æ/æ*), eth (*Ð/ð*), thorn (*þ/ƿ*) and wynn (*ƿ/ƿ*) are used consistently.

Orthography: Scribe 1, the scribe of Section A (Part I) is particularly idiosyncratic. Scribe 1 has ‘a delicate, unusual hand of s. xi in’.¹² He employs the archaic style of exaggerated extended ascenders and descenders on the first and last lines (respectively) of some pages. Scribe 1 often uses a majuscule *N* or flourishes the strokes of *a*, *e*, *m*, *n*, *s* and *t* at line-ends to fill the line to the margin. The *eg* ligature is low and diagonally slanting and the bow of *p* is open. This scribe has a more pointed hand, when compared to the rounded appearance of the hands of Section B. Scribe 1 uses red and green ink for initials, and marks the beginning of sentences by writing the first letter in red ink, or filling it with red pigment. Section B (Part I) is written by three scribes of s. xi^{med}. Scribe 2 (the main scribe of Section) writes pp. 8-151 and pp. 167-69; Scribe 3 writes pp. 151-60; Scribe 4 writes pp. 170-76. Regarding Scribe 2, Ker notes the use of ‘insular *a* in Latin as well as in OE: *æ* regularly used for WS *e* before a covered nasal: the first letter of a sentence filled with red’.¹³ The hand of Scribe 4 is close to Style I of Anglo-Caroline minuscule, a script which had connections with Æthelwold (Bishop of Winchester, d. AD 984) and which was used in the *scriptorium* at Worcester s.x.².¹⁴ There is some musical notation in diastematic neumes of varied style in the Old English *Regularis Concordia*.

Punctuation: Word division is incomplete. Prefixes are often separated from the words which they prefix. Unaccented particles, prepositions, pronouns, negative particles, definite articles, intensive adverbs, and the conjunction *ond* are often joined to the

¹² Neil R. Ker, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990; first publ. 1957), p. 90.

¹³ Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 90.

¹⁴ See David N. Dumville, *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism, A.D. 950-1030*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), pp. 2-6, p. 55, and pp. 144-45; David N. Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England: Four Studies*, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon History* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 147-49.

following word. Caie notes that ‘as a large number of words appear to be incorrectly divided, one might suspect that the scribe was not always aware of what he was copying, or that the source manuscript was difficult to read’.¹⁵ The often condensed nature of the *mise-en-page* of this manuscript results in sometimes questionable word division, since spaces between words are often small or indistinct.

Punctuation is generally used sparingly. A medial point indicates a rhetorical metrical pause (the metrical point), of especial importance for recitation since the manuscript is written in long lines. Medial points are also used before and after numerals, proper names, words consisting of only one vowel, and single Roman letters. Strong marks of punctuation are given by the use of *punctus elevatus* and occasionally a mark resembling a semi-colon (*punctus versus*) and hyphen (;–). A system of bolded initials of very slightly larger size than the main text, and either filled with, or written in red/green ink, is used systematically throughout the manuscript, within the main text, to indicate major pauses or clause finishes. Such initials are sometimes preceded (as in *Judgment Day II*) by a medial dot over a small 2, or (as in the homilies) by three dots next to a small 2 (:·²). Small marginal text initials of 1-2 lines in red or green ink mark stronger divisions. Red and green ink initials of varying sizes are used to indicate new parts of texts and new texts. Size varies from 3 to 8 or 10 lines; some have additional basic foliate ink decoration. Red ink rustic capitals are used throughout the manuscript, at text openings or closings only.

Occasionally hyphens are employed at line ends to indicate run-on words. Some guide letters in the inner and outer margins are noticeable (for example, pp. 168-69); there is the occasional use of run-over marks in the lower margin. There is essentially no marginalia or glossing in this manuscript. Marginalia, such as crosses, dotted ornament, or scribble (of s. xi), appears on: pp. 7, 30, 38, 61-62, 87, 97-101, 115, 119, 120, 123, 127, 161-62, 165-66.

¹⁵ Caie, *Old English ‘Judgment Day II’*, pp. 6-7.

Abbreviations: There are very few abbreviations in the codex. In texts written in Old English, only those standard and common abbreviations for *ond* (ſ), *þæt* (þ), *þonne* (þon), *cwæð* (cþ), *preost* (pr) and *m*, *n*, *um* and *en* are used consistently. The conjunction and prefix *ond* is almost always represented by the Tironian nota ſ. In Latin texts, abbreviations are more common, with the ubiquitous use of: *nomina sacra*; the ligature & for Latin *et*; abbreviations for *m*, *n*, *um*, and *per* (p), *pro* (p), *pre-* (p'), *us* (?) and *con* (c), etc.

Contents and Physical Description

Part I (pp. 1-178)

s. xi^{in-med}

1. ff. 'i-ii' (unnumbered) Parkerian endleaves; f. 'i' is a re-used s. xvi document, formerly a pastedown; f. 'ii' is a new sheet
2. pp. 1-7 (Part I, Section A, subsection i) Incomplete Old English (OE) translation of *Regularis Concordia*:¹⁶ p. 1 has been erased (by Parker?) except for the final three lines;¹⁷ some remaining evidence of coloured initials in erased section; Parker (?) has written a ruled table of contents (incorrect and incomplete) entitled *Miscellanea quedam saxonice* over the erasure in red crayon. Begins imperfectly 'ON þone palm sunnandæg'; ends imperfectly, although with a strong mark of punctuation (;). The bottom half of p. 7 is blank
3. pp. 8-9 (Part I, Section B, subsection ii) Homily, untitled, beg. 'Adam se æresta man'¹⁸

¹⁶ Printed in J. Zupitza 'Ein weiteres Bruchstück der Regularis Concordia in altenglische Sprache', *Archiv für das Studium der neuen Sprachen und Literatur*, 84 (1890), 1-24.

¹⁷ Ker states that 'the erasure is probably due to Parker's wish to contrive a tidy beginning' (*Catalogue*, p. 83). Wormald argues that 'it looks as if the erased text began in mid-sentence. At least one preceding quire, and probably several, have therefore gone missing' (Wormald, *Making of Law*, p. 206).

¹⁸ Collated in Napier, pp. 1-5, no. I.

4. pp. 9-10 Entitled DE AETATIBUS MUNDI: beg. 'On þyssere worlde fruman'¹⁹
5. pp. 10-19 Set of three homilies, entitled SERMONIS LUPI EPISCOPI: 5.i (pp. 10-15), untitled, beg. 'Leofan men us is deope beboden';²⁰ 5.ii (pp. 15-16), entitled DE FIDE CATHOLICA, beg. 'Leofan men doð swa eow micel þearf is'; 5.iii (pp. 16-19), entitled DE SERMO, beg. 'Leofon men understandað swiðe georne'²¹
6. pp. 19-20 Pastoral letter by Wulfstan I, beg. 'Wulfstan arche bisceop greteð freondlice þegnas onðeode'²²
7. pp. 20-24 Set of four homilies, each entitled TO FOLCE: 7.i (p. 20), beg. 'Leofan men for ure ealre þearfe'; 7.ii (pp. 20-21), beg. 'La leofan men hwa mæg æfre'; 7.iii (pp. 21-22), beg. 'Leofan men uton don eac swa us þearf is';²³ 7.iv (pp. 22-24), beg. 'Leofan men habbað æfre anrædne geleafan'²⁴
8. pp. 24-28 Set of three homilies, each entitled TO EALLUM FOLCE: 8.i (pp. 24-25), beg. 'Leofan men ælcne þara ic bidde';²⁵ 8.ii (p. 25), beg. 'Eala leofan men understandað þæt soð is';²⁶ 8.iii (pp. 25-28), beg. 'Leofan men uton understandan ealswa us þearf is'²⁷
9. pp. 28-29 Homily, entitled BEMISLICUM GELIMPUM, beg. 'gyf hit ge wurðe þæt on þeodscipe'²⁸
10. pp. 29-30 Homily, entitled HER IS GIT OPER WEL GOD EACA, beg. 'Laleof a is swa betera swa cristenra mannam'²⁹

¹⁹ Collated in Napier, pp. 311-12, no. LXII.

²⁰ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as VI: 'Incipiunt Sermones Lupi Episcopi', pp. 142-56.

²¹ Articles 5.ii and 5.iii are printed together in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as VII: 'De Fide Catholici', pp. 157-65.

²² Printed, together with articles 7.i, 7.ii, 7.iii, in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XIII: 'Sermo Ad Populum', pp. 224-32.

²³ Articles 7.i, 7.ii and 7.iii are printed, together with article 6, in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XIII: 'Sermo Ad Populum', pp. 224-32.

²⁴ See Bethurum, *Homilies*, VIIa: 'To Eallum Folke', pp. 166-68; collated in Napier, pp. 122-24, no. XXV and pp. 125-27, no. XXVI (paragraphs 2, 3).

²⁵ Article 8.i is collated in Napier pp. 116-18, no. XXIII.

²⁶ Article 8.ii is printed in Napier pp. 128-30, no. XXVII.

²⁷ Article 8.iii is printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XIX: 'Be Godcundre Warnunge', pp. 251-54, and as XXI: 'Her is Gyt Rihtlic Warnung 7 Soðlic Myngung Deode to Dearfe', pp. 276-77. The part of 8.iii which appears as Bethurum's XXI, is reproduced in article 34 below.

²⁸ Collated in Napier, pp. 169-72, no. XXXV.

11. p. 30 Law code VIIa Æthelræd, entitled *DIS MANGERÆDDE ÐA SE MICELE HERE COM TO LANDE*, beg. ‘Ealle we be þurfan þæt we geornlice earnian’³⁰
12. pp. 31–40 Ælfric's *Pastoral Letter I*, revised version (by Wulfstan), entitled *TO GEHADEDEDUM MANNUM*,³¹ beg. ‘Vs biscopum gedafenað þæt we þa god cundan lare’³²
13. pp. 40–42 *Institutes of Polity XXIII*, entitled *Be gehadedum mannum*, beg. ‘Ge hadodum mannum gebirað ælcclænnes’³³
14. p. 42 *Institutes of Polity XXII*, entitled *To gehadedum 7 læwedum*, beg. ‘Gehadedum mannum gebirað eac þæt hi læwedemen wisian’³⁴
15. pp. 42–43 *Institutes of Polity XXV* (partial), entitled *Be eallum cristenum mannum*, beg. ‘Eallum cristenum mannum is micel þearf þæt hi rihtne cristendom georne healdan’³⁵
16. pp. 43–46 *Northumbrian Priests' Law*, entitled *Norð hym bra preosta lagu*, beg. ‘Gyf hwa ænigum preoste’³⁶
17. pp. 46–47 Law code II Edgar, entitled *her is eadgares cynincges gerædnes*, beg. ‘Þys is seo gerædnes þe eadgar cyngc’³⁷
18. pp. 47–48 Law code III Edgar, entitled *Eadgares cynincges gerædnes*, beg. ‘Þis is ðonne seoworld cunde gerædnes þe ic wille þæt man healde’³⁸

²⁹ Printed in Napier, p. 180, no. XXXVIII.

³⁰ Printed in *Gesetze*, p. 262. References to *Gesetze* are to Liebermann's editions of C; Liebermann denotes C by the manuscript siglum 'D'.

³¹ Further entitled *EPISTOLA ÆLFRICI* in a later hand.

³² Printed in *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in Aletenglischer und Lateinischer Fassung*, ed. by Bernard Fehr (Hamburg, 1914; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966, with a supplement by Peter Clemoes), pp. 68–140 (Brief II, by Ælfric for Archbishop Wulfstan; corrections, p. 269).

³³ Occurs below, pp. 89–90, article 35.viii; printed in *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical': Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*, ed. by Karl Jost, Swiss Studies in English, 47 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1959), p. 109.

³⁴ Occurs below, pp. 90–91, article 35.xiii; printed in Jost, *Polity*, p. 131.

³⁵ Printed in Jost, *Polity*, p. 139.

³⁶ Printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 380–85.

³⁷ Printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 194–200.

³⁸ Printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 200–06.

19. pp. 48-52 Law code V Æthelræd, entitled *In nomine domini*, beg. 'Ðis is seo gerædnes þe engla cyningc', including *Polity XXIV* (p. 51, ll. 6-37), beg. 'Riht is þæt ealle cristene men heora cristendom huru rihtlice healdan'³⁹

20. p. 52 Set of four short homiletic pieces or extracts: 20.i (p. 52), entitled DE PRECEPTIS DOMINI, beg. 'Micel is us nydþearf þæt we godes beboda geornlice healdan';⁴⁰ 20.ii (p. 52), entitled DE UITIS PRINCI PALIBUS, beg. 'Micel is eacneod þearf manna gehwilcum';⁴¹ 20.iii (p. 52), entitled DE UIRTUTIBUS, beg. 'Ðonne syndon eahta healice mægnu'⁴²

21. p. 53 Law code I Æthelstan, entitled, *æðestanes cinyncges gerædnes*, beg. 'Æþelstan cyninge midge þeahhte wulfhelm arcebiscop'⁴³

22. pp. 53-61 Homily in Latin (Lat.) (pp. 53-56), entitled DE CHRISTIANITATE, beg. 'A Christo enim Christi ani',⁴⁴ and in OE (pp. 56-61), entitled HER ONGINNEÐ BE CRISTENDOME, beg. 'Eallum cristenum mannum is micel þearf þæt hiheora cristen domes gescad witan'⁴⁵

23. pp. 61-64 Biblical texts and homily, entitled INCIPIT DE UISIONE ISAIE PROPHETE QUAUIDIT super iudam & ierusalem: 23.i (pp. 61-62), Lat. texts from the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, beg. 'In diebus illis dixit esaias propheta'; 23.ii (pp. 62-64), OE homily, beg. 'Fela is on bocum þæs þe mæg tobisnan'; 23.iii (p. 64, incomplete), OE text, entitled UERBA HIEREMIE PROPHETE, beg. 'Hieremias sewitega myngode to þearfe'. Ends imperfect (1 leaf missing)⁴⁶

24. pp. 65-66 *De Septiformi Spiritu*, beg. imperfectly 'þe of godes agenre gife cymð'⁴⁷

³⁹ *Polity XXIV* occurs below, pp. 92-93, article 35.xvi; printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 236-47; Jost, *Polity*, p. 155.

⁴⁰ Printed in Napier, pp. 66.9-67.9, no. X, paragraph 2.

⁴¹ See Napier, p. 188, note to no. XL; pp. 68.13-68.18, no. X, part paragraph 3.

⁴² See Napier, p. 188, note to no. XL; pp. 68.18-69.4, no. X, part paragraph 3.

⁴³ Printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 146-49.

⁴⁴ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as Xb: 'De Cristianitate', pp. 194-99.

⁴⁵ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as Xc: 'Her Ongynð be Cristendome', pp. 200-10.

⁴⁶ Articles 23.i, 23.ii, 23.iii are printed together in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XI: 'Incipit De Visione Isaie Prophete Quam Vidit Super Iudam et Hierusalem', at pp. 211-14, pp. 214-19, and pp. 219-20 respectively.

⁴⁷ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as IX: 'De Septiformi Spiritu', pp. 185-91 (at pp. 187-91).

25. pp. 66-68 Homily, entitled DE ANTI CHRISTO, beg. Lat. 'omnis qui secundum christiane professionis';⁴⁸ beg. OE (p. 67) 'Leofan men understandað swiðe georne þæt ge rihtlice'⁴⁹
26. pp. 68-71 Homily, untitled, beg. Lat. 'Interrogatus iesus a discipulis de consummatione seculi'; beg. OE (p. 68) 'Vres drihtenes apostolas axodan wilum'⁵⁰
27. pp. 71-72 Homily, untitled, beg. Lat. 'Egressus iesus de templo'; beg. OE (p. 71) 'Hit gewearð wilum on ðare birig'⁵¹
28. pp. 72-74 Homily, untitled, beg. 'Erunt signa in sole & luna & stellis & reliqua . Þis godspel segð ȝ swutelað þæt fela foretacna'⁵²
29. pp. 74-78 Homily *De temporibus antichristi*, untitled, beg. 'Leofan men us is swiðe micel þearf þæt we ware beon þæs egeslican timan þe toward is'⁵³
30. pp. 78-80 Homily *In die iudicii*, untitled, beg. 'Leofan men ælmihti god us singallice manað'⁵⁴
31. pp. 80-81 Homily, entitled UERBA EZECHIEL PROPHETE DE PIGRIS AUT TIMIDIS UEL NEGLEGEN<TI>BUS PASTORIBUS, beg. 'Ezechiel se witega lærð godes bydelas'⁵⁵
32. p. 81 Homiletic extract, untitled, beg. 'Ne dear ic nu for godes ege'⁵⁶
33. pp. 82-86 Homily, entitled SERMO LUPI AD ANGLOS QUANDO DANI MAXIME PERSECUTI SUNT EOS QUOD FUIT ANNO MILLESIMO VIII AB

⁴⁸ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as Ia: 'De Antichristo', pp. 113-15.

⁴⁹ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as Ib: 'De Antichristo', pp. 116-18.

⁵⁰ Homily on Mark 13:14-19; printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as V: 'Secundum Marcum', pp. 134-41.

⁵¹ Homily on Matthew 24:1-14, 36, 42; printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as II: 'Lectio Sancti Evangelii Secundum Matheum', pp. 119-22.

⁵² Homily on Luke 21:25; printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as III: 'Secundum Lucam', pp. 123-27.

⁵³ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as IV: 'De Temporibus Antichristi', pp. 128-33.

⁵⁴ Printed in Eric G. Stanley, "'The Judgement of the Damned'" (from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201 and other Manuscripts), and the Definition of Old English Verse', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 363-91; collated in Napier pp. 182-90, no. XL.

⁵⁵ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XVIIb: 'Verba Ezechiel Prophete De Pigris Aut Timidis Vel Neglegentibus Pastoribus', pp. 240-41.

⁵⁶ Also occurs in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 115 (Ker no. 332; article 19); printed in Napier, pp. 191.20-191.23, no. XLI, 191/20-23, final paragraph.

INCARNATIONE DOMINI NOSTRI IESU CRISTI, beg. 'Leofan men gecnawað þæt soð is'⁵⁷

34. pp. 86-87 Homily, entitled SERMO LUPI, beg. 'Eala leofan men uton understandan ealswa us þearf is'⁵⁸

35. pp. 87-97 Set of civil and ecclesiastical institutes and law codes: **35.i** (p. 87), *Institutes of Polity II*, entitled BE CININCGE, beg. 'Cristenum cyninge gebyrað'; **35.ii** (p. 87), *Polity III*, entitled BE CINEDOME, beg. 'Eahta sweras syndon'; **35.iii** (pp. 87-88), *Polity IV*, untitled, beg. 'Ælc cynestol stent'; **35.iv** (p. 88), *Polity X*, untitled, beg. Lat. 'De episcopis paulus dicit', beg. OE 'Biscopum gebiriað ealdlice wisan'; **35.v** (pp. 88-89), *Polity VI*, entitled ITEM, beg. 'Byscopas sculon bocum ȝ gebedum'; **35.vi** (p. 89), *Polity XI*, entitled BE EORLUM, beg. 'Eorlas ȝ heretogan'; **35.vii** (p. 89), entitled BE SACERDUM, beg. 'Riht is þæt sacerdas on heora scriftscirum';⁵⁹ **35.viii** (pp. 89-90), *Polity XXIII* (ll. 1-23), entitled BE GEHADEDUM MANNUM, beg. 'Eallum cristenum mannum is micel þearf þæt hi riht lufian';⁶⁰ **35.ix** (p. 90), *Polity XIII*, entitled BE ABBODUM, beg. 'Riht is þæt abbodas'; **35.x** (p. 90), *Polity XIV*, entitled BE MUNECUM, beg. 'Riht is þæt munecas'; **35.xi** (p. 90), *Polity XV* (ll. 1-2), entitled BE MINECENAN, beg. 'Riht is þæt mynicena'; **35.xii** (p. 90), *Polity XVI* and *XXIII* (ll. 1-4), entitled BE PREOSTUM ȝ BE NUNNAN, beg. 'Riht is þæt preostas ȝ efen wel nunnan'; **35.xiii** (pp. 90-91), *Polity XXII* (ll. 1-7, 15-18), entitled BE LÆWEDUM MANNUM, beg. 'Riht is þæt gehadode men þam læwedum wissian';⁶¹ **35.xiv** (p. 91), *Polity XVII*, entitled BE WUDEWAN, beg. 'Riht is þæt wudewan'; **35.xv** (pp. 91-92), *Polity XXV*, entitled BE CIRCAN, beg. 'Riht is þæt cristene men cristendom georne healdan'; **35.xvi** (pp. 92-93), *Polity XXIV*, entitled BE EALLUM CRISTENUM MANNUM, beg. 'Riht is þæt ealle cristene men heora

⁵⁷ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XX: 'Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos Quando Dani Maxime Persecuti Sunt Eos, Quod Fuit Anno Millesimo .VIII. Ab Incarnatione Domini Nostri Iesu Cristi', pp. 260-66.

⁵⁸ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as XXI: 'Her Is Gyt Rihtlic Warnung ȝ Soðlic Myngung Deode to Dearfe', pp. 276-77. Article 34 is reproduced in article 8.iii above.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Polity XIX*, ll. 1-3.

⁶⁰ Occurs above, p. 40, article 13

⁶¹ Occurs above, p. 42, article 14

cristendom rihtlice healdan’;⁶² **35.xvii** (pp. 93-96), Law code VIII Æthelræd, entitled Anno MXIII ab incarnatione domini nostri iesu cristi, beg. ‘Þis is an ðara gerædnessa þe engla cynyngc’;⁶³ **35.xviii** (pp. 96-97), Law code I Eadmund, entitled *Her gerbirat to æðestanes gerænes hu he be teoðunge gerædde*⁶⁴. *Her onginneð eadmundes gerædnes*, beg. ‘Eadmund cyngc gesamnode’⁶⁵

36. pp. 97-101 Wulfstan's *Canons of Edgar*, entitled HER GEBIRAÐ NU TO EADGARES GERÆDNES BE GEHADODRA MANNA LIFFADUNGE, beg. ‘We lærað þæt godes þeowas beon geornlice gode þeowigende’⁶⁶

37. pp. 101-03 Set of short legal statements concerning the rights of the classes of society with especial concern for the clergy: **37.i** (pp. 101-02), entitled *Be wergildum 7 be geðinðum*, beg. ‘Hwylum wæs þæt leod 7 lagu’;⁶⁷ **37.ii** (p. 102), entitled *Norðleoda laga*, beg. ‘Norðleoda cynges gild’;⁶⁸ **37.iii** (p. 102), entitled *Be mircna laga*, beg. ‘Ceorles wergild’;⁶⁹ **37.iv** (p. 102), entitled *Be mirciscan aðe*, beg. ‘Twelfhendes mannes að’;⁷⁰ **37.v** (pp. 102-03), entitled *Be gehadodra manna aðe 7 be hadbote*, beg. ‘Mæssepreostes að 7 worldþegnas’⁷¹

38. pp. 103-08 Christian rites and homily, entitled INCIPIT DE BAPTISMA, beg. Lat. ‘Primo necesse est ut paganus’;⁷² beg. OE (p. 105) ‘Leofan men eallum cristenum mannum is micel þearf þæt hi heora fulluhtes gescad witan’⁷³

39. pp. 108-12 Entitled DE ECCLESIASTICIS GRADIBUS, beg. ‘Cirichadas sindon to healdenne mid swiðe micclum wisdom’⁷⁴

⁶² Article 35.xvi occurs above, p. 51, article 19. Articles 35.i-35.xvi printed in Jost, *Polity*, pp. 40-154.

⁶³ Printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 263-68.

⁶⁴ This section of the title rightly belongs to p. 53, article 21 (Law code I Æthelstan) above.

⁶⁵ Printed in *Gesetze*, pp. 184-87.

⁶⁶ Printed in *Wulfstan's Canons of Edgar*, ed. by Roger Fowler, EETS 266 (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 2-18; see also Jost, *Polity*, pp. 179-209.

⁶⁷ Printed in *Gesetze* as *Geþyncðo*, pp. 456-58.

⁶⁸ Printed in *Gesetze* as *Norðleod laga*, pp. 458-60.

⁶⁹ Printed in *Gesetze* as *Mircna laga*, pp. 462-64.

⁷⁰ Printed in *Gesetze* as *Að I*, p. 464.

⁷¹ Printed in *Gesetze* as *Hadbot*, pp. 464-68.

⁷² Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as VIIa: ‘Incipit De Baptisma’, pp. 169-71.

⁷³ Printed in Bethurum, *Homilies*, as VIIc: ‘Sermo De Baptismate’, pp. 175-84.

40. pp. 112-14 Prose only version of the OE *Benedictine Office*, entitled DE ECCLESIASTICIS OFFICIIS, beg. 'Godcund þeowdom is geset'⁷⁵

41. pp. 114-26 Confessional and penitential texts (Lat. and OE):⁷⁶ 41.i (pp. 114-15), untitled in Lat., beg. 'Quando aliquis voluerit confessionem facere';⁷⁷ 41.ii (pp. 115-17), untitled in OE, beg. 'Ðæt sceal geþencan se þe bið manna sawla læce';⁷⁸ 41.iii (pp. 117-21), untitled in OE, beg. 'Þas þeawas man healt begeondan sæ';⁷⁹ 41.iv (pp. 121-24), series of texts in OE, entitled **Be dædbetan**, beg. 'On wisum scrifte bið swiðe forðgelang';⁸⁰ 41.v (pp. 124-25), text in OE, entitled **Be mihtigum mannum**, beg. 'Þus mæg mihtig man 7 freondspedig';⁸¹ 41.vi (pp. 125-26), untitled in Lat., beg. 'Theodorus de egris qui ieiunare non possunt'⁸²

42. pp. 126-30 Law code, incorporating parts of I Cnut, II Cnut, VI Æthelræd, untitled, beg. 'In nomine domini. Ðis is seo gerædnes þe witan geræddon'⁸³

43. pp. 130-31 Code, incorporating parts of *Polity XIX* and I Cnut, entitled BE SACERDAN, beg. 'Micel is 7 mære þæt sacerd ah to donne'⁸⁴

⁷⁴ Also found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121 (Ker no. 338) and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 190 (Ker no. 45); 'parts of lines 18, 19 on p. 110 were written in s. xvi on erasure': Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 88. Printed in Jost, *Polity*, pp. 223-47.

⁷⁵ Printed in *The Benedictine Office: An Old English Text*, ed. by James M. Ure (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957).

⁷⁶ Articles 41.i-41.v printed in Fowler, 'Handbook', pp. 1-34.

⁷⁷ Corresponds to Fowler, 'Handbook', Part I; section erased p. 115, ll. 1-13.

⁷⁸ Corresponds to Fowler, 'Handbook', Part II and III, beginning with Part III and with Part II inserted at p. 115, l. 37 (to p. 117, l. 2); ending with Part III.

⁷⁹ Corresponds to Fowler, 'Handbook', Part IV; parts are 'extracts from the OE version of Halitgar's Penitential (ed. Raith 1933, I) and sect. 32-35 agree exactly with the additions to the fourth book of the Penitential in no. 338 [MS Junius 121]' (Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 88).

⁸⁰ Corresponds to Fowler, 'Handbook', Part V.

⁸¹ Corresponds to Fowler, *Handbook*, Part VI.

⁸² Printed in *Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche*, ed. by F. W. H. Wasserschleben (Halle, 1851; repr. Graz, 1958), p. 622.

⁸³ Printed in *Gesetze* as *I Cn* (Inscr; 1; 2; 2,1; 2,2), pp. 278-80; *II Cn* (1; 1,1; 2; 2a; 2,1; 3; 4; 4a; 4,1; 4,2; 6; 7; 7,1), pp. 308-12; *I Cn* (6; 6a; 6,1; 6,2; 6,2a; 6,3; 7; 7,1; 7,2; 7,3), pp. 288-91; *VI Atr* (16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 21,1; 22; 22,1; 22,2; 22, 3; 22,4; 23; 24; 25; 25,1; 25,2; 26; 26,1; 27; 27,1; 28; 28,1; 30; 31; 32; 32,1; 32,2; 32,3; 40; 40,1), pp. 252-56; *II Cn* (15,1; 15,1a; 15,2; 15,3), p. 318; *VI Atr* (42; 43; 44; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49), pp. 256-58. Also printed in 'Cnut's Law Code of 1018', ed. by A. G. Kennedy, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 57-87 (pp. 72-81). See also *EHD I*, p. 452.

⁸⁴ Printed in Jost, *Polity*, pp. 104-06.

44. pp. 131-45 *Apollonius of Tyre* (incomplete; missing at least one quire between p. 142 and p. 143), entitled *her onginneð seo gerecednes be antioche þam unge sæligan cingce 7 be apolonige þam {.....}*, beg. 'An antiochia þare ceastre wæs sum cyningc antiochus gehaten'⁸⁵

45. pp. 145-46 Pages 145 (ll. 26-41) and 146 are blank

46. pp. 147-51 (*Part I, Section B, subsection iii*) Set of untitled OE texts on English saints and their burial-places: 46.i (pp. 147-49), beg. 'Her cyð ymbe þa halgan þe on angelcynne restað on ures drihtenes naman hælendes cristes . [S]anctus agustinus gefullode æþelbriht';⁸⁶ 46.ii (pp. 149-51), beg. 'Her onginneð secgan be þam godes sanctum þe on englalande ærost reston . sanctus albanus martir'⁸⁷

47. pp. 151-60 (*Part I, Section B, subsection iv*) OE translation of Genesis 37:1-47:18 (incomplete; missing one leaf between p. 154 and p. 155 and two leaves after p. 160), untitled, beg. 'Her cydde god ælmihtig his moldheortnisse þe he abrahame behet 7 iosepe 7 abrahames ofsprincge . Ða þa iosep wæs .XVI. wintra'. Ends imperfectly⁸⁸

48. pp. 161-67 (*Part I, Section A, subsection v*) Set of verses: 48.i (pp. 161-65), *Judgement Day II*, entitled *INCIPIT UERSUS BEDE PRESBITERI. DE DIE IUDICII*, beg. 'Inter florigeras cespites heras {.....} uem tobit resonantibus undique ramis. Hwæt ic ana sæt innan bearwe';⁸⁹ 48.ii (pp. 165-66), *Exhortation to Christian Living*, untitled, beg. 'Nu lære ic þe swaman leofne sceal'; 48.iii (pp. 166-67), *A Summons to Prayer*, untitled in OE and Lat., beg. 'Ðænne ge miltsað þe Ñ mundum qui regit'⁹⁰

49. pp. 167-70 (*Part I, Section B, subsection vi*) Set of OE alliterative verse paraphrases of the Lord's Prayer and Gloria: 49.i (pp. 167-69), *Lord's Prayer II*, untitled,

⁸⁵ Printed in *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. by Peter Goolden, Oxford English Monographs, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

⁸⁶ Printed in *Die Heiligen Englands: angelsächsisch und lateinisch*, ed. by Felix Liebermann (Hannover: Hahn, 1889), 1.

⁸⁷ Printed in Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands*, 9.

⁸⁸ Printed in *Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, ed. S. J. Crawford, EETS 160 (London: Oxford University Press, 1922, repr. with additions by N. R. Ker, 1969), pp. 170ff.

⁸⁹ Printed in Caie, *Old English 'Judgement Day II'*, pp. 84-103.

⁹⁰ Articles 48.ii and 48.iii printed in Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, pp. 68-70.

beg. 'Pater noster. Ðu eart ure fæder ealles wealdend'; **49.ii** (pp. 169-70), *Gloria I*, untitled, beg. 'Gloria. Sy þe wuldor 7 lof wife geopnod'⁹¹

50. pp. 170-76 (*Part I, Section B, subsection vii*) Added s.xi^{med} forms of absolution and confession in Lat., untitled, beg. 'Quando aliquis uoluerit confessionem facere' (cf. article 41.i). A bifolium is now misbound, so that the text reads p. 170, pp. 175-76, pp. 171-74; p. 174 is blank from l. 19

51. pp. 177-78 Blank

ff. ii + 89, rectos paginated in red pencil, 'preceded by two paper flyleaves of the date of binding and two parchment flyleaves, s. xvi, the first of which is part of a notarial document'.⁹² In quires II-VI the pages (except the first and last of the quire) are marked from *a* to *o* in green ink, (?) s. xi. Vellum: 'the original leaves are usually rather thin and supple, with smooth, shiny, yellowish surfaces or cream-coloured, suède-like surfaces'.⁹³ c. 280 x 162 mm. Written space c. 250 x 122-138 mm. Ruling in hard point and pricking (in quire I the pricks are within the written space); hard point has on occasion ripped through the vellum. 41 long lines (single column); 20-21 long lines in the added pp. 171-176. Collation: I⁸ (pp. 1-16) II⁸ (pp. 17-32) III⁸ (pp. 33-48) IV⁸ (pp. 49-64) V⁸ wants 1 before p. 65 (pp. 65-78) VI⁸ (pp. 79-94) VII⁸ (pp. 95-110) VIII⁸ (pp. 111-126) IX⁸ (pp. 127-42) X² (pp. 143-46) XI⁴ (pp. 147-54) XII⁶ wants 1 before p. 155 and 5-6 after p. 160 (pp. 155-60) XIII⁸ wants 8 poss. blank after p. 178 (pp. 161-70, 175-78) + a bifolium (pp. 171-74) after 6 now misbound after 5 (p. 174). 3 and 6 in quire IX are half-sheets. Possibly one full quire is missing between quires IX and X. There is various damage, including stains from damp and mould, corroded pigments, brittle edges, and traces of gold. The manuscript has been subjected to unskilful sewing repairs in thick red yarn. Written in four hands of s. xi^{in-med} (see script and orthography above) in Anglo-Saxon minuscule for Old English and English Caroline minuscule for Latin. The decoration is minimal: sometimes the texts are 'modestly decorated with geometric and foliate ornament in Late Anglo-Saxon style'⁹⁴ and text initials (usually of 1-2 lines, but up to 10 lines) are coloured red and green or have filling of red pigment. Binding of tan leather, 1948.

⁹¹ Articles 49.i and 49.ii printed in Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, pp. 70-77.

⁹² Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 90.

⁹³ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 475.

⁹⁴ Budny *et al.*, *MS Art at CCCC*, p. 477.

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Throughout the bibliography, only brief bibliographical details are given for individual essays appearing in edited collections. The reader is directed to the full bibliographical details listed in the bibliography under the editor's surname.

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