Religious Thought and Reform in late tenth-century England: The Evidence of the Blickling and Vercelli Books

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Thomas Kearns

This thesis is a sustained historical analysis of religious thought in late tenth-century England focusing on two collections of vernacular religious literature: the Blickling Book (Princeton, Scheide Library, MS 71) and the Vercelli Books (Biblioteca Capitolare di Vercelli MS CXVII). The late tenth century was a complicated time in Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical history on account of the dominance in the primary evidence of authors espousing church reform. The dominance of these voices has led to a one-sided view of the period founded upon caricatures of the non-reformed. This thesis has two aims. The first is to discern from the Blickling and Vercelli books a sense of the ideas and worldview of these non-reformed ecclesiastics. The second is to offer an analysis of late tenth-century ecclesiastical reform which interprets the evidence in light of the Blickling and Vercelli books, rather than the more usual approach of evaluating the books in light of the evidence produced by reformers. To achieve these goals this thesis first engages with ongoing debates over the origins and audiences of the books. After addressing these, it proceeds to consider the issues most often discussed by the Blickling and Vercelli authors: ideals of the priesthood; the main penitential practices of prayer, vigils, fasting, and almsgiving; and the authors' underlying theology. The main benefit of viewing the period through the lens of Blickling and Vercelli is that it offers a more nuanced view of the relationship between reformers and the non-reformed. It emerges that the late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon Church was typified by significant continuity in ideas, attitudes, and practices. The late tenth-century Church had a strong pastoral tradition that inspired both reformers and the non-reformed; it also had monastic traditions that similarly transcended boundaries set by reformist rhetoric. Yet this reforming rhetoric does not accurately reflect the realities of the late tenth-century Church.

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Abbreviations

ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
HE	Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, transl. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1972).
CÆ	Canterbury Ælfric tradition
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
SE	South East
VSO	Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita Sancti Oswaldi*, in *The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, ed., and transl. by M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2009).
WM	West Midlands

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Introduction

One day in the year 964, as the canons of the New Minster performed the Divine Office, Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, strode into the cathedral with an entourage of monks and armed royal agents. He presented the canons with a stark choice, to take up the monastic life or leave. All the canons left, although two subsequently returned as monks to re-join the new strictly-Benedictine monastic cathedral that Æthelwold created.[1] In the eyes of future generations, this event marked the first act of a movement that would remake the English Church and produce an environment in which the old 'secular clergy' were denigrated as corrupt and uneducated. Due to such rhetoric, the late tenth-century reforms may appear to be a watershed in English ecclesiastical history.[2] While there has been a tendency to move away from such a stark dichotomy, the perception of the period as a watershed remains and this leads to a continued sense that texts produced on either side of it offer glimpses into different intellectual worlds.[3] This thesis tests this notion by re-examining the late tenth century through the writings of those usually associated with the established order of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The image that emerges from this endeavour challenges the sense of the period as a watershed. Rather, trends of both continuity and diversity characterise the period and these attest to the vitality of vernacular religious thought among the 'non-reformed'. It also highlights how indebted some writers in the reformed tradition such as Wulfstan were to older ideas. The watershed narrative depends on the testimony of reformers, while other perspectives reveal a subtler transformation in which most ideas and attitudes remained essentially unchanged while writers developed fresh ways of discussing them. Rather than a watershed, the period shows signs of a more gradual evolution.

The prime sources for this endeavour are the prose and poetic texts found in the Blickling and Vercelli Books (Princeton, Scheide Library, MS 71 and Biblioteca Capitolare di Vercelli MS CXVII respectively). These two manuscripts present an enigma to historians. Many articles have been written about their language, their literary value, and the place of their script in the history of Anglo-Saxon handwriting. Yet, for all this discussion, Blickling and Vercelli remain peculiarly detached from their historical context which, regardless of whether

[1] Wulfstan of Winchester, *Vita sancti Æthelwoldi*, c.20, in *The Life of St. Æthelwold*, ed. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991).
[2] Gatch, M., *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977), p. 8.
[3] Zacher, S., *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto, 2009), pp. 34-36; Ó Carragáin, É, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli: The Dream of the Rood and the Italian Connection', in *Vercelli tra Oriente ed Occidente, tra tarda antichità e Medioevo*, ed. V. Docetti Corazza (Alessandria, 1998), pp. 93-97.

it was an intellectual watershed, was certainly a time of major upheaval in the English Church. Not only did the late tenth century see the monastic reforms associated with King Edgar (d. 975) and Æthelwold of Winchester (d. 984), but it was also the period of the so-called 'anti-monastic reaction' under King Æthelred (d. 1016) and his subsequent penance.[4] The Blickling and Vercelli Books offer insight into the religious worldview of this hectic period.

However, discussion of the historical value of these books has been limited to a few comments in literary articles that attempt to link them to larger cultural and institutional forces.[5] There are two main reasons for this neglect. Firstly, there is continuing debate over fundamental questions like the origins and audiences of the manuscripts. Secondly, scholarship continues to use terminology that unwittingly reinforces an antagonistic relationship between the Blickling and Vercelli Books, as sources supposedly produced by the 'secular clergy', and the writings of reformers. This terminology derives more from the reformers, and especially the writings of their students, than it does from anything in either Blickling or Vercelli. Consequently, it attempts to force the books into a mould dictated by reformist thinking. Even recent revisionist historiography in fact reinforces these categories. Revisionism leads scholars to downplay elements of the books which seem 'monastic' and highlight those elements which appear to derive from the 'secular clergy'.[6] While well-intentioned, revisionist historiography reinforces the criteria of older scholarship rather than revising it.

Methodology and Sources

My aim is to address these two issues and to offer an interpretation of the Blickling and Vercelli Books that sees them foremost as historical artefacts capable of shedding light on a complex period of English ecclesiastical history. The thesis contains two parts. The first, comprising chapters one and two, addresses historiographical questions about the origins and audiences of the books. The second, comprising chapters three to six, approaches the contents of the books as reflections of their intellectual context. The first part makes use of palaeography, codicology, and literary analysis to engage with ongoing scholarly debates while offering conclusions of

[4] Cubitt, C., 'The politics of remorse: penance and royal piety in the reign of Æthelred the Unready', *Historical Research* 85 (2012), 178-183; Keynes, S., *The Diplomas of Æthelred 'the Unready' 978-1016: a Study in their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 176-187.

[5] Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform: Tailored Sources and Implied Audiences', in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden, 2002), pp. 203-227; Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homily XV and The Apocalypse of Thomas', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. by S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 170-179.

[6] Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, pp. 34-36; Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli', pp. 93-97; Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII', pp. 203-227; Wright, 'Vercelli Homily XV', pp. 170-179.

my own. The second part moves away from the limits of previous scholarship by focusing on the issues and ideas that most occupied the authors of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. In both books the principal concerns of the authors are pastoral, devotional, and theological. This second part will analyse the issues of the duties and ideals of the priesthood, the religious practice of the laity, and the theology that informed the authors. The testimony of the books will be compared to that of other Anglo-Saxon material, as well as the works of Frankish and patristic authors, to uncover the origins of their ideas.

Ælfric (d. 1010) and Wulfstan (d. 1023) wrote a significant portion of the other Anglo-Saxon material discussed here. Both writers were influenced by the ideas of late tenth-century monastic reformers, and Ælfric especially was indebted to the ideas promoted by Æthelwold at Winchester. Ælfric was a student of Æthelwold, and Wulfstan corresponded with Ælfric.[7] While Ælfric and Wulfstan did not always agree, and it seems that Wulfstan was not himself a monk, it is appropriate to class both men as heirs to the late tenth-century reformers. Besides their homilies, this thesis will also use Ælfric's pastoral letters and Wulfstan's legal texts to inform the study of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. Ælfric wrote his two Old English pastoral letters in the late tenth century at the request of Wulfstan, and of Wulfsige (d. 1002), bishop of Sherborne, with the intention that the bishops could read them aloud to their cathedral canons and instruct them about the proper performance of their duties.[8] Wulfstan's legal texts similarly concern the practices of the clergy and the laity and are part of his larger aim of creating a Christian polity.[9] While this involved drafting royal law codes, the texts which are of most interest here are those that did not have royal authority but which were more theoretical. Of particular interest are *The Institutes of Polity*, a treatise on theology and political philosophy, and *The Canons of Edgar*, one of two historical forgeries created by Wulfstan and probably intended to instruct the canons of York Minster in their pastoral duties.[10] Both texts discuss the duties of the clergy, and they do so in more practical terms than Ælfric whose letters were laced with theological reflection. Besides these two writers, the thesis will also make use of liturgical evidence, such as books like the Leofric Missal (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 579) and the Red Book of Darley (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422), both of which collect

[7] Godden, M., 'The Relations of Wulfstan and Ælfric', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 354-362.
[8] Hill, J., 'Reform and Resistance: Preaching Styles in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *De l'homélie au sermon: histoire de la prédication médiévale, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve* (Louvain, 1993), p. 23; Wilcox, J., 'Ælfric in Dorset and the Landscape of Pastoral Care', in *Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 56-57.
[9] Rabin, A., *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* (Manchester, 2014), pp. 13-16.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

liturgical rites and texts for use by the religious in the performance of their duties. Prayerbooks too offer evidence for the practice of prayer in later Anglo-Saxon England. Poetry provides insight into the worldview of its authors. Finally, administrative documents and archaeological evidence – such as burials, small churches like Raunds and evidence of diet – offer information about the relationship of the Church to the lay community.

The thesis also considers texts produced by Merovingian and Carolingian writers such as Caesarius of Arles (d. 542) and Amalarius of Metz (d. 850) whose work helped shape the theology of the later Anglo-Saxon Church. Besides these named authors, I will also make use of the various Carolingian homiliaries and texts associated with the 813 reforming councils which likewise were also highly influential in England. Discussion of the theology in the Blickling and Vercelli Books requires the use of various patristic sources. Particularly important are the works of Augustine (d. 430) and Gregory the Great (d. 604).

Terminology

Both parts of the term 'secular clergy' are problematic. The designation 'secular' is anachronistic to the late tenth century. Its use by reformers to define and criticise their opponents originated during the Gregorian reforms of the twelfth century.[11] It was not a term used by any Anglo-Saxon reformers. The term also assumes shared standards for religious life among non-reformed ecclesiastics in contrast with which all other practices are 'secular'. Not only does the term imply a hierarchy, it is also implicitly critical. This is especially problematic given that it erases any sense of self-identity from those to whom it is applied. As Sarah Foot has shown, the *regula mixta* communities of earlier Anglo-Saxon England often had unique rules for life. Despite not following a standard practice, onlookers could still identify these communities as monastic.[12] While the Church faced hardships in the ninth century from Viking attacks and other difficulties, scholars have overstated the degree to which this led to a break with what came before. While some places such as Canterbury seem to have been badly affected, other areas like the West Midlands saw relatively little disruption.[13] Here there is

[11] Barrow, J., *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c. 800- c. 1200* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 3.
[12] Foot, S., 'What was an Early Anglo-Saxon Monastery?', in *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition*, ed. J. Loades (1990), pp. 48-57.
[13] Brooks, N., 'Latin and Old English in Ninth-Century Canterbury', in *Spoken and Written Language: Relations between Latin and the Vernacular Languages in the Earlier Middle Ages*, ed. M. Garrison, A. Orbán, M. Mostert, and W. S. van Egmond (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 113-132; Tinti, F., *Sustaining Belief: The Church of Worcester from c.870 to c.1100* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 228-243.

every reason to think that older attitudes continued into the tenth century and, given the role of Worcester in King Alfred's Renaissance, also spread out from here to other more severely affected regions. This makes the blanket designation 'secular' highly problematic since it erases this diversity while also implicitly criticising it. The term thus obscures the fluid boundaries that existed prior to and alongside the more exacting definition promoted by the monks at Winchester from the 970s on.

The term 'clergy' is similarly misleading. The fluidity of ecclesiastical identities means that it is deceptive to characterise all non-reformed ecclesiastics as 'clergy' since the term in fact has quite a specific meaning. The clergy are those men who took some role in the performance of liturgy. This could range from the major clergy like bishops, priests, and deacons who served at the altar to the minor clergy who filled other roles like singing in the choir or ringing the church bell.[14] Established wisdom held, and still holds, that the order of bishop/priest contained within itself all the other grades of clergy. The separation of the orders was done more for practical reasons than theological ones.[15] Therefore, while the sources often focus on bishops and priests, the burdens of service and holiness placed on them also applied to the clergy as a whole. While almost all the surviving evidence relates to clerics who lived in religious communities, even lone household priests like those who occasionally appear in the wills of nobles are also clergy on account of their liturgical role. Clergy also did not have a set relationship to monasticism. Monks could also be clerics although they were under no obligation to receive clerical orders. In fact, in the Rule of Benedict, monks were actively discouraged from seeking ordination to the priesthood. Therefore, some Benedictine monastic communities may have relied on priests from outside the community for the performance of the Mass. In only a few unusual cases and in specific contexts, for example in Æthelwold's Winchester, were canons required to become monks and this was due to the distinctive ideas of Æthelwold and his students. The term 'clergy' suggests that the non-reformed communities of later Anglo-Saxon England cannot have been monastic, even though it is probable that some of these communities did regard themselves as monastic. Much as with the use of 'secular', this term therefore removes any sense of self-identity from its objects. Instead, it imposes on them terms intimately bound up with the assumptions and ideas of reform.

[14] Barrow, J., 'Grades of Ordination and the Clerical Careers, c. 900-c.1200', *Anglo-Norman Studies XXX* (2008), pp. 42-43.
[15] See Amalarius of Metz, *Liber officialis*, II.4-6, in *On the Liturgy: Books 1-2*, ed. and transl. E. Knibbs (Cambridge, MA, 2014); also Ælfric, 'Letter for Wulfstan', cc. 99-116, in *Councils and Synods* I, pp. 281-284.

In summary the issues of the term 'secular clergy' are that it is anachronistic, implicitly critical, and that it smothers any sense of diversity. The term is clearly not ideal for the task at hand and alternative terminology is required. The main division that underlies the discussion here is that of the reformed and the non-reformed. While this may seem to perpetuate the reform-centric perspective implied by 'secular clergy', the reality is that contemporary sources draw this distinction, and one of the key aims here is to ascertain how different non-reformed ecclesiastics were from those who claimed superiority because they were reformed. In fact, these terms can be used without confusion so long as they are both properly defined. In contrast to the view found in modern scholarship, the reform of the late tenth century was a highly localised and diverse event. The image of reform derived from the primary evidence comes overwhelmingly from Æthelwold of Winchester and from the work of Ælfric, his student.[16] These two men both expressed inherently exclusionary visions of the ideal religious life based on the Rule of Benedict. At its core, the worldview of the Winchester reformers prised the virtues of obedience and chastity.[17] Most usages of 'reform' in the scholarship refer to this Winchester-style of Benedictinism and assume that the ideas of this group can be applied to all so-called reformers. However, while some other communities such as Sherborne followed the Winchester example, other centres such as Worcester and Christ Church deviated from Winchester-style reform in some significant ways, such as in the continued presence of a clerical community alongside the monastic community at Worcester.[18] These other communities were also reformed, but not along Winchester lines which suggests that the term 'reformed' must be understood in a more nuanced way than is typical.

While some work has been done to recover other views of reform, the most complete alternate vision is that offered by Wulfstan.[19] Despite his close association with Ælfric through their correspondence, Wulfstan was not a monk and does not seem to have encouraged reform in the Winchester style. He did not employ the same kind of exclusionary language favoured

[16] Wormald, P., 'Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast', *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. by B. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 13-42.
[17] Barrow, J., 'The Ideology of the Tenth-Century 'Reform', in *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* ed. by P. Skinner (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 141-154; Wright, C., 'A new Latin source for two Old English homilies Fadda I and Blickling I: Pseudo-Augustine, Sermo App. 125, and the ideology of chastity in the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine reform' in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill*, ed. C. Wright, F. Biggs, and T. Hall (Toronto, 2007), pp. 252-255.
[18] Barrow, J., 'The community of Worcester, 961-c.1100', in *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influences*, ed. by N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (Leicester, 1996), pp. 84-89.
[19] Riedel, C., 'Debating the Role of the Laity in the Hagiography of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform', *Revue Bénédictine* 127 (2017), 315-346; Hudson, A., 'From medieval saint to modern bête noire: The case of the Vitae Æthelwoldi', *Postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 4 (2013), 284-295; see also my 'Oswald of Worcester and the Lost Ideologies of Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Monastic Reform', *Revue Bénédictine* 131 (forthcoming).

by Winchester reformers as seen in his legal texts which speak more of regularisation than exclusion.[20] Regularisation implies exclusion but, whereas Winchester reformers focused on the negative qualities of those whom did not conform to their specific standards, Wulfstan does not make similarly sweeping claims about the character of those who do not conform. Reform was certainly a major preoccupation for him, but it was broader socio-spiritual reform that encompassed both the Church and secular society, contrasting with the reform of the clergy encouraged by Ælfric.[21] Of course, Ælfric was also concerned with the reform of society and religious education, but he envisioned this reform as coming from the preaching of the clergy and through the example of Benedictine monasticism, while Wulfstan saw royal power as the means by which large-scale reform could be effected and expressed no particular favour for Benedictine monasticism.[22] Consequently, while it is proper to class Wulfstan as an heir to the tenth-century reformers he was not the same kind of reformer as Ælfric. Both men agreed that Church and society needed spiritual renewal, they simply differed on where that renewal would come from. When the terms 'reformed' or 'reformist' are used in this thesis they refer to reforming ideas generally, to Winchester-style reform, or to the more episcopal reform of Wulfstan, as will be specified when the term is used. They do not refer to an ideologically unified movement but rather to trends towards regularisation, exclusion, and spiritual renewal. Clerical celibacy was a common preoccupation of all reformers. Despite achieving some institutional success under Edgar, the gains of the reformers were always limited to a few communities and failed to have a long-term impact. As early as the end of the tenth century the ideas espoused by reformers were rapidly being combined with older ideas leading to a new synthesis in Anglo-Saxon religious thought.

These older 'non-reformed' ideas, which I take to be reflected in Blickling and Vercelli, were similarly not a unified body of thought. Instead they reflect the inherited trends and attitudes from earlier Anglo-Saxon religious history. Some sense of how non-reformed ideas differed from reformed ones can be gleaned by considering what was novel about reformist views. The key difference between these communities and Winchester-style reform was the exclusionary attitude of the latter. For Æthelwold and Ælfric, non-Benedictine lifestyles were illegitimate and, while neither reformer demanded that all clergy become monks, refusal to take the monastic habit nevertheless raised concerns about a cleric's personal morality.

[20] Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', cc. 15-24, 30-35, in *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York,* ed. and transl. A. Rabin (Manchester, 2014), pp. 89-98.
[21] Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 14-15.
[22] Menzer, M. J., 'The Preface as Admonition: Ælfric's Preface to Genesis' in *The Old English Hexateuch: Aspects and Approaches* ed. R. Barnhouse and B. C. Withers (Kalamazoo, MI, 2000), pp. 17-19, 22-24, 31-34.

Winchester reformers also regularly employed rhetoric suggesting the ignorance of the non-reformed, and the chief topic on which the non-reformed were allegedly ignorant was the need for clerical celibacy. While non-reformed writers could look to the example of Bede and his letter to Egbert for cases of the illegitimacy of some forms of religious life, there is no evidence that they engaged in the kind of general anathematising found in the rhetoric emanating from Winchester and which other reformers adopted.[23] The terms used by the non-reformed were inherently more open to diversity since they had developed out of the more diverse landscape of earlier Anglo-Saxon religious history.[24] Due to the dominance of reformist views in the evidence, it is difficult to set clear boundaries on the non-reformed. It is important to stress, however, that not all non-reformed were clergy since some apparently regarded themselves as monks. Neither did they claim that alternative forms of life were inherently illegitimate unless the subjects were engaged in open immorality, for example adultery. Yet we know that some clergy were married, indicating that this was not seen as adultery by the non-reformed. This is not to say that the non-reformed could not also hold exacting standards of religious life, only that both exclusion and regularisation are visible features of reformist thought in the late tenth century, whereas the non-reformed seem to have fostered an environment in which difference was more easily tolerated. As will be shown, this in no way compromised their pastoral or theological views, but it is essential to understanding use of the terms reformed and non-reformed.

In summary, this thesis views Blickling and Vercelli as products of a unique historical moment while also not wholly defining them by that moment. Inevitably, the contrast between these books and the works of contemporary and near-contemporary reformist writers is a recurrent theme of this thesis. It differs from previous scholarship, however, by interpreting reformist writers in light of the Blickling and Vercelli Books rather than the other way around. This change in perspective alters our impression of the period. The tension and hostility of reform recede from view. In their place appears a more nuanced view of the Church and theology in late tenth-century England that emphasises continuity. This nuance is the major benefit of an extended historical study of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, and it is the principal contribution of this thesis to scholarship.

[23] Bede, 'Letter to Egbert', in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* transl. L. Sherley-Price (London, 1955), pp. 339-340.
[24] Foot, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Monastery', pp. 48-57.

I

The Manuscripts and their Origins

Introduction

Before it is possible to use Blickling and Vercelli as historical sources, it is essential to identify the approximate dates and locations of their creation. Without a sense of both, it is difficult to put the books in their historical context. Unfortunately, scholarly consensus on these points is still elusive, although trends favouring particular dates or origins have emerged in the last few decades. However, it is still not possible to say definitively when or where the Blickling and Vercelli Books were created.[25] In this chapter I will address both questions. Firstly, I will show that both books most likely date from the period 971-1000 as can be deduced from archaic features of their palaeography and codicology. Secondly, I will show that the Blickling Book most likely originated in the West Midlands while the Vercelli Book probably originated in Kent. These conclusions are partly based on the work of previous scholars, which focus on the dialects found in the books, and partly on a new method of pinpointing their origins based on the occurrence of Blickling and Vercelli material in later manuscripts. This new method confirms the conclusions on origins reach by previous scholars, since the earliest and most faithful examples of Blickling and Vercelli influence all occur in the same regions that produced the main dialects of the books.

Several observations arise from this. The community which produced Vercelli was a centre of Anglo-Saxon learning with close ties to Ælfric of Eynsham. Blickling has ties to a community in the West Midlands, perhaps Worcester, or one of the minsters that survived and flourished in the region from the eighth century until the late tenth and eleventh centuries.[26] Both books are just as much products of elite Anglo-Saxon religious culture as the works of later writers like Ælfric and Wulfstan. Yet, despite their links to this culture, this chapter also shows how limited the influence of the Blickling Book is compared to that of the Vercelli Book.

[25] Zacher, S., 'Rereading the Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Homilies', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. A. J. Kleist (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 175-176; Wilcox, J., 'The Blickling Homilies revisited: knowable and probable uses of Princeton University Library, MS Scheide 71', in *The Genesis of Books: Studies in the Scribal Culture of Medieval England in Honour of A.N. Doane,* ed. M. T. Hussey and J. D. Niles (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 98-100.

[26] Blair, J., *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 135-138.

The dates and origins of the books matter: they help to contextualise them and set the standards by which they are judged.

The Dates of the Blickling and Vercelli Books

i) The Blickling Book

The Blickling Book contains homilies arranged in accordance with the liturgical year (Advent to Pentecost and various Saints' Days). From its contents and structure, the book can be identified as a homiliary, that is, a collection of sermons and homilies organised to follow the feasts of the Church year. Traditionally these collections were written in Latin. The Blickling Book, however, is written entirely in Old English except for some Latin quotations from the Gospels. Blickling is the earliest surviving Anglo-Saxon homiliary written entirely in the vernacular. Quires have been lost from the beginning and end of the book.[27] Based on what remains of the Anglo-Saxon quire markings Donald Scragg suggests that four quires are missing from the beginning and an unknown number from the end.[28] The size of the book (200mm by 150mm) and the relative size of the text on the page (195mm by 145mm) would make it compact enough to transport easily and hold while reading. This size, along with the marking of long vowels, suggests the book was used for oral reading.[29]

To make the book, homiletic booklets – unbound collections of leaves containing homilies – were bound into an organised collection.[30] This is seen from the unusual frequency with which homilies end with their quires (see table 1). There are six examples of this: homilies III, IV, VI, VII, XV, and XVII. (Technically homily XVIII also ends with its quire, but this is the result of missing leaves.[31]) The tendency for these six quires to be longer or shorter than the usual eight leaves suggests that this peculiarity is not the result of chance; rather these quires were constructed specifically to hold these homilies. Also, the outer leaves of these quires are visibly worn in a manner which would be impossible if they had always been bound within a

[27] Dalby, M., 'Themes and Techniques in the Blickling Lenten Homilies', in *The Old English Homily & Its Backgrounds,* ed. P. Szarmach and B. F. Huppé (Albany, NY, 1978), p. 221.
[28] Scragg, D., 'The homilies of the Blickling manuscript', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday* ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 299-300.
[29] Toswell, M. J., 'The codicology of Anglo-Saxon homiletic manuscripts, especially the Blickling Homilies', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation* ed. A. J. Kleist (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 219-220.
[30] Robinson, P., 'Self-contained units in composite manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon period', *ASE* 7 (1978), 231-238; Toswell, 'codicology', p. 219.
[31] Toswell, 'codicology', p. 219.

larger book.[32] The uneven length and signs of wear indicate that these quires originated as self-contained units and existed as such for a time.

It remains unclear when the book was bound. Most likely it occurred before c.1304 by which time it had moved to Lincoln. The original binding of the Blickling Book was flawed. Upon its rediscovery at Blickling Hall in the early modern period, several pages were bound out of their proper order.[33] The liturgical arrangement of the homilies was preserved, but the worn outer leaves had been moved into positions where they would not rub against each other. It is not clear why the book was bound in this way, although it may have been out of a desire to have pages with similar textures facing each other.[34] Since the liturgical arrangement of the booklets was preserved, it is possible that the binder saw the booklets as still useful in a liturgical setting (what they were used for will be the subject of the following chapter). This suggests that those who bound the book could still read Old English, a suspicion confirmed by the inclusion of rubrics for some homilies (for example Blickling VIII and XI) written in Old English but in a later hand than those which wrote most of the contents of the book.[35] While the booklets circulated for a time independently, they were bound into a collection by someone who could read and write in Old English. Probably, then, the Blickling Book was bound at some point between the creation of the booklets in the late tenth century and the end of the twelfth century.

The book is the work of two scribes. One of these, Scribe 1, wrote most of the text while the other, Scribe 2, intervened at certain points between quires 8 and 15 (table 1), usually at the beginning and end of a homily. The only exception to this dynamic occurs on pages 7r-7v when Scribe 2 intervenes part way through a homily.[36] It is unclear what relationship existed between Scribes 1 and 2. It has been described as 'supervisory' given the better quality of script used by Scribe 2 and his/her tendency to guide Scribe 1 by intervening at the beginning and end of a text.[37] However, it is unclear how this characterisation could be proved or disproved. Instead, all that can be said is that Scribe 1 produced most of the book while Scribe 2 took over briefly at certain points. Why s/he did this is unknown. What is clear, though, is that a single

[32] Kelly, R., *Blickling Homilies: Edition and Translation* (London, 2003) p. xxxv; Robinson, 'Self-contained units', p. 232.
[33] Wilcox, 'Blickling Homilies', pp. 98-99.
[34] Gameson, R., 'The Material Fabric of Early British Books', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vol. 1: 400-1100,* ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 34-41.
[35] Morris, R., *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century from the Marquis of Lothian's Unique MS. A.D. 971* (London, 1880), pp. 97, 115.
[36] Scragg, 'homilies', pp. 299-303.
[37] Kelly, *Blickling Homilies,* p. xxxvii.

scriptorium produced all the booklets of the Blickling Book. Whether they were bound there is another matter.

ii) The Vercelli Book

The Vercelli Book contains twenty-nine items, comprising twenty-three Old English homilies and six Old English poems. Its contents lack a clear organising plan, instead they are united more by common themes of judgement, penance, soteriology, and the saintly life. The Vercelli binding measures 310mm by 200mm, while the writing on the page measures 240mm by 140mm.[38] Donald Scragg notes that, despite the Vercelli Book having only one scribe, the number of rulings on a page fluctuates between quires. This suggests that they were not prepared for use all at once, but at different times and with little care for consistency.[39] The sense of fitful progression is further supported by the pieces ending on pages 16r, 24v, 29r, 54v, 71r, 101r, and 120v which leave the pages only partially filled. Of these only 24v and 120r coincide with the end of a quire. These instances of breaks within the flow of text indicate that here the exemplars ended, and the scribe marked this by only partially filling the page.[40] In contrast to Blickling, Vercelli was from the beginning conceived as a larger collection rather than a set of booklets.

While Blickling was created to offer a sequence of homilies to serve the year, Vercelli has no similarly obvious purpose. For example, homilies XI-XIV are all Rogationtide homilies but only homilies XI-XIII are rubricated as such. Homily XIV is not a homily for Ascension, as it should be if the collection was arranged in liturgical order.[41] XIV also recycles material used in homily XI and thus highlights the repetition which occurs throughout the book.[42] Likewise homilies V and VI, the former linked to Christmas and the latter to Advent, share a list of miracles said to have occurred in Rome (derived from Orosius) in anticipation of the birth of Christ.[43] A similar situation characterises the poetry where common themes or even common authorship do not seem to have guided the work of the scribe. For example, the only two pieces with a named author, *The Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene*, occur separately from

[38] Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, (New York, NY, 1932), p. xi.
[39] Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford, 1992), p. xxiii.
[40] Krapp, *Vercelli*, p. xii
[41] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, pp. 237-238; *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, ed., J. Bazire and J. Cross (Toronto, 1982), p. xxiv; Gatch, M., 'Basic Christian Education from the Decline of Catechesis to the Rise of the Catechism', in *A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis*, ed. J. Westerhoff III and O. Edwards, Jr. (Wilton, CONN, 1981), p. 93.
[42] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, pp. 237-238.
[43] Hall, T., 'The Portents of Christ's Birth in Vercelli Homilies V and VI: Some Analogues from Medieval Sermons and Biblical Commentaries', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 93-96.

each other which suggests that their common authorship was not the basis for their selection.[44] The compiler worked according to a plan, but what this was is now unclear.

iii) Dates

Scholarly opinion favours dates in the late tenth century for both books: between 971 and 1000 for the Blickling Book and between 975 and 1000 for Vercelli.[45] The primary evidence used for this dating is palaeographical. There are also some potentially significant internal references, although the usefulness of these has been overstated.

The scribes of both books wrote in an early form of Anglo-Saxon vernacular minuscule which retained some elements of the older square minuscule.[46] For example, the archaic features of the hands are visible in the form of *a* which occupies a middle ground between square and vernacular minuscule. Square minuscule favoured a flat-topped *a* while vernacular minuscule used a tear-drop *a.* The form used in Blickling and Vercelli is not flat-topped, but it has an angled top-stroke formed with a straight line which falls part way between the square and vernacular forms. A similar top-stroke appears in the *æ* form.[47] Both books also consistently use the open-tailed *g*, a hall-mark of early Anglo-Saxon vernacular minuscule, as opposed to the close-tailed *g* more commonly found in square minuscule.[48] Beyond letterforms, both books exhibit typical hallmarks of the emerging vernacular minuscule in the lengthening of their ascenders and descenders.[49] The early vernacular minuscule forms in the book date them to the late tenth or early eleventh century. Square minuscule had become somewhat standardised under King Æthelstan (d. 939), while the change to vernacular minuscule began under King Edgar, due to increased exposure to Carolingian minuscule, and continued into the

[44] Ó Carragáin, É., 'How did the Vercelli Collector interpret *The Dream of the Rood?*', in *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen,* ed. P. Tilling (Coleraine, 1981), pp. 64-65; Fulk, R. D., 'Cynewulf: Canon, Dialect, and Date', in *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, ed. R. E. Bjork (Abingdon, 1996), pp. 15-16.
[45] Scragg, D., 'An Old English homilist of Archbishop Dunstan's day', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Korhammer, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 191-192.
[46] Scragg, D., 'Old English homiliaries and poetic manuscripts', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, I: 400-1100,* ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2011), p. 553; Dumville, D., 'English Square minuscule script: the background and earliest phases', *Anglo-Saxon England* xvi (1987), 178-179.
[47] Stokes, P., *English Vernacular Minuscule from Æthelred to Cnut, circa 990 – circa 1035* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 188.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

eleventh century.[50] Blickling and Vercelli should therefore be dated from their script to a time during the reigns of Edgar (959-975), Edward Martyr (975-978), or Æthelred (978-1016).[51]

The codicology of the books suggests that they should be dated to the earlier part of the late tenth century because they do not follow certain conventions that had become standard by the early eleventh century. For example, there is no consistency in the construction of their quires. By the eleventh century it had become usual to have like sides of parchment facing like (flesh facing flesh, hair facing hair).[52] However the quires of Blickling and Vercelli do not follow this pattern. Likewise, the length of each quire is inconsistent (tables 1 and 2) when compared to the regular quire lengths found in later manuscripts.[53] The varying lengths of its component booklets may account for the inconsistent quire lengths of the Blickling Book. It is not clear why the Vercelli compiler did not regularise quire lengths, but it may indicate that the book dates to a point before the relative standardisation of these practices later in the tenth century. The palaeography and codicology of the manuscripts suggests that both Blickling and Vercelli date from a time when Anglo-Saxon vernacular minuscule was developing but before the standardisation of codicological conventions. Thus, the beginning of the last quarter of the tenth century is the most likely period of their production.

Besides palaeography and codicology, both Blickling and Vercelli contain internal references that can help to date them. The end of Vercelli XI refers to the destruction of churches by heathens, a general decline in the morality of those in church orders and increasing economic exploitation by the powerful. The reference to heathens may date the Vercelli Book to a time of intense Viking raiding, possibly the 980s.[54] The homily is based on two different homilies by Caesarius, but this reference to contemporary raiding is an original insertion by the author of Vercelli XI.[55] However, as Scragg notes, the comment provides a thematic bookend to the homily which opened with an account of the creation of the Rogation days as a response to heathen raiding into Roman Gaul.[56] Thus while the reference may allude to

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[51] Ker, N., *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), pp. xxxv-xxxvi; Lapidge, M., 'Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England', in *Anglo-Latin Literature 900-1066* (London, 1993), p. 32; Wilcox, 'Blickling Homilies, p. 99.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[53] *Ibid.*; Zacher, 'Style and Rhetoric', pp. 175-176; Scragg, 'Old English homilist, pp. 191-192; Toswell, 'codicology', p. 219; Collins, R., *Anglo-Saxon vernacular manuscripts in America: [exhibited at the Pierpont Morgan Library, 1 April-9 May, 1976],* (New York, NY, 1976), p. 53.
[54] Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform: Tailored Sources and Implied Audiences', in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages,* ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leidne, 2002), p. 223.
[55] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* pp. 219-220.
[56] *Ibid*.

contemporary events, it does not necessarily refer to the intensification of Viking activity in the 980s.

Blickling XI, a homily for Ascension, includes an exhortation to urgent action which alludes to the current date:

> 'This world must end in this age which is now present, because five [of the signs of Apocalypse] are passed in this age. Then this world must end, and [of] this the greatest part is passed even nine-hundred and seventy-one years in this year'.[57]

Such an unambiguous reference would seem to date the Blickling Book to 971, but in fact the comment is unlikely to apply to the book as a whole.[58] The component booklets of the Blickling Book certainly existed before they were bound into a single manuscript, therefore the homilies and the book are unlikely to share a common date. Blickling XI cannot have been copied before 971. However, there is no evidence that the Blickling Book or its other booklets originated in that year. It would be advisable, as with Vercelli, to think in terms of a larger period of time since it is likely impossible to offer a more precise date than 971-1000.

Previous Scholarship on the Origins of Blickling and Vercelli

There is broad, although not total, agreement on where the Blickling and Vercelli Books originated. This agreement results from scholarship focused mainly on the dialect and provenance of the manuscripts. The language of the books indicates that Blickling originated in Mercia while Vercelli originated in the south east. The later provenance of the manuscripts is of comparatively limited usefulness. Blickling was in Lincoln in the high Middle Ages but the evidence discussed in this section shows that it probably did not originate there. Vercelli travelled to northern Italy at some point before 1748 but cannot have originated there.

i) *The Vercelli Book*

[57] Blickling XI: 'Þes middan[geard] nede on ðas eldo endian sceal þe nu andweard is; forþon fife syndon agangen on þisse eldo. Þonne sceal þes middangeard endian 7 þisse is þonne se mæsta dæl agangen efne nigon hun wintra 7 lxxi. on thys[se] geare'. [All translations are my own].
[58] Morris, *Blickling Homilies*, p. v; Jeffrey, J. E., *Blickling Spirituality and the Old English Vernacular Homily: A Textual Analysis* (Lewiston, NY, 1989), p. 2.

The Vercelli Book contains an assortment of different dialects: late West Saxon, early West Saxon, Anglian, and Kentish are all represented. Because of refusal by the compiler to standardise spelling, it is difficult to distinguish his/her voice from those of his/her sources.[59] Late West Saxon is the most prominent dialect in the book. This does not mean, though, that the manuscript came from Wessex, since West Saxon was the most common dialect of Old English in the late tenth century while regional dialects had begun to die out. Therefore, while the mix of dialects found in Vercelli offers a glimpse into the rising prominence of West Saxon, it also indicates that the manuscript came from an institution with a library drawn from across England.[60] Donald Scragg has argued that the compiler was Kentish and that the manuscript originated in the south east.[61] This is partly based on the fact that Kentish is the most common non-late West Saxon dialect found in the Vercelli Book. Kentish spellings occur throughout the homilies while other dialects are limited to particular pieces.[62] A small but consistent example of Kentish dialect found throughout the Vercelli Book is the tendency to use *e* where late West Saxon would use *y,* or sometimes in place of *a.* Also indicative is the propensity of the scribe to use *o* instead of *a* when followed by a nasal, for example in the sequence *-samn-*, which the scribe frequently copies as *-somn-*, or in the rendering of words such as *framian* as *fromian.*[63] That the scribe favoured south eastern forms is demonstrated by an instance where s/he appears to lapse from late West Saxon into a Kentish dialect. The lapse occurs at the end of Vercelli III, in a standard closing invocation of the Trinity and the eternal kingship of God. As it stands the sentence is garbled due to scribal error. Joan Turville-Petre concluded that the problem lay in the omission of two phrases.[64] This eye-skip indicates a lapse in concentration possibly brought about by exhaustion or boredom at the end of copying a homily.[65] Prior to this point the homily is in late West Saxon, but in this sentence the copyist slips in to a Kentish dialect in two cases, with the use of *e* for *y* in *gefellan* and the use of *in* rather than *on* in *gaste a in ecnesse.*[66] This latter example represents the only instance of *in* in this homily while the

[59] Scragg, D., 'The compilation of the Vercelli Book', *ASE* ii (1973), p. 196; Ó Carragáin, 'How', pp. 65-66; Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies,* pp. lxx-lxxi; Zacher, S., *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto, 2009), pp. 10-12.
[60] Scragg, D., 'Studies in the language of copyists of the Vercelli Homilies', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book,* ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), p. 41.
[61] Scragg, 'Compilation', p. 207.
[62] *Ibid.,* p. lxx.
[63] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* pp. xlv-xlvi, xlviii.
[64] Turville-Petre, J., 'Translations of a Lost Penitential Homily', *Traditio* 19 (1963), 51-78; Scragg, 'Compilation', pp. 206-207.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid.*

West Saxon form *on* occurs twenty-eight times throughout.[67] Elsewhere dialect appears to derive from the sources used. For example the group of homilies XV-XVIII all use Anglian word forms which derive from a ninth-century Northumbrian exemplar, a fragment of which was recently discovered.[68] Similarly the late West Saxon of most of Vercelli III probably reflects its source while the Kentish suggests the actual dialect of the scribe.[69]

Besides dialect there are two other ways that previous scholars have attempted to identify origins. The first is to examine the hand in which the scribe wrote. As discussed above, the style of hand is Anglo-Saxon vernacular minuscule, but with some archaic features.[70] The distinct *g* used has some similarity with the style found in three late tenth-century leases, one from Winchester and two from Worcester.[71] Beyond this one similarity there is no evidence that the Vercelli Book originated at Worcester. It is also possible to trace the abbreviations and ornamentation of the Vercelli Book to particular scriptoria. The style of ornamentation on page 49r probably originated in Winchester while the style found on pages 106v and 112r came from Canterbury. It is unusual to find these two styles of ornamentation in the same book and the diversity is probably a result of the different sources used by the compiler.[72] The abbreviations and ornamentations found in the book suggest a scribe steeped in the scribal culture of late tenth-century England, especially that found in Canterbury and Winchester.[73] However, this diverse culture does not undermine the conclusion that the Vercelli Book originated in Kent, since it is consistent with the idea that the scribe used sources from across England, something that the diverse dialects of the manuscript have already demonstrated.

The provenance of the Vercelli Book cannot be the same as its origin. From all outward appearances the manuscript is thoroughly English: its language is English, its codicology follows tenth-century English practices, and its palaeography is also English.[74] Consequently, no scholars have suggested that the book originated in Vercelli. The book was listed in the library of Vercelli Cathedral in 1748, but how it came to be there is unknown.[75] Because of

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[67] *Ibid*.
[68] Scragg, D., 'A ninth-century Old English homily from Northumbria', *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016), 42-45.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *The Vercelli Book: A Late Tenth-Century Manuscript Containing Prose and Verse*, ed. C. Sisam (Copenhagen, 1976), pp. 20-23.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 21, n. 4.
[72] Temple, E., *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900-1066* (London, 1976), nos. 20, 28; Treharne, E., 'The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book', in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. A. Minnis and J. Roberts (Turnhout, 2007), p. 255.
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] Zacher, S., and A. Orchard, 'Introduction', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), P. 3.
[75] Gatch, M., 'Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies', *Traditio* xxi (1965), 136.

eleventh-century marginalia written in a Milanese hand Kenneth Sisam has argued that it travelled to Italy in the eleventh-century, possibly in the possession of a pilgrim.[76] Given that Vercelli was a stop on the pilgrim road to Rome, it is unlikely that provenance can help to identify a particular place of origin.

ii) *The Blickling Book*

The main dialect of the Blickling homilies is late West Saxon.[77] However, since 1899 scholars have recognised that the codex contains many traces of Anglian dialect and vocabulary.[78] For example, in Blickling I Mary is referred to as *halgan Godes cyningan.* Richard Morris translates the unique word *cyningan* as 'queen' – thus making her 'God's holy queen'.[79] However Morris' translation is problematic and J. H. Kern suggested that *cyningan* may in fact be a variant spelling of *cynnicgan,* an Anglian dialectal variant of *cennicgan,* 'mother'.[80] Kern's argument was strengthened by the observation of Rowland Collins that Anglian forms occur in other Blickling homilies. One example is in Blickling XIV where the same dialectal variance is found in the word *acynned,* usually spelled in late West Saxon *acenned.*[81] Anglian origins are also implied by the vocabulary of the manuscript. Words such as *geara* (formerly, once), *medmicel* (moderate-size, small), and *gewinn* (meaning 'labour') occur most often in Anglian Old English.[82] As well as general Anglian forms the homilies also contain several words that are specifically Mercian including *eno* (moreover), *halettan* (to greet), and *semninga* (suddenly).[83] There are no occurrences of Northumbrian vocabulary.[84]

In his work on Vercelli, Donald Scragg identifies several features typical of different Old English dialects that confirm the Anglian origins of the Blickling Book.[85] Two features are

[76] Sisam, K., 'Marginalia in the Vercelli Book', in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 113-118.
[77] Kelly, R., *The Blickling Concordance: A Lexicon to the Blickling Homilies* (London, 2009), pp. 12-13; Menner, R. J., 'The Anglian Vocabulary of the Blickling Homilies', in *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies,* ed. T. A. Kirby and H. B. Woolf (Baltimore, ML, 1949), p. 56.
[78] Hardy, A. K., *Die Sprache der Blickling Homilien* (Leipzig, 1899); Kern, J. H., 'Altenglische Varia: 4. Zu den *Blickling Homilies', Englische Studien,* lii (1918); Menner, 'Anglian Vocabulary', pp. 56-64; Schabram, H., *Superbia: Studien zum altenglischen Wortschatz* (Munich, 1965), p. 75; Collins, R. L., 'Six Words in the Blickling Homilies', in *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt,* ed. J. L. Rosier (The Hague, 1970), p. 138.
[79] Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* pp. 12-13.
[80] Kern, 'Altenglische Varia', p. 289.
[81] Collins, 'Six Words', p. 138.
[82] Menner, 'Anglian Vocabulary', p. 57.
[83] *Ibid.,* p. 62; Kelly, *Blickling Concordance,* p. 14.
[84] Menner, 'Anglian Vocabulary', p. 62.
[85] Scragg, 'compilation', pp. 189-207.

especially important: the use of the digraph *eo/io* and syncopation.[86] The digraph represents a widespread sound in Old English that appears in many common words, such as in forms of the verb 'to be', *beon/bion,* and the pronoun *heora/hiora.* It is also subject to clear regional variation. Its use relates to the Common Germanic sounds *eu* and *iu* or under certain circumstance *e* and *i*.[87] Late West Saxon favours *eo* to represent both sounds, while Kentish favours *io.* Northumbrian retains a sense of distinction between the two as traditionally did Mercian, but after the eighth century Mercian used *eo* more frequently until *io* vanished entirely.[88] The Blickling homilies consistently favour *eo,* putting them in the West Saxon/Mercian sphere of influence. This feature could therefore be late West Saxon, but the consistent lack of syncopation in the Blickling homilies reveals that the dialect is in fact Mercian. Syncopation was an increasingly common feature of late West Saxon after the reign of King Alfred (d. 899), and is mostly seen in the endings of verbal and adjectival forms in the loss of unstressed vowels, for example using *cymð* for *cymeð*.[89] The absence of syncopation from the Blickling homilies suggests that they were produced outside of Wessex by scribes familiar with another dialect. The preference for *eo* makes tenth-century Mercia the most likely place of origin.

The Blickling Book was in Lincoln during the later Middle Ages, as is evident from annotations of city business made in its margins between 1304 and 1623.[90] Some scholars, such as Jonathan Wilcox, have used these annotations to suggest a Lincoln origin.[91] Since few Lincoln manuscripts have survived from the mid- to late tenth-century it is difficult to say how closely, if at all, Lincoln productions mirrored Blickling. As such, arguments for Lincoln origins are ultimately arguments from silence. The evidence of close kinship between the Blickling Book and the Worcester manuscripts Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121 shows that the manuscript originated in or around Worcester.[92] It was not uncommon for manuscripts to travel away from their place of origin and never return. The most prominent example of this in the tenth and eleventh centuries is Exeter where the establishment of a cathedral by Bishop Leofric in 1050 prompted an influx

[86] *Ibid.,* pp. 196-199, 200, 203-204.
[87] *Ibid.,* pp. 196-199.
[88] *Ibid.,* pp. 196-197; Campbell, A., *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1959), §§ 293-297.
[89] Sisam, 'Marginalia', pp. 123-126; Scragg, 'Compilation', pp. 203-204.
[90] Wilcox, 'Blickling Homilies', p. 103.
[91] *Ibid.,* pp. 103-105.
[92] Swan, M., 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198 and the Blickling manuscript', *Leeds Studies in English* xxxvii (2006), p. 93; Scragg, D., 'A late OE Harrowing of Hell Homily from Worcester and Blickling Homily VII' in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Honour of Michael Lapidge, vol. II*, ed. K O'Brien O'Keeffe and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2005), pp. 203-207.

of manuscripts from across England.[93] A similar influx may have occurred in Lincoln following the establishment of the cathedral there by Remigius de Fécamp between 1072 and 1092. The Blickling Book may have been among them, although this is speculation.

Textual Circulation and the Origins of the Blickling and Vercelli Books

This section will consider manuscripts produced between the late tenth and twelfth centuries that contain enough Blickling and Vercelli material to allow for some discussion of how their versions relate to those in the Blickling and Vercelli Books. Of these manuscripts, the most important are Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 + 342; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 162; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121. These manuscripts are significant because they contain the earliest and most faithful examples of Blickling and Vercelli influence. Therefore, when compared with other later manuscripts it becomes possible to identify the origins of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. My argument is based on the principle that kinship, date and geographical proximity offer a means of identifying origins. Since all copies of a text must relate back to a source, all copies of Blickling and Vercelli material in other manuscripts must ultimately derive from the Blickling and Vercelli Books themselves or common sources. By identifying the sources of Blickling and Vercelli material in other manuscripts, and identifying how this relates back to the books, it is possible to ascertain where the influence of the Blickling and Vercelli books first manifested. This approach demonstrates that the influence of both books first appeared in the same regions identified by dialect. This confirms the arguments by previous scholars that these are the regions in which Blickling and Vercelli themselves most likely originated.

i) Manuscripts containing Blickling and Vercelli Material

Mostly the manuscripts which contain Blickling and Vercelli material are homiliaries or collections of miscellaneous pieces intended for various purposes (use by bishops etc.), although admittedly the distinction is often blurred. The former can be distinguished from the latter in two ways. Firstly, they contain only homilies while the others frequently contain homilies alongside other material. Secondly, the former are often (though not always) organised according to the liturgical year, while the structure of the latter depends on the

[93] Treharne, E. M., 'The Bishop's Book: Leofric's Homiliary and Eleventh-Century Exeter', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. by Stephen Baxter, and others (Ashgate, 2009), pp. 521-523; Corradini, E., 'The Composite Nature of Eleventh-Century Homiliaries: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 421', in *Textual Cultures: Cultural Texts*, ed. by O. Da Rold and E. Treharne (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 9-13.

specific intended use of the manuscript. Their structure may follow established conventions – pontifical, sacramentary, etc. – but they may also follow no known exemplar. Only one manuscript under consideration here does not fall into either category. The manuscript in question is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41 (s. xi[1] – xi med; S England) which contains a copy of the Old English Bede to which various pieces have been added as marginalia, among them Vercelli homilies.[94]

Of the important manuscripts identified above two are homiliaries: Bodley 340 + 342 (s. x. ex./in. xi., SE England) and CCCC 162 (s. x. ex./in. xi., SE England). Here the histories and contents of the two books will be considered side by side since they are closely related to each other and thus benefit from comparison. The two manuscripts are the earliest extant copies of the Canterbury Ælfric (CÆ) tradition identified by Kenneth Sisam.[95] This CÆ tradition is characterised by the combination of the two series of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* into a single cycle, augmented with anonymous material. This type of homiliary originated in Canterbury under Archbishop Sigeric (d. 994) with a copy of the Catholic Homilies sent to him by Ælfric himself.[96] Bodley 340 + 342 and CCCC 162 are both slightly altered copies of the combined collection associated with Sigeric. They are not identical copies, since CCCC 162 does not contain all the pieces that Bodley 340 + 342 does, but their contents must derive from the same source given the degree to which they agree with each other. Bodley 340 + 342 is a two-volume CÆ homiliary that contains most of the homilies of Ælfric with the addition of eleven anonymous homilies. All of the anonymous material is found in Bodley 340.[97] The same hand copied most of Bodley 340 + 342 indicating that both volumes came from the same scriptorium.[98] An eleventh century addition about the life of St Paulinus which refers to the tomb of the saint being 'here' indicates that the additions were made at Rochester.[99] CCCC 162 is an abbreviated form of the CÆ type which contains only the homilies for Sundays and festivals.[100] The manuscript is in a single hand similar to the main scribe of Bodley 340 + 342. Both hands have similarities to the hand found in London, British Library, Royal 6.C.i, a

[94] Hawk, B., *Preaching Apocrypha in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2018), p. 63; Bredehoft, T., 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', in *The Review of English Studies* lvii (2006), p. 721.
[95] Sisam, K., 'MSS. Bodley 340 and 342: Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 154-15.
[96] Scragg, 'Studies in the language', pp. 46-47.
[97] Scragg, D., 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives before Ælfric', *Anglo-Saxon England* viii (1979), p. 237.
[98] Lowe, K., 'Filling the Silence: Shared Content in Four Related Manuscripts of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', in *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* iv (2015), p. 195.
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] Hawk, *Preaching Apocrypha*, p. 59; Lowe, 'Filling the Silence', p. 196.

manuscript produced at St Augustine's, Canterbury in the eleventh century.[101] This indicates a link to Canterbury for both manuscripts.[102] The homiliary tradition of which these are the earliest examples had many close links to the Vercelli Book and it helped to spread Vercelli homilies throughout England.

CCCC 198 (s. xi[1]; SE/WM England) is perhaps the most important of the manuscripts considered here, but it also has the most problematic history. The manuscript reflects three stages of scribal activity by eight main scribes, who worked in at least two different institutions, and a single annotator.[103] Scholars have divided the manuscript into three parts identified by the scribes responsible for each.[104] Part 1 is a copy of the same CÆ homiliary tradition as Bodley 340 + 342 and CCCC 162: this part is from the south east of England.[105] It has been dated on palaeographical grounds to the early eleventh century and is the work of four different scribes.[106] Part 2 is a collection of additional homilies written in four new hands. The consensus is that this second part was made after the manuscript had moved from its original south-eastern home to a new church, since the scribes do not match any known to be active in the south east.[107] The location of this new community is debated. Worcester specifically has been identified due to the third stage of scribal activity. Part 3 comprises extensive annotation by the Tremulous Hand, the distinctive hand of a prolific thirteenth-century Worcester scribe.[108] CCCC 198 was at Worcester in the thirteenth century but the hands responsible for Part 2 do not match any known to be active at Worcester. It has also been argued that the use of Ælfrician homilies in Part 2 is more limited than could be expected from Worcester. For example Part 2 contains a copy of Blickling XVIII, a homily for St Andrew, although Worcester scribes would be expected to have access to Ælfric's St Andrew homily.[109] This argument is not convincing since it seems odd to suggest that communities would have only one homily per feast; it is entirely possible that the community had both Blickling XVIII and a copy of the Ælfric text. Based on an Office for St Guthlac found in Part 2, Mary Swan has suggested St Guthlac's Abbey in Hereford as a plausible origin place.[110] Here I will err on the side of caution and suggest that Part 2 was not produced at Worcester itself but at another church in the region.

[101] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* pp. xxviii – xxix.
[102] Scragg, 'Studies in the language', p. 51.
[103] Stokes, *English Vernacular Minuscule,* pp. 99-102.
[104] Scragg, 'Homilies', pp. 309-313.
[105] Scragg, 'Studies in the language', pp. 46-47.
[106] Clayton, M., *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 124-125.
[107] Scragg, 'Homilies', 311-313; Swan, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198', p. 93.
[108] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 313.
[109] Swan, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198', p. 93.
[110] *Ibid.*

CCCC 198 continued to be read up to the thirteenth century and in this time it seems to have served as some kind of homiletic repository. Most of the homilies in Parts 1 and 2 are by Ælfric, but several anonymous pieces are also included among them Vercelli and Blickling homilies. However, the Vercelli material is found only in Part 1 while the Blickling material is found only in Part 2. Since both parts apparently come from different institutions the distribution of anonymous material between them indicates that Vercelli and Blickling influence was in some sense regional.

Junius 121 (s. xi$^{3/4}$; Worcester) is a miscellaneous volume which deals mainly with episcopal duties, especially penance, catechism, and preaching. Most of its contents consist of works by Wulfstan.[111] A single scribe wrote most of the manuscript and this same scribe was also responsible for two other Worcester manuscripts, Hatton 113 + 114, both of which also contain a substantial amount of Wulfstan material.[112] The scribe probably worked during the episcopacy of St Wulfstan (d. 1095).[113] Like CCCC 198, Junius 121 also was glossed in the thirteenth century by the Tremulous Hand. In its use of Blickling material, Junius 121 contains some of the closest verbal parallels to Blickling found so far, indicating that at some point both books were probably kept in the same library.[114] As discussed below this raises some problems, especially when considered alongside CCCC 198 Part 2.

ii) Circulation

By 'circulation' I mean the occurrence of Blickling and Vercelli material in other manuscripts. The interpretation of this circulation is guided by three factors: kinship, geography, and date. Kinship refers to how closely related the manuscripts under consideration are to the Blickling and Vercelli Books and is the primary factor in deciding whether something counts as 'circulation'. But kinship alone is not enough to appreciate fully the significance of circulation. Geography concerns the origins and provenance of the manuscripts while date determines when they were created. Geography and kinship are linked since many of the manuscripts which relate closely to each other also are linked by common regions or institutions, such as Junius 121 and its related manuscripts Hatton 113 + 114. The same principle probably holds true for the Blickling and Vercelli Books and this allows us to use circulation to trace the history

[111] Foxhall Forbes, H., 'Affective piety and the practice of penance in late-eleventh-century Worcester: the address to the penitent in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121', *ASE* xliv (2015), p. 312.
[112] *Ibid.;* Scragg, 'Harrowing of Hell', p. 197.
[113] Franzen, C., 'Oxford, Bodleian Junius 121 (5232): Ecclesiastical Institutes, Homilies', in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile* (Tempe, AZ, 1998), pp. 55-67
[114] Scragg, 'Harrowing of Hell', p. 206.

of their influence. It emerges from this that the earliest and most closely related occurrences of Blickling and Vercelli material in other manuscripts all originate in the same regions which produced the main dialects of the books. Examples of wider circulation, that is, circulation outside the regions identified through dialect, all post-date the earliest occurrences of Vercelli and Blickling influence, and in all cases are based on altered or alternative versions.

a) Vercelli in the South East

The influence of the Vercelli Book in the south east began not long after the book itself was created. The earliest and most direct influence from Vercelli was tied particularly to the CÆ tradition of homiliaries created at Canterbury in the 990s.[115] The close relationship between the CÆ homiliaries and Vercelli is most clearly seen in the two earliest representatives of the CÆ tradition: Bodley 340 + 342 and CCCC 162. Together these contain the earliest occurrences of Vercelli material outside the Vercelli Book itself. Many of these pieces seem to be based either on the Vercelli Book itself or on the same source material used by the Vercelli compiler. This suggests that these books come from the same community which contained both the original sources and possibly Vercelli itself.[116]

Bodley 340 + 342 contains five Vercelli homilies: I, III, V, VIII, and IX.[117] All of these have been extensively altered by the Bodley scribe through the excision of words and passages as well as the standardisation and modernisation of language.[118] A pervasive example of standardisation is his/her use of *sceolon* over *sculon.* Both mean 'will, must', but the former is the more common late tenth- and eleventh-century form, while the latter is more archaic. Vercelli is split fairly evenly between the two: there are fifty-seven examples of *sceolon* and thirty of *sculon*.[119] The Vercelli scribe made no attempt at standardisation but instead allowed archaisms and various older dialects to sit alongside more modern late West Saxon word forms. The Bodley scribe, in contrast, modernised the language of his/her sources and thus only used *sceolon.*[120] Bodley 340 + 342 was created by scribes with access to several Vercelli homilies. However, the extensive alterations made by the Bodley scribe leave it unclear whether s/he copied from the Vercelli Book itself or a common source.[121]

[115] Scragg, 'Studies in the language', p. 47.
[116] *Ibid.*
[117] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* p. lxxvi.
[118] Scragg, 'Studies in the language', pp. 45-49.
[119] *Ibid.*, p. 48, n. 27.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* p. 1.

A similar case can be made for CCCC 162. It is clear, though, that CCCC 162 draws not on the Vercelli Book itself but on sources used by the Vercelli compiler. Specifically, CCCC 162 draws on a collection containing pieces for Rogationtide and Ascension that are all the work of a single author. That the manuscripts share a common source can be seen in the use of two Vercelli homilies for the Rogation days (Vercelli XIX and XX) in CCCC 162. These two homilies occur in Vercelli as part of a set (XIX, XX, XXI) which covers all three Rogation days. Vercelli XIX-XXI have been identified as the work of a single author due to their similar style and shared unique vocabulary.[122] CCCC 162 also contains a unique Ascension homily that shares many of the linguistic and stylistic features of Vercelli XIX-XXI. Together the three Rogation homilies and Ascension homily present a full exposition of salvation history and faith derived from *De catechizandis rudibus* by Augustine of Hippo.[123] CCCC 162 cannot have copied these homilies from Vercelli itself given its use of the Ascension homily. Instead CCCC 162 must derive its material from a source also used by the Vercelli compiler. CCCC 162 came from an intellectual milieu similar to that which produced Vercelli as is also true of Bodley 340 + 342.[124] Both manuscripts come from south eastern England, either Canterbury or Rochester, and both were created at most a few decades after the Vercelli Book itself. It is probable that the three manuscripts either came from the same scriptorium, or that their exemplars or sources circulated among the same south-eastern communities.

b) Blickling in the Midlands

Two manuscripts from the midlands are closely related to the Blickling Book: CCCC 198 Part 2 and Junius 121. It is not known when CCCC 198 Part 2 was created and added to the rest of CCCC 198, although it must be after the creation of Part 1 in the early eleventh century, while Junius 121 dates from the third-quarter of the eleventh century. Blickling was created between 971 and 1000. Therefore, either no manuscripts have survived from the period between the creation of the book and its influence on these later manuscripts, or a lengthy interval of time elapsed before Blickling influenced other manuscripts. In either case, the high number of verbal parallels between the Blickling Book and between CCCC 198 Part 2 and Junius 121 shows that both draw either on Blickling itself or on closely related sources. Even though there is a more

[122] Scragg, D., 'Archbishop Dunstan's day', pp. 182-186.
[123] *Ibid.*, pp. 181-192; Szarmach in 'The Vercelli Homilies: Style and Structure', in *The Old English Homily and Its Background*, ed. P. Szarmach and B. F. Huppé (Albany, NY, 1978), pp. 244, 248; Fox, M., 'Vercelli Homilies XIX-XXI, the Ascension Day Homily in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 162, and the catechetical tradition from Augustine to Wulfstan', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 259-260, 277-278.
[124] Scragg, 'Old English Homilist', p. 192.

substantial gap of time between them and Blickling, CCCC 198 Part 2 and Junius 121 present the earliest and most direct kinship with the Blickling homilies in any extant manuscripts. However, CCCC 198 Part 2 and Junius 121 present two major problems that Bodley 340 + 342 and CCCC 162 did not in relation to Vercelli. Firstly, given their much later date than Blickling itself, there is a possibility that Blickling had moved from its original community to another in the meantime. Secondly, they seem to come from different scriptoria: Junius 121 is from Worcester, while CCCC 198 Part 2 is unlikely to be a Worcester manuscript, although it is probably Mercian. Since the evidence of dialect indicates that Blickling also originated in Mercia, even if Blickling had time to travel, no evidence exists to suggest that it travelled far. It seems to have stayed in Mercia between the late tenth century and the latter half of the eleventh.

The second problem is more difficult to answer. CCCC 198 Part 2 was produced by four different scribes (identified in scholarship as Scribes 5-8) and the Blickling material copied in Part 2 is limited to the sections produced by Scribes 7 and 8.[125] The source used by Scribe 7 was very much like the Blickling Book as is indicated by his/her repetition of some unusual spellings such as *good* 'good' and *culufre* 'dove' as well as repetition of some errors such as *geongweardode* instead of *geondweardode* 'presented'.[126] S/he also emulates the style of uppercase letters found in Blickling.[127] Scribe 8, however, was not a mechanical copyist and corrected several errors found in his/her source while still following it closely.[128] For example Scribe 8 repeats some unusual forms found in Blickling, such as *discipulos*, a nominative plural form of *discipul.*[129] Given how few variant readings there are between the Blickling and CCCC 198 material, especially between Blickling and the work of Scribe 7, it is probable that the creators of CCCC 198 Part 2 copied from either the Blickling Book itself, some of its component booklets, or its sources.[130] Since CCCC 198 as a whole was at Worcester in the thirteenth century it is tempting to see Part 2 as a Worcester production. However, doubts have been raised whether it reflects the intellectual milieu of the Worcester scriptorium on account of its lack of Ælfric material.[131]

In contrast, the evidence of Junius 121 would place at least one Blickling homily at Worcester. The author of a Junius 121 composite homily on the Harrowing of Hell (fols. 148v-

[125] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 313.
[126] Clayton, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 240.
[127] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 313.
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 314.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] Clayton, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 240.
[131] Swan, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi', p. 93.

154v) was steeped in the language of the Blickling homilies. The author of the Junius homily uses Old English terms that are unattested outside Blickling VII, for example *herehuðe* for booty and *ealdor* to denote Satan.[132] The author of the Junius homily only copies part of the Blickling homily, the scene of Adam and Eve begging for Christ's forgiveness, and crucially neither of the unusual terms occur in this section of Blickling VII. This suggests that the Junius author was familiar with the complete Blickling text. Since Junius 121 is known to have been produced at Worcester, it is clear that Blickling VII was available in some form to the Worcester community while other Blickling homilies were available elsewhere in the West Midlands. This could be explained by the circulation of Blickling booklets prior to the creation of the Blickling Book. Junius 121 and CCCC 198 Part 2 suggest, though, that this circulation was limited mainly to the West Midlands. Barring further discoveries this suggests that the booklets which became the Blickling Book originated in Mercia. Possibly, since CCCC 198 Part 2 contained more Blickling material than Junius 121, the booklets were not created in Worcester but rather somewhere else in the West Midlands.

c) Wider Circulation

The circulation of Blickling and Vercelli material beyond the West Midlands and south east can be grouped into four categories: material shared between Blickling and Vercelli themselves, Vercelli material in the west midlands, Blickling material in the south east, and Vercelli material in the south west.

c.i) Shared Material

While there are several thematic parallels between the Blickling and Vercelli Books, there is only one instance of shared material.[133] Blickling IX/Vercelli X are both based on a common source. The source in question was a Rogationtide homily focused on the Incarnation as an act of mercy and humility. Blickling IX is a fragment of the beginning of the homily while Vercelli X is a complete version. The introductory passage of Vercelli X which is not found in Blickling

[132] Scragg, 'Harrowing of Hell', p. 206.
[133] The main thematic parallels are Blickling XVII/Vercelli XVIII and Blickling XVIII/*Andreas*. For detailed discussion of these and their relationship see Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 308; Napier, A., 'Notes on the Blickling Homilies .I. St Martin', in *Modern Philology* i (1903), pp. 303, 306; Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* pp. 289-290; Sisam, *Studies*, p. 16; Hamilton, D., '*Andreas* and *Beowulf*: Placing the Hero', in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation,* ed. L. E. Nicholson and D. W. Frese (Notre Dame, IND, 1975), p. 81; Furuta, N., 'The Devaluation of Heroic Tradition in the Old English Poem *Andreas*', in *Multiple Perspectives on English Philology and History of Linguistics: A Festschrift for Shoichi Watanabe on his 80th Birthday* (Bern, 2010), pp. 125-156.

IX demonstrates that the two homilies reflect different versions of this homily. The ornamental 'm' of *men þa leofestan* which opens Blickling IX on f. 63v indicates that nothing is lost from the beginning of the homily. Therefore, the opening passage of Vercelli X must come from a different version of this homily from that used by the Blickling scribes.[134] This homily was comparatively popular in Anglo-Saxon England. It exists in seven known versions, most of which are only fragments.[135] While the fragmentary nature of most copies makes it difficult to be certain, the number of variant readings between these pieces indicate that not one of the surviving examples is directly based on any other.[136] Therefore there were many distinct copies of this piece in circulation and they all represent unique lines of transmission. This is consistent with the popularity of Rogation homilies in this period.[137] While Blickling IX/Vercelli X share a common source, they are not directly related to each other and therefore do not indicate a common origin for the books.

c.ii) Vercelli in the West Midlands

There are three occurrences of Vercelli material in manuscripts from the West Midlands: Bodley 343 (s. xii^2, W England), Hatton 113 (s. xi^2 (1064x1083), Worcester), and Hatton 115 (s. xi$^{3/4}$ or xi^2, Worcester?). All three of these manuscripts are linked to the episcopacy of St Wulfstan at Worcester. This may suggest the influx of Old English texts that occurred during his episcopacy brought Vercelli material to Worcester.

Bodley 343 offers the clearest example of the role of St Wulfstan in the migration of Vercelli material. Despite the late twelfth-century origins of the manuscript it contains a sizeable amount of Anglo-Saxon material.[138] It draws on many sources from different regions and institutions.[139] The Vercelli material is included among homilies copied from the CÆ tradition. The language of the manuscript, which is quite conservative for the twelfth century, is primarily late West Saxon.[140] Since it contains no traces of Kentish dialect but abundant late West Saxon influence, it is safe to suggest that Bodley 343 derives its Vercelli material from intermediate stages of the CÆ tradition which similarly removed the Kentish features. CCCC

[134] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 305.
[135] *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305; Gatch, 'Eschatology', pp. 117-118.
[136] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 306.
[137] *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, ed., J. Bazire and J. Cross (Toronto, 1982), p. xxiv.
[138] Irvine, S., *Old English Homilies from MS Bodley 343* (Oxford, 1993), p. xviii; Clayton, *Apocryphal Gospels*, p. 120.
[139] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, p. xxx; Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, pp. xxxiii, l-li.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. lv.

198 probably was in Mercia at the time of the creation of Bodley 343 and therefore it is possible that it served as an exemplar for the Bodley creator. However, Bodley 343 does not closely follow the conventions of other CÆ homiliaries. In other examples of the tradition it is not uncommon to find the same homilies copied in the same order.[141] However Bodley 343 deviates from this by using Vercelli III to serve the First Sunday in Lent rather than the Second, as it is used in both Bodley 340 and CCCC 198.[142] This is a small deviation but, given the consistency with which other CÆ homiliaries reproduce the structure of their exemplars, it is enough to raise the question of whether Bodley 343 drew on CCCC 198 or some other related collection. Regardless, its source was not the Vercelli Book itself, so it does not suggest any direct link between that book and the West Midlands.

An almost identical case can be made for Hatton 113, which contains the composite Wulfstan homily known as Napier XXX. This piece combines extracts from various Wulfstan homilies with some anonymous material to create a new work. Among its sources are several Vercelli pieces (Vercelli XXI, IX, IV, X).[143] Due to the compiler copying chunks of Vercelli material faithfully into his/her creation, Scragg suggests that the creator of Napier XXX was familiar with both Wulfstan and the Vercelli Book.[144] He even proposes that the creator of Napier XXX had access to the same exemplars as the Vercelli scribe.[145] While Scragg does not say so, this indicates that the creator of Napier XXX must have been working in the south east. Given that Hatton 113 is also closely associated with the episcopacy of St Wulfstan and so also with his interest in the history of Worcester, it seems entirely possible that a south eastern homily drawing heavily on Wulfstan's homilies would find its way into a Worcester manuscript.[146]

The last example of Vercelli circulation in the West Midlands comes from Hatton 115. This manuscript comprises various booklets that have been bound together. Where and when the binding happened is not clear, but given that the manuscript was extensively glossed by the Tremulous Hand it is possible that it was bound at thirteenth century Worcester.[147] The single Vercelli homily is found in a booklet appended to the end of the manuscript, now at fols. 140-

[141] Conti, A., 'An anonymous homily for Palm Sunday, The 'Dream of the Rood', and the progress of Ælfric's reform', *Notes and Queries* 48 (2001), 377-378.
[142] Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, p. lv.
[143] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* p. 395.
[144] Scragg, D., 'Napier's "Wulfstan" Homily XXX: Its Sources, its Relationship to the Vercelli Book and its Style', *ASE* 6 (1977), pp. 198-199, 211.
[145] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* p. 395.
[146] Scragg, 'Napier's "Wulfstan" Homily XXX', p. 205.
[147] Treharne, E. M., 'The Dates and Origins of Three Twelfth-Century Old English Manuscripts', in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and their Heritage*, ed. P. Pulsiano and E. M. Treharne (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 233, 235-236.

147.[148] The booklet evidently existed for some time apart from the manuscript since it was folded across the middle.[149] Given how little is known about this book its Vercelli material is difficult to account for. However, the probability is that, as with Bodley 343 and Hatton 113, the Vercelli material originated in the south east and came to Worcester in the late eleventh century where it was bound into the manuscript now called Hatton 115, although further work would be needed to demonstrate this conclusively.

c.iii) Blickling in the South East

There are three occurrences of Blickling material in the south east: CCCC 419 + 421 (s. xi[1], SE England), Junius 85 + 86 (s. xi med., SE England), and Cotton Faustina A. ix (s. xii[1], SE England). Unlike the manuscripts just discussed, these three do not come from the same community and therefore they cannot be linked to a single context in the way that the Worcester Vercelli homilies can. None of the cases from outside the West Midlands can be linked unequivocally to the Blickling Book itself. Rather, they all derive from intermediate, edited versions that can be linked to Mercia directly or indirectly.

Together with CCCC 421, CCCC 419 forms a homiliary made up mostly of pieces by Ælfric and Wulfstan. Parallels with Blickling IX occur in a composite homily attributed to Wulfstan (Napier XLIX).[150] Napier XLIX has been claimed as an example of Vercelli circulation due to the parallel between Blickling IX and Vercelli X.[151] However, linguistically, in its use of Anglian dialect and preference for *þ* over *ð*, Napier XLIX is closer to Blickling IX than it is to Vercelli X.[152] It is beyond dispute that Napier XLIX in CCCC 419 reflects an occurrence of Blickling-related material in the south east. It is unlikely that its source was the Blickling Book, however, since none of the seven extant versions of this anonymous Rogationtide homily are based directly on any other.[153] While the CCCC 419 version is more like Blickling IX than Vercelli X, it is still not close enough to be a direct copy. However, this overlooks the fact that the text in CCCC 419 is a composite homily that makes extensive use of Wulfstan. Since the creator(s) of CCCC 419 + 421 sought out Wulfstan and Ælfric material, the Anglian word form of the homily in question suggest that Napier XLIX originated in

[148] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies,* p. xxxi; Robinson, 'Self-contained units', p. 235-236.
[149] *Ibid.,* p. 235.
[150] Scragg, 'Corpus', p. 230.
[151] Wilcox, 'Variant texts', pp. 341-345.
[152] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 305.
[153] *Ibid.,* p. 306.

Mercia, possibly Worcester. Napier XLIX may have come to the south east in a manner similar to how Napier XXX came to Worcester, due to an interest in material by Wulfstan. However it got there, Napier XLIX does not draw on Blickling itself despite some general linguistic parallels.

Junius 85 + 86 makes use of three Blickling homilies: Blickling IV, Blickling IX/Vercelli X and Blickling XVII. The first of these is a tithing homily based on a sermon by Caesarius of Arles.[154] While the version in Junius 85 + 86 is quite similar to Blickling IV, it even includes the discussion of episcopal and priestly duties which has no parallel in the Caesarian original, the tendency of the Junius text to offer alternate translations of Caesarius' Latin indicates that it is not based on Blickling itself but rather on an alternate translation of the same homily.[155] The other two Blickling homilies in Junius 85 + 86 both have parallels in the Vercelli Book – Blickling IX/Vercelli X and Blickling XVII/Vercelli XVIII – and therefore could be mistaken for examples of Vercelli circulation. They are not based on the Vercelli Book, however. The example of Blickling IX found in Junius 85 + 86 is a fragment from the end of the homily. Since Blickling IX is itself only a fragment from the beginning of the homily, it is difficult to tell how closely related, if at all, the Junius fragment is to Blickling IX. All that can be said is that it is not from the same line of transmission as Vercelli X, but this does not mean that it is especially close to Blickling either.[156] Blickling XVII/Vercelli XVIII is a homily for Martinmas based extensively on the *Vita Sancti Martini* by Sulpicius Severus. The item in Junius 85 + 86 is closer to Blickling than Vercelli due to some shared scribal errors and both texts omitting a scene found in Vercelli XVIII. The superficial similarities between Blickling XVII and the homily in Junius 85 + 86 are not enough to indicate direct Blickling influence in the south east, though. Instead it most likely reflects the influence of a common source.[157] Old English hagiographical sermons are often essentially abbreviated translations and, in most cases, they probably derive from translations that circulated independently. An example of this can be seen with Cotton Vespasian D xxxi, which contains a translation of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* similar to that used in Vercelli XXIII.[158] There is no way to tell how many other homilies this translation may have influenced, but it offers an example of how the sources for hagiographical sermons could circulate.

[154] *Ibid.*, p. 308; Willard, R., 'The Blickling-Junius Tithing Homily and Caesarius of Arles.', in *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies*, ed. by Thomas A. Kirby and Henry Bosley (Baltimore, MD, 1949), pp. 66-67.
[155] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[156] Scragg, 'Homilies', pp. 307-308.
[157] Napier, 'Notes', pp. 303-304.
[158] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, p. xxxv.

Cotton Faustina A. ix is the most potentially problematic manuscript studied here. This book may have connections to early twelfth-century Winchester.[159] The manuscript contains pieces of Blickling VI, VIII, and IX. The closest parallel is with Blickling VI for Palm Sunday. Blickling VI stands out among Palm Sunday homilies due to its unusual combination of readings for Palm Sunday and Holy Monday.[160] The version found in Cotton Faustina A. ix also mixes discussion of Palm Sunday and Holy Monday. This indicates that it is based on some version of Blickling VI. However, the source is probably an intermediate version of Blickling VI rather than Blickling VI itself since the creator of the Faustina piece consistently deviates from the original. The author of the Faustina homily excises material to create a more focused homily.[161] The Faustina A. ix scribe is generally conservative. The scribe faithfully reproduces the late West Saxon dialect despite writing in the late twelfth century.[162] It is unlikely that s/he would on the one hand dutifully copy what must have been an archaic form of English while also editing the text. This shows that the scribe copied these changes from their source(s) and therefore they cannot have been copied from the Blickling Book.[163]

c.iv) Vercelli in the South West and Elsewhere

There are four manuscripts linked to Exeter which contain Blickling and/or Vercelli material: CCCC 41, CCCC 201 Part II, CCCC 419 + 421, and London, Lambeth Palace Library, 489. Two of these (CCCC 41 and CCCC 419 + 421) were created elsewhere and moved to Exeter. Two (CCCC 201 Part II and Lambeth Palace 489) were created wholly or in part at Exeter. Blickling influence is almost non-existent in the south west. CCCC 419 + 421 contains a small fragment of Blickling IX but, as noted, none of the versions of this popular homily is directly based on each other. So, while the text of CCCC 419 + 421 is related to the Mercian recension of this homily, it is not based on Blickling IX itself. This is the extent of Blickling influence in Exeter. To judge from what has survived, Vercelli was the only anonymous collection to have substantial influence in the south west. This stands out given the close ties between Worcester and Exeter.[164] Of course, it is possible that purely by chance no Blickling material travelled to

[159] Teresi, 'Ælfric or Not?', pp. 290-291.
[160] Lees, C. A., 'The Blickling Palm Sunday homily and its revised version', *Leeds Studies in English* xix (1988), 4-11.
[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
[162] Pope, J. C., *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 50-51.
[163] Scragg, 'Homilies', p. 307.
[164] Treharne, 'Bishop's Book', p. 542.

Exeter, but this may also indicate that Blickling was not produced at Worcester but somewhere else in the West Midlands.

CCCC 41 comes originally from the south east but its Vercelli material is in the form of marginalia added in the mid-eleventh century, around the time that the book presumably went to Exeter.[165] It is possible, therefore, that the Vercelli material in CCCC 41 was added in the south west. However, the trend in other manuscripts is for Vercelli influence to come to Exeter from elsewhere. For example, CCCC 201 Part II and Lambeth Palace 489 both contain Vercelli material but this must have come from manuscripts created elsewhere since there is no evidence for any other knowledge of Vercelli in the south west except for what was sent there by other communities.

Another link between Vercelli and Exeter is the *Soul and Body* poems found in both the Vercelli and Exeter Books. While the two poems differ in some notable ways, the close verbal parallels that they share, such as the only attested usages of the participle *bicowen/becowen*, 'to chew through', suggest that either they draw on a common source or that one is a copy of the other.[166] Both books were produced in the mid- to late tenth-century and Richard Gameson has demonstrated that, just like the Vercelli Book, the Exeter Book is the product of a scriptorium in the south of England.[167] Furthermore he has demonstrated that several of the manuscripts which bear codicological parallels with the Exeter Book were produced at Canterbury.[168] However, the book itself does not seem to have come from Canterbury since it lacks elements of the Canterbury ornamental style.[169] Since the Vercelli Book also originated in the south east, it is possible that the *Soul and Body* poems are both the work of the same scriptorium, perhaps even based on each other. *Soul and Body II* may well be adapted from *Soul and Body I* (or vice versa), but until the origins of the Exeter Book are better understood any such suggestion must remain tentative. All that can be said with certainty is that both poems reflect different versions of the same source, one of which travelled to Exeter.

Apart from this Exeter material, distribution of Blickling and Vercelli material was limited to the south east and West Midlands. The evidence for the influence of either book at

[165] Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins', p. 721; Hawk, *Preaching Apocrypha,* p. 63.
[166] Amodio, M. C., *The Anglo-Saxon Literature Handbook* (London, 2014), pp188-189.
[167] Gameson, R., 'The origin of the Exeter Book of Old English poetry', *Anglo-Saxon England* 25 (1996), 162-167.
[168] *Ibid.,* 177-179.
[169] *Ibid.*

the other major Anglo-Saxon intellectual centre, Winchester, is minimal.[170] This could result simply from loss of evidence. The tentative suggestion of some link between Cotton Faustina A. ix and Winchester may suggest that some legacy of influence existed but has been lost, but this is not enough to form firm conclusions.[171] Certainly monks from Winchester were familiar with older preaching materials as attested by the criticism of 'many errors' found in the preface to the first series of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*.[172] At least one of the 'errors' he attacked is found in the Vercelli Book, namely the motif of saintly intercession after the Last Judgement.[173] It is unclear whether Ælfric encountered this motif in Vercelli material or elsewhere so this can only provide a tentative hint at the availability of Vercelli material at Winchester.

Since almost all extant Anglo-Saxon manuscripts have links to Canterbury, Worcester, Winchester, Exeter or some combination of these, it is no surprise that Blickling and Vercelli circulation would focus on these communities. Even so their circulation was limited; Blickling influence never reached Exeter and neither book perceptibly influenced Winchester. The reason for this limited circulation is not clear.

Conclusions

Both Blickling and Vercelli appear to date from the last quarter of the tenth century, probably both from the earlier part of this timeframe. This chapter has also demonstrated that the origins based on dialect offered by previous scholars are almost certainly correct and can be corroborated by tracing the circulation of Blickling and Vercelli material in other manuscripts into the twelfth century. Just as dialect suggests a Mercian origin for Blickling and a Kentish origin for Vercelli, the links of descent that bind the various examples of circulation also lead back to these same regions. Thus, it seems almost certain that Blickling originated in the West Midlands near Worcester and Vercelli originated in Kent, although exactly where is unclear.

These conclusions suggest that the tendency to regard Blickling and Vercelli as 'other' when compared to the writings of reformers should not be taken too far. In fact, their origins suggest that Blickling and Vercelli are just as much products of the institutional church as are the works of men like Ælfric and Wulfstan. The origins of the books show that scholars must take seriously the question of how the ideas espoused in the Blickling and Vercelli Books

[170] Gneuss, H., 'The Origins of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester', *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), pp. 69-75.
[171] Teresi, 'Ælfric or Not?', pp. 290-291.
[172] Wilcox, 'Blickling Homilies', p. 100.
[173] Clayton, M., 'Delivering the Damned: A Motif in OE Homiletic Prose', *Medium Ævum* 55 (1986), 98-100.

compare to those of these later writers and what this comparison says about the nature and extent of disagreement in the late tenth-century English Church.

II

The Partially Knowable Audiences of the Blickling and Vercelli Books

Introduction

The Blickling and Vercelli Books, like Charles Dickens, tend to reflect different perspectives to different people.[174] To some they display the conservatism of the 'secular clergy', to others they are resources for the 'popular religion' of the laity, for others they have an ascetic streak, and some scholars have given up on the hope of identifying a specific audience.[175] Opinions about the intended audience for the Blickling and Vercelli Books have followed two distinct trajectories in the twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. Up to the mid-1980s scholars assumed a monastic audience for the Vercelli Book on account of what they saw as 'ascetic themes' and association with the tradition of monastic *florilegia*.[176] Since the 1990s discussion of the Vercelli Book has been, and continues to be, dominated by a revisionist trend that highlights elements associated with the 'secular clergy'.[177] There has been no comparable revisionist turn for the Blickling Book. The usual trend is still to assume a mixed audience of clergy and laity gathered at the Mass to hear a sermon.[178] However, this assumption is not without its critics, and of these Milton Gatch is the most vocal. He argues that association with

[174] Orwell, G., 'Charles Dickens', in *Essays* (London, 2000), p. 35.
[175] Zacher, S. 'Rereading the Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Homilies', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation,* ed. A. J. Kleist (Turnhout, 2007), p. 181; Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homily XV and *The Apocalypse of Thomas',* in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book,* ed. by S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 170-179; Gatch, M., 'The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies, *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989), 99-115.
[176] Sisam, K., 'Marginalia in the Vercelli Book', in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 116-118; Gatch, M., 'Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies', *Traditio* xxi (1965), p. 144; Szarmach, P. E., 'The Vercelli Homilies: Style and Structure', in *The Old English Homily & Its Backgrounds,* ed. P. Szarmach and B. F. Huppé (Albany, 1978), p. 241; Ó Carragáin, É., 'How did the Vercelli Collector interpret *The Dream of the Rood*?', in *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen,* ed. P. Tilling (Coleraine, 1981), pp. 66-67; Clayton, M., 'Homiliaries and preaching in Anglo-Saxon England', *Peritia* 4 (1985), p. 227.
[177] Ó Carragáin, É, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli: *The Dream of the Rood* and the Italian Connection', in *Vercelli tra Oriente ed Occidente, tra tarda antichità e Medioevo,* ed. V. Docetti Corazza (Alessandria, 1998), pp. 93-97; Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform: Tailored Sources and Implied Audiences', in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages,* ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leidne, 2002), pp. 203-227; Zacher, 'Rereading the Style and Rhetoric', p. 181; Wright, 'Vercelli Homily XV', pp. 170-179.
[178] Clayton, 'Homilaries', 223-225; Wilcox, J., 'The Blickling Homilies revisited: knowable and probable uses of Princeton University Library, MS Scheide 71', in *The Genesis of Books: Studies in the Scribal Culture of Medieval England in Honour of A.N. Doane*, ed. M. T. Hussey, J. D. Niles (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 106-107.

the Mass is unjustified, that references to audience are inconsistent and overly reliant on the homilists' sources, and therefore that audience is unknowable.[179] His conclusions remain influential, but they are also controversial since to most scholars a lay audience at the Mass still seems likely based on examination of the structure and contents of the Blickling Book.[180] In this chapter I argue that the audiences for both Blickling and Vercelli are 'partially knowable'; meaning that it is possible to recover some sense of for whom the books were intended and who used them, but that a detailed understanding of their audience is probably irrecoverable due to the fluidity of ecclesiastical identity in the late tenth century.

It is first of all necessary to define exactly what is meant by audience. Since both Blickling and Vercelli contain compilations built from pieces by many authors, 'audience' can refer to two distinct groups: the original audience for each text and the audience for the manuscripts. These two questions are linked since our opinions of audience for the manuscripts must be based on the cumulative evidence of their contents. If most or all of the contents of the manuscript reflect a monastic audience, then the manuscript itself probably was created for a monastic audience (at least a monastic audience should be seriously considered). The audience that an author intended was not necessarily the audience that read his/her work and the same piece could have been read by many different audiences. In the case of Vercelli there is also the question of the audience for the poetry and how this relates to the audience of the homilies.

In this chapter I will begin with the Blickling Book and the claim that its audience is unknowable. I argue that the audience of the book probably was a mixed one of laity and clergy gathered for Mass on Sundays and other feast days. To make this case, I will consider the two parts of Gatch's argument as found both in his 1977 book and in his 1989 article, that preaching at the Mass was not common in the early Middle Ages and that the use of sources by the Blickling homilists is so impersonal that any sense of intended audience is lost. I will show that preaching at the Mass was common, or at least expected, in early medieval Europe and was certainly encouraged in England from the late ninth century onwards. I will also show that while the homilies are reliant on their sources to a degree that can seem almost robotic, they are far from 'cut and paste' affairs. Rather, they are coherent thematic wholes crafted (albeit occasionally clumsily) to highlight key themes and lessons derived from the pericope read at the Mass.

[179] Gatch, 'Unknowable Audience', pp. 99-101; Gatch, M., *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 36-39.
[180] Dyson, G. P. *Priests and their Books in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2019), p. 122.

In contrast, the Vercelli Book was not created for an audience at the Mass. Instead its audience probably comprised the inmates of a religious community. The compiler had access to a library of religious poetry and prose that, while not necessarily beyond the scope of a lay library, fits more comfortably with the kind of libraries that existed at major churches such as Christ Church, St Augustine's, and Ramsey.[181] This library housed homilies and poems on diverse themes that drew on both pastoral and ascetic traditions of Christian thought. Consequently, the positions expressed in the book can appear contradictory to outside observers. However, the compiler and his/her community did not see contradiction, probably because s/he did not intend the book to be an apologia for a particular way of life. Instead, it was a source for devotional readings and study in both poetic and prose form based around themes of eschatology, penance, and the holy life. Consequently, despite the confidence of some recent claims, it is difficult to identify what kind of community produced the book, whether it was clerical or monastic.[182] The community does not fit easily into either category and this serves as a reminder that, outside communities touched by Winchester-style monastic reform, the boundaries between clerical and monastic lifestyles were probably fluid.

The Audience of the Blickling Book

i) The Use of Homilies in the Mass and the Audience of the Blickling Book

Gatch claims that, despite some references in the later Middle Ages, regular preaching at the Mass is a post-Tridentine ideal. Therefore, he claims, Blickling cannot have been created for use at the Mass.[183] In contrast, those familiar with patristics and the history of liturgy agree that preaching following the Gospel is an ancient component of Christian liturgy.[184] On account of these two conflicting views, it is necessary to examine the history of preaching at the Mass. This reveals that Gatch is almost certainly incorrect and preaching was a common part of late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon liturgy.

[181] Lapidge, M., *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 32-33, 50-51.
[182] Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII', pp. 203-227; Zacher, 'Rereading the Style and Rhetoric', p. 181; Wright, 'Vercelli Homily XV', pp. 170-179.
[183] Gatch, *Preaching and Theology,* pp. 25-26.
[184] Jungmann, J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* vol. 1 (New York, NY, 1959), p. 456; Martimort, A. G., *The Church at Prayer, vol. I: Principles of the Liturgy,* (Collegeville, MIN, 1987), p. 139.

Justin Martyr (d. 165), in his first *Apology*, refers to the preaching of sermons after scriptural readings among the Christians of Rome in the second century.[185] The abundance of homilies surviving from the patristic period also attest to the importance of preaching and exegesis from an early period.[186] Despite these ancient origins, however, liturgical preaching was not always universally practised. Preaching seems to have been associated at least partly with missionary zeal. For example, in North Africa after the defeat of Arianism all apart from bishops were expressly forbidden to preach. Augustine only revived the practice of priestly preaching there in the fifth century for his own missionary endeavours against Manicheism, Donatism, and Pelagianism.[187]

The specific regional custom that most influenced Anglo-Saxon liturgy was that found in Rome. By about c.700 references to the sermon disappear from *ordines* of the papal Mass.[188] It is not clear whether this means that liturgical preaching was no longer practiced at all, or whether it was reserved for special occasions, or whether it was understood that a gospel reading would be accompanied with preaching as a matter of course. If liturgical preaching had fallen out of favour in Rome by 700, it seems to have been a comparatively recent development since popes like Leo and Gregory had shown keen interest in religious education and the duties of preachers.[189] It was also Gregory who sent Augustine to evangelise the English c.597, so even if preaching at the papal Mass had become uncommon by 700 the first experience of the Roman Mass by the English probably involved preaching. Another liturgical tradition was introduced into Northumbria by the Irish who also seem to have practiced exegetical preaching.[190] However, by the late tenth century Roman custom was dominant in England and the Roman Rite served as the basis for all Anglo-Saxon descriptions of the Mass. Whether the Mass in England involved preaching must remain speculative since, while there are many references to preaching, it is often unclear whether it was associated with the Mass. For example, Bede regarded preaching as a fairly common practice within his monastic community, although its relationship to the Mass is ambiguous. The canons of the council of

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[185] Justin, *Apologia*, c. 67, in *The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy of the Rule of God*, ed. and transl. T. B. Falls (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp. 106-107.
[186] Jungmann, *Roman Rite* 1, pp. 456-457.
[187] *Ibid.*, p. 457.
[188] Klauser, T., *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, transl. J. Halliburton (Oxford, 1969), p. 64.
[189] Gy, P. M., 'History of the Liturgy in the West to the Council of Trent', in *The Church at Prayer, vol. I: Principles of the Liturgy* by A. G. Martimort, (Collegeville, MIN, 1987), p. 47; Markus, R. A., *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 26-33.
[190] Hughes, K., 'The Church in Irish Society, 400-800', in *A New History of Ireland vol. 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. D. Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005), pp. 321-323.

Clofesho in 747 also place great emphasis on the importance of bishops and priests preaching, although again it is not clear that this refers to preaching at the Mass.[191] The lack of evidence for vernacular homilies in England before the late ninth century stimes attempts to link these references to preaching to the Mass.[192] It is unimportant, however, whether preaching was a long-established custom in England since the emergence of vernacular homilies coincides with the influence of Carolingian Church reform, a movement which undeniably placed high value on *ad populum* preaching and greatly influenced the Anglo-Saxons.

The Franks had influenced English preaching as early as the Merovingian period. The most influential exponent of regular preaching from this time was Caesarius of Arles whose copious *ad populum* sermons were fundamental in shaping the Old English vernacular preaching tradition, albeit often under the name of Augustine rather than Caesarius.[193] It was, however, the Carolingians who had the greatest impact on Anglo-Saxon Church practice. Under the Carolingians attempts were made by Emperors Charles the Great and Louis the Pious to romanise and standardise the Frankish liturgy. This programme reached its zenith in the reforming councils of c.813 and in the imperial *capitula* that were promulgated alongside them, for example the *Admonitio Generalis*. These texts all affirm the importance of priests regularly preaching at the Mass to the faithful.[194] The *Capitula a sacerdotis proposita* instructed that preaching was to be done on Sundays and on feast days throughout the year, while the *Capitula episcopi cuiusdam Frisinensia* specifies that it was to occur in the Mass after the Gospel reading.[195] From 813 on Frankish custom was to preach regularly at the Mass. To accommodate this many homiliaries were produced in this period, such as the homiliaries of Alan of Farfa, Hrabanus Maurus, and St Perè-de-Chartres.[196] Others were produced for devotional reading or the Night Office.[197] Even though the Carolingians attempted to romanise the liturgy, they did not simply emulate the Roman *ordines.* Instead the reformed Frankish liturgy was a hybrid of Roman, Gallic, and Visigothic custom, implying that they found some elements of the Roman

[191] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.5, in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, transl. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1972); Cubitt, C., 'Pastoral care and conciliar canons: the provisions of the 747 council of Clofesho', in *Pastoral Care before the Parish* ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 201-202.
[192] Scragg, D., 'A ninth-century Old English homily from Northumbria', *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016), 47-49.
[193] Jungmann, *Roman Rite* 1, p. 458.
[194] McKitterick, R., *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789-895* (London, 1977), pp. 81-82, 87-89; Boretius, A., *Capitularia Regum Francorum* vol. 1, no. 22 (Hannover, 1881).
[195] McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, pp. 82-83; Boretius, *Capitularia*, vol. 1, nos. 36.
[196] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
[197] *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 99-114.

Rite lacking.[198] Even if the popes no longer regularly preached after 700, the Carolingians certainly continued to place a high value on preaching in a liturgical context.

The importance of Carolingian ideas for the Church in tenth-century England cannot be overstated. Alfred and Æthelstan are both known to have cultivated close ties to Frankish and Breton churches and to have hosted notable figures like Grimbald, John the Old Saxon, and Israel the Grammarian at their courts.[199] The programme of translation initiated by Alfred may have been inspired by Frankish models. Specifically, his wish that all bishops familiarise themselves with the *Cura pastoralis* of Gregory the Great may have been inspired by decrees from the reforming councils of 813, especially the council of Mainz.[200] Besides this, evidence for profound Carolingian influence on Anglo-Saxon preaching is visible in the extent to which Anglo-Saxon authors relied on Carolingian models when composing their homilies. Many of the Blickling and Vercelli homilies show the influence of Carolingian homiliaries created for preaching to the people, such as those of St Perè-de-Chartres and Alan of Farfa. In contrast homiliaries for the Night Office, like those by Smaragdus or the Auxerre school, were much less influential; the one exception to this is the Homiliary of Paul the Deacon which was universally influential.[201] In other words, the English in the tenth century were particularly influenced by Carolingian policies of *ad populum* preaching and these shaped their practice of liturgical preaching. An area where the English may have innovated on the Frankish example is in vernacular preaching since all surviving Carolingian homilies are in Latin, although preaching in 'German' is alluded to in some of the 813 reforming councils.[202]

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[198] Gy, 'History of the Liturgy', p. 55.

[199] Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi*, c. 78 in *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* transl. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (London, 1983); Gretsch, M., *The Intellectual Foundations of English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 242-249; Brett, C., 'A Breton Pilgrim in England in the Reign of King Æthelstan', in *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. G. Jondorf and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 43-70; Lapidge, M., 'Israel the Grammarian in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Latin Literature 900-1066* (London, 1993), pp. 87-104

[200] McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, pp. 87-89.

[201] Zacher, S., 'Sin, Syntax, and Synonyms: Rhetorical Style and Structure in Vercelli Homily X', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 103 (2004), 54; Szarmach, P., 'Vercelli Homily XIV and the Homiliary of Paul the Deacon', *Leeds Studies in English* 37 (2006), 75-80; De Bonis, G. D., 'The Birth of Saint John the Baptist: A Source Comparison between Blickling Homily XIV and Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I.XXV', in *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c.950-1150)*, ed. L. Lazzari, P. Lendinara, and C. Di Sciacca (Barcelona, 2014), pp. 264, 284; Cross, J. E., 'Blickling Homily XIV and the Old English Martyrology on John the Baptist', *Anglia* 93 (1975), 146-147; Hall, T., 'The Portents of Christ's Birth in Vercelli Homilies V and VI: Some Analogues from Medieval Sermons and Biblical Commentaries', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 76-83; Scragg, D., 'An Old English homilist of Archbishop Dunstan's day', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Korhammer, (Cambridge, 1992), p. 182.

[202] Gatch, M., 'The Achievement of Ælfric and his Colleagues in European perspective', in *The Old English Homily & Its Backgrounds*, ed. P. Szarmach and B. F. Huppé (Albany, NY, 1978), pp. 48-51.

It is reasonable to conclude that Anglo-Saxon homilists understood the purpose of these Frankish texts and were using their vernacular creations similarly, although whether preaching at the Mass was a continuation, restoration, or innovation is unclear. It is advisable to conclude that books like the Blickling Book, which were modelled on sources used for preaching at the Mass, were themselves intended for this purpose. They are part of a larger tradition of ritualistic preaching that reaches back to the Apostolic Age, but that was especially important in Carolingian Francia. Thus by considering the use of homilies in worship in western Europe during the first Christian millennium it is evident that, contrary to Gatch's suggestion, preaching at the Mass is the most likely intended context for the use of the Blickling Book.[203]

ii) The Blickling Homilists' Sources, Themes, and Audience

The other key part of Gatch's argument is about the way that authors used their sources. In brief Gatch claims that audience is unknowable since the homilists used a diverse array of sources but make little attempt to adapt them for a lay audience. While this observation is basically correct, he overemphasises the problems that it creates. It is the norm for vernacular homilies from the late tenth to the twelfth centuries to be 'composite', that is built from a variety of sources. However, it is not the case that they are uncreative or mechanical copies.[204] In fact, the authors of such composite homilies consistently add their own stylistic elements and take care that the final product works satisfactorily as a homily in its own right.[205] The Blickling homilies are no different, and while their authors drew on a variety of sources this does not necessarily make their audience 'unknowable'.

Blickling IV demonstrates how audience can be partially recovered despite the homily being composite. The homily is mostly based on a tithing homily for the Birth of John the Baptist (24th June) by Caesarius of Arles, but it also contains a long section of original material on pastoral care inserted at about the midpoint.[206] The rubric of the piece links it to the third Sunday in Lent. Gatch claims that Lent would be an inappropriate time for a sermon on tithing since the Caesarian exemplar 'was suitable to the harvests which were just beginning at that time of the year (i.e. late June) in the south of France'.[207] Gatch claims that therefore Blickling

[203] Gatch, 'Unknowable', pp. 99-101.
[204] Godden, M., 'Old English composite homilies from Winchester', in *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975), 57; Scragg, D., *Dating and Style in Old English Composite Homilies* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 1; Thompson, N., '*Hit Segð on Halgum Bocum*: The Logic of Composite Old English Homilies', *Philological Quarterly* 81.4 (2002), 383-384.
[205] Scragg, *Dating and Style,* pp. 5-12.
[206] Gatch, 'Unknowable', pp. 102-103.
[207] *Ibid.*

IV cannot expound a Lenten pericope since it had been removed from the appropriate agricultural context.[208] There is also the pastoral section which addresses itself to the priesthood. Gatch claims that this section marks a radical shift away from the laity to the clergy and thereby confusingly mixes these two different audiences in a manner unsuitable for public preaching.[209] In other words, the suggestion that Blickling IV was not suitable for a lay audience in Lent rests on two claims: that the agricultural sections on tithing were inappropriate for the third Sunday and that the pastoral section was inappropriate for the laity.

The first question that arises is whether Blickling IV is in fact a homily for the third Sunday in Lent, as its rubric claims. The selection of Lenten homilies in the Blickling Book is unusual because it contains a homily for the third Sunday but not one for the fourth. Homilies for the third Sunday are rare in the Old English homiletic corpus while homilies for the fourth Sunday are common.[210] Is it possible that the rubric is incorrect and Blickling IV was intended as a homily for the fourth Sunday, and does this effect its appropriateness for public preaching in Lent? The other surviving version of the homily in Junius 86 does not help, it is not rubricated and is found alongside other homilies none of which is arranged in liturgical order.[211]

Despite claiming that the homily does not fit a pericope, Gatch nowhere indicates what the pericope for the third Sunday in Lent would have been. From consultation of gospel lists and other homilies, it emerges that the reading for the third Sunday in Lent in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries was Luke 11. 14-28, the story of the Pharisees falsely accusing Jesus of casting out demons with the help of demons. This is the reading given in the gospel list of Cambridge, Trinity College, B. 10. 4 (215), a gospel-book produced at either Christ Church or Peterborough in the first quarter of the eleventh century.[212] The same is also given in the list of London, British Library, Add. 34890 another early eleventh-century gospel-book from Christ Church.[213] Luke 11. 14-28 is also the reading explicated by Ælfric in his popular third Sunday homily. Therefore, this pericope was read on the third Sunday in Lent at Christ Church, Winchester, Cerne Abbas, and possibly Peterborough in the early eleventh century. Of the two anonymous homilies associated with the third Sunday – Blickling IV and a piece in Cambridge,

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[208] *Ibid.*
[209] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.
[210] Scragg, D., 'The homilies of the Blickling manuscript', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday,* ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), p. 303.
[211] Willard, R., 'The Blickling-Junius Tithing Homily and Caesarius of Arles.', in *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies*, ed. by Thomas A. Kirby and Henry Bosley (Baltimore, MAR, 1949), pp. 66-67; Scragg, 'homilies of the Blickling manuscript', p. 308.
[212] Cambridge, Trinity College, B. 10. 4 (215), Wren Library, f. 165v, accessed 01.09.2019.
[213] London, British Library, Add. 34890, British Library, f. 148v, accessed 01.09.2019.

Corpus Christi College Library 198 – neither explicitly responds to this reading since they are both primarily catechetical rather than exegetical. However, both are united by themes of social order and harmony consistent with Christ's comment in the reading that a house divided against itself cannot stand.[214] In the CCCC 198 homily this sentiment is expressed through the rule 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. In Blickling IV, an emphasis on tithes as a social good and therefore on the Church as a conduit for Christian peace is also visible in the bridge between the Caesarian source and the pastoral section:

> 'See now how glad the poor are when any man comforts them with food and clothing. Much more glad is the soul of that man when he distributes alms for her … No man need doubt on this, that the forsaken church will not be mindful about those who live near her. Therefore, my dearest brethren, give your tithe goods to that place and, [for] God, divide them thereto [for] those who keep their orders with purity and will properly cultivate God's praise'.[215]

Blickling IV blurs the distinction between alms and tithes found in Caesarius' thought and which was repeated elsewhere in both Blickling and Vercelli.[216] The homilist first refers to the gratitude of those receiving alms and to the gratitude of the soul whose body gives alms. S/he then moves to point out that a church not supported by tithes cannot support those who live around her. By the late tenth century, it was accepted that part of the tithe would be distributed by the clergy as alms to the poor.[217] Thus when the homilist shifts from the benefits of alms and tithes to associated pastoral duties s/he emphasises not only how tithes benefit the payer but also how they factor into the larger cohesion of a Christian society.[218] Rudolph Willard, describing the shift into the pastoral section, said of Blickling IV that the 'theme suddenly changes to pastoral care'.[219] However if Blickling IV was a third Sunday homily, then the change seems less sudden and instead appears to be a logical shift from the discussion of tithing to a reflection on its larger socio-spiritual implications.

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[214] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 198, Parker Library, ff. 137r-140r, accessed 31.05.2019.
[215] Blickling IV, ll. 59-63: 'Geseoþ nu hu bliþe þa earman beoþ þonne hi mon mid mete 7 mid hrægl reteþ. Mycle bliþre bið seo sawl þæs mannes þonne hire man þa ælmessan fore dæleþ… ne þearf þæs nanne man tweogean þ*æt* seo forlætene cyrice ne hycgge ymb þa þe on hira neawiste lifgeaþ. Forþon broþor mine þa leofestan syllaþ ge eowere teoþan sceattas þyder 7 þær Gode dælaþ þa*m* þe heora hadas mid clænnesse healdan 7 Godes lof mid rihte began willaþ'.
[216] Shuler, E., 'Caesarius of Arles and the Development of the Ecclesiastical Tithe: From a Theology of Almsgiving to Practical Obligations', *Traditio* 67 (2012), 57-65.
[217] Constable, G., *Monastic Tithes: From their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 27-44; Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', c. 56, in *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* ed. and transl. A. Rabin (Manchester, 2014), p. 97.
[218] Tinti, F., 'The 'costs' of pastoral care: church dues in late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 32-44.
[219] Willard, 'Tithing Homily', p. 78.

If the rubric to Blickling IV is wrong, however, and the homily was meant for the fourth Sunday, then Gatch's criticisms are still shaky since the homily fits the pericope of the fourth Sunday in Lent even more neatly than the third Sunday. Looking again at Ælfric and the gospel lists, the reading for the fourth Sunday was John 6. 1-14, the feeding of the five thousand. Thematically the treatment of this subject by Ælfric aligns almost exactly with the agricultural and pastoral themes of Blickling IV. On agriculture Ælfric says:

> 'God has wrought many miracles and daily works, but those miracles are much weakened in the sight of men because they are very ordinary. [It] is a greater miracle that God Almighty everyday feeds all the world and directs the good than was that miracle, that he filled five thousand men with five loaves. But men wondered at this not because it was a greater miracle but because it was unusual. Who now gives fruit to our fields and multiplies the harvest from a few grains but he who multiplied the five loaves?'[220]

Ælfric emphasises that harvests come from God, and this is reminiscent of a passage from the Caesarian homily quoted in Blickling IV:

> 'Why can we not perceive that the earth is God's? And that [the] livestock by which we live is God's, and we all are His, and all the world is under His power; and the winds and the rains which awaken the fruits of the earth are His and the heat of the sun that warms the earth, and He created them all, and has them under His dominion. And our Lord is very mindful of all the gifts that He has bestowed on us, and at the last day we must repay all that He has previously given to us on earth'.[221]

While the Blickling extract is more obviously related to tithing, the basic understanding found in both Blickling IV and Ælfric is that all that grows and feeds humanity comes from God and thus belongs to him, an idea underlined in the pericope. As well as the agricultural reference, Ælfric also emphasises the role of the apostles in distributing the bread. This, Ælfric claims, symbolises their preaching. The emphasis which Ælfric places on preaching aligns exactly with the theme of the pastoral section in Blickling IV, the chief point of which is that the clergy

[220] Ælfric I.12, ll. 45-53: 'Fela wundra worhte God and dæghwamlice wyrcð ac ða wundra sind swiðe awacode on manna gesihðe forðon ðe hi sind swiðe gewunelice. Mare wundor is þæt God Ælmihtig ælce dæg fet ealne middangeard and gewissað þa godan þonne þæt wundor wæra þæt he þa gefylde fif ðusend manna mid fif hlafum. Ac ðæs wundredon men ne forði þæt hit mare wundor wære ac forði þæt hit wæs ungewunelic. Hwa sylð nu wæstum urum æcerum and gemenigfylt þæt gerip of feawum cornum buton se ðe ða gemænigfylde ða fif hlafas?'
[221] Blickling IV: 'For hwon ne magon we geþencan þ*æt* seo eorþe is Godes? 7 Godes is þ*æt* yrfe þe we big leofiaþ 7 we ealle syndon his 7 on his onwealde is eal þes middangeard 7 þas windas 7 þas regnas syndon ealle his þa þe eorþan wæstmas weccaþ 7 þære sunnan hæto þe þas eorþan hlyweþ 7 we ealle gesceafta syndon his 7 he hi ealle geworhte 7 on his anwalde hafaþ. 7 ure Drihten is swiþe gemyndig ealra þara gifena þe he us tolætaþ 7 we æt þæm ytmestan dæge eall agyldan sceolan þ*æt* he us ær on eorþan sealde'.

should properly teach the laity. The similarity in theme between Blickling IV, John 6. 1-14, and the Ælfrician fourth Sunday homily suggests that Blickling IV may be incorrectly rubricated. Regardless of whether the rubric is correct, though, there is clear thematic agreement between the readings of the third and fourth Sundays, the Caesarian tithing homily, and the pastoral section of Blickling IV. This undermines the claim that Blickling IV is confused and inappropriate for a lay audience at Mass.

As for the implicit suggestion by Gatch that lay and clerical audiences are mutually exclusive, Jonathan Wilcox has shown this not to be the case. There is every reason to think that the usual audience at Mass would be a mix of laity and clergy.[222] In this context, the exhortation to the clergy to teach has a dual effect of reminding them of their duties while also reminding the laity what they should expect from their priests. There is no suggestion that the laity are excluded. Rather, the homilist has written his/her homily to serve a mixed audience.

The other claims made by Gatch rest broadly on the assertion that the Blickling homilies are 'thoroughly conventional and without detectable local colouring'.[223] This claim is not unfounded since the homilies are formulaic and usually discuss their themes in ways that give little hint of an intended audience. The examples Gatch uses to demonstrate this, however, are questionable. For example, his doubtful claim that the *ubi sunt* motif in Blickling V 'gives one pause' about its suitability for a lay audience since it has a monastic source.[224] The *ubi sunt* motif was widely popular in Old English homiletics and poetry so, even if it originated in a monastic source, there are no grounds to suggest that it was inappropriate for a general audience.[225] Likewise Ælfric also worked to promote ideas in his homilies that derived from 'monastic' or otherwise complicated sources, yet he certainly addressed the laity.[226]

The pericope is at the core of any homiletic text and with it comes a link to the performative context of the Mass. Since preaching at the Mass is an ancient practice with which authors in tenth-century England were familiar, it cannot be dismissed as a post-Tridentine ideal. Despite claims to the contrary, the Blickling homilies were crafted to respond to the pericope and impart Christian wisdom to the gathered faithful. They did this regardless of the tendency of their authors to construct homilies out of extracts from other sources, some of

[222] Wilcox, J., 'Ælfric in Dorset and the Landscape of Pastoral Care', in *Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 56-59.
[223] *Ibid.*, pp.
[224] Gatch, 'unknowable', pp. 106-108.
[225] Di Sciacca, C., 'The "Ubi Sunt" Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105 (2006), 365-387.
[226] McKitterick, *Frankish Church,* pp. 86-87; Hall, T., 'Ælfric as Pedagogue', in *A Companion to Ælfric,* ed. H. Magennis and M. Swan (Leiden, 2009), pp. 193-199.

which were not intended for the Mass. The audience of sources used is of secondary importance, however, since what matters more is the new audience that the homilists gave to this material. While there is always room for some scepticism, the historical attitudes to preaching and the example of other homiletic texts from the period suggest that the intended use of the Blickling homilies was preaching at the Mass to a mixed lay and religious audience.

The Audience of the Vercelli Book

In his *Regula Pastoralis,* Gregory the Great devoted the entire final book to how preachers should moderate their teaching style to suit different audiences. Over a century after King Alfred had the book translated, Ælfric echoed this concern in the preface to his translation of Genesis when he warned Ealdorman Æthelweard about the dangers of presenting complex material to unlearned audiences.[227] Gregory and Ælfric were both highly skilled teachers. It is unlikely that all those responsible for preaching and pastoral care could effectively adapt their approach to their audience. However, in principle there was an awareness that those tasked with promoting Christianity amongst the laity should remain conscious of the capabilities of their audience. In the case of the Vercelli Book this raises the question of which audiences the various poets, homilists, and the compiler all assumed for their work and how, if at all, we can recover some sense of who these audiences were based on how these people approached their tasks.

Unlike Blickling, the Vercelli Book is not a homiliary and consequently it does not have an obvious context for use.[228] Therefore it is best to approach the audience for the Vercelli Book in two stages. The first is to consider the different audiences reflected in the works of the poets and homilists. The second is to build from these conclusions a sense of for whom the compiler intended the book. The individual authors of the Vercelli Book did not all share a common assumed audience. The pieces instead seem intended for a diverse selection of potential audiences including devotional readers, students, lay congregants, and aspiring homilists. It is difficult to say with certainty for whom a writer intended a work and there is no reason why a work could not serve multiple distinct audiences. In the case of poetry, it is important to look not only at evidence within the poems themselves but also to how vernacular

[227] Menzer, M. J., 'The Preface as Admonition: Ælfric's Preface to Genesis' in *The Old English Hexateuch: Aspects and Approaches* ed. R. Barnhouse and B. C. Withers (Kalamazoo, MI, 2000), pp. 17-19, 22-24, 31-34.
[228] Zacher, 'Rereading Style and Rhetoric', p. 181; Scragg, D., 'Old English homiliaries and poetic manuscripts', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, I: 400-1100* ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2011), p. 557.

poetry was used in Anglo-Saxon society. In the case of the homilies, rather than discussing each homily individually, I will focus on the use of the Old Testament in homilies III, VII, XIX-XXI to demonstrate how this sheds light on their intended audience. To discuss audience, it is necessary to single out particular texts and trends in the Vercelli Book. What should be avoided though is the temptation to cast the entirety of the book in a single mould based on the texts and trends selected. [229] Rather than trying to impose uniformity where it does not exist, it is important to remain open to the diversity that the compiler himself/herself either did not see or did not take issue with.

i) Audience of Individual Authors

It is famously difficult to identify the audience for Old English poetry largely because it is unclear what such poetry was for.[230] The poems of the Vercelli Book are no exception to this. However, the Vercelli compiler freely mixed religious poetry and prose suggesting that s/he intended them to serve a common purpose. This purpose may reflect the tradition of *lectio divina* in which reading served as a source for meditation and personal reform.[231] The practice is mandated in several religious rules and customaries from the period. It is also alluded to in Asser's *Vita Ælfredi regis Angul Saxonum* and in the letter to Sigeweard by Ælfric, where the writers allude to reading religious poetry and prose as a means of spiritual edification.[232] The possibility that poetry like that recorded in the Vercelli Book could have been written for *lectio divina* cannot be discounted. In fact, the self-consciously literary approach of the poetry of Cynewulf underlines how important the act of reading was to the effectiveness of some of the poems. It is also important to note that reading in the modern sense of an activity undertaken for pleasure does not seem to have been valued by late antique and early medieval moralists. In the works which transmitted classical ideas about education to medieval writers, education and reading were encouraged mainly as means to personal growth.[233] The Anglo-Saxons were

[229] Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII', pp. 203-227; Zacher, 'Rereading the Style and Rhetoric', p. 181; Wright, 'Vercelli Homily XV', pp. 170-179.
[230] Wormald, P., 'Bede, *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in his *Times of Bede, 625-865: Studies in Early English Christian Society and Its Historian,* ed. S. Baxter (Malden, MA, 2006), pp. 32-58; Goffart, W., '*Hetware* and *Hugas*: Datable Anachronisms in *Beowulf*', in *The Dating of Beowulf,* ed. C. Chase (Toronto, 1997), p. 100.
[231] DeGregorio, S., 'Texts, Topoi, and the self: a reading of Alfredian spirituality', *Early Medieval Europe* 13.1 (2005), 85-93; DeGregorio, S., 'Affective Spirituality: Theory and Practice in Bede and Alfred the Great', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005), 129-139.
[232] Benedict, *Regula sancti Benedicti,* cc. 38, 42; Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis Angul Saxonum,* cc. 75-76, 88, in *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* transl S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (London, 1983); Remley, P., *Old English Biblical Verse: Studies in Genesis, Exodus and Daniel* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 87-90.
[233] Robertson, D., *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, MIN, 1996), pp. 107-119.

heirs to this tradition. Given that the poetry of the Vercelli Book emphasises universal subjects of devotion such as the apostles, the Cross, and eschatology it probably was to be read with an eye to its lessons which links it to the practice of *lectio divina.*

Some of the poems refer to the ability of the poetic form to inspire action in the reader. The best examples of this are found in *The Fates of the Apostles* and *The Dream of the Rood.* In the former, Cynewulf, who calls himself 'sad and travel-weary' (*siðgeomor*) and alludes to his 'sick spirit' (*seocum sefan*) says that he has gathered together the accounts of the martyrdoms of the twelve apostles to reflect on how their deaths magnified God. The uncharacteristic reference to his own condition at the beginning indicates the reason behind his poem. He is by his own admission either physically or spiritually exhausted and sick. He returns to this self-image at the end of the poem when he ruminates on the inevitable journey out of life and into the unknown that is death. The end of the poem is oddly structured: it has two conclusions that sandwich a runic riddle. This peculiarity lends credence to the idea that *Fates* may be the work of a Cynewulf hampered by sickness or old age.[234] The poem serves as a series of vignettes that together show how a Christian should face death. Implicit in *Fates* then is the sense that it offered to Cynewulf a chance for reflection and had a message to impart. The other example comes from *The Dream of the Rood.* Éamonn Ó Carragáin argues that the poem was inspired by liturgical veneration of the Cross on account of the similarity between the bejewelled Rood described early in the poem and ornate altar crosses from the late tenth century.[235] Beyond this the poem also encourages its reader to emulate its example by practising devotion to both the Cross and to Mary. At several points the Cross takes comfort in the fact that it is venerated by the faithful and warns that those who do not carry 'the noblest of signs' (*beacna selest*) in their breast will be left terrified, mute, and damned on Doomsday. Likewise, the Cross also compares its own exaltation to that of Mary, whom it claims God honoured above all other women. If veneration of the Cross is essential to the eternal fate of the soul, then so too is veneration of Mary. The poet thus urges the reader to engage in the veneration of these things, suggesting the effect s/he meant the poem to have on its readers. These are only two examples, but they suggest that one use of written poetry was to inspire action. This places such poems in a tradition of *lectio divina* undertaken either by members of a religious community or by laity wealthy enough to be literate or employ literate people to read to them.

[234] *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles,* ed. K. Brooks (Oxford, 1961), p. xxxi.
[235] Ó Carragáin, É., *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems in the* Dream of the Rood *Tradition* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 339-351.

Another potential audience for the poetry is students in the school of a religious community. While Anglo-Saxon teachers seem to have been unfamiliar with classical texts of rhetoric, the importance of clear expression to the performance of pastoral duties resulted in Anglo-Saxon teachers prioritising literacy and eloquence. From traditions of classical education that were filtered through a late antique lens, the Anglo-Saxons inherited the idea that memorisation of examples of eloquence helped students to become eloquent.[236] This practice is referred to in several textbooks for the study of Latin by Aldhelm, Bede and Boniface.[237] The most common subjects of memorisation were the works of Roman Christian poets like Juvencus, Avitus and Prudentius since these writers helped students to learn both eloquence and the essentials of Christianity.[238] Vernacular poetry was also studied and memorised as suggested by the education of King Alfred and his children. In both cases English (noble) children were expected to memorise the Psalter and 'Saxon poems'.[239] What these 'Saxon poems' were is unknown but, given the emphasis on Christian poetry in minster schools, it is likely that some of the Old English poetry studied by Alfred and his children would have been religious. There is no reason to think that the study of vernacular eloquence would be limited to the secular nobility. The religious too would need to be conversant in eloquent and persuasive Old English, especially if they aimed to become preachers. The influence of poetry is visible in the homilies of men like Ælfric and Wulfstan both of whom employed the rhythms and conventions of Old English and Latin poetry, such as alliteration and rhyming, to give their words more force when spoken aloud.[240] It is possible that the poems of the Vercelli Book were studied by students in a religious community. Their religious nature would make them vernacular counterparts to the Christian Latin poems that were found in these schools. While it is difficult to know who would have been the audience for the poetry at least three potential audiences suggest themselves. The poems could have been copied for the practice of public reading, for *lectio divina*, or to help teachers educate their students.

The homilies have a similar number of potential audiences although, due to homiletic conventions prioritising a listening lay audience, other audiences can be overlooked by scholars. A feature of the Vercelli homilies that may help identify their intended audiences is how some authors approach the Old Testament. It has sometimes been assumed that knowledge

[236] Knappe, G., 'Classical rhetoric in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998), 7-8, 13-20, 24-29.
[237] Thornbury, E. V., *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 40-41.
[238] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[239] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63; Asser, *Vita Ælfredi*, cc. 23, 75.
[240] Knappe, 'Classical Rhetoric', 24-25.

of the Old Testament would have been common among the laity.[241] However, the amount of time devoted to it in homilies suggests otherwise since preaching on the Old Testament was not especially common in Anglo-Saxon England. Ælfric is the only homilist to devote significant time to the subject, and he does so in a catechetical manner that does not assume any familiarity with the material. Ælfric prefaces any use of the Old Testament with a summary of the relevant story before explaining how it relates to the pericope or theme.[242] Despite making this concession, he still limits his use of the Old Testament to the second series of his homilies. This suggests that he expected preachers to leave Old Testament subjects until they had completed the first series. The usual practice for other Anglo-Saxon homilists was to focus overwhelmingly on the New Testament and other Christian texts such as hagiographies, passion narratives, and other legends. While most of the Vercelli homilies follow this approach of silence, a handful extensively use the Old Testament. This is interesting since it attests to vernacular preaching on the Old Testament before Ælfric, even though this is usually seen as a 'hallmark of Ælfrician Christianity'.[243] It also offers a path to reach conclusions about the audience of the Vercelli Book, since homiletic discussion of the Old Testament is so unusual for this period.

In the handful of homilies that use the Old Testament two different approaches are apparent. Three homilies (Vercelli XIX-XXI) assume that their audience will be unfamiliar with the Old Testament and employ a method like that used by Ælfric of summarising the story and explaining its relevance. Two homilies (Vercelli III and VII) appear to assume that their audience has some familiarity with the Old Testament and consequently do not try to explain their use of it in any detail. The general trend not to preach on the Old Testament suggests that familiarity with it was not universal and that preachers knew to take this into account. This is an inference borne out by our evidence. Preaching at the Mass was the primary vehicle through which lay people would become familiar with the Bible. The Roman Rite, the dominant form of Anglo-Saxon Mass, did not include any Old Testament readings, only a Gospel and an Epistle reading.[244] In contrast, the Gallic Rite encountered by Augustine on his way to England did include Old Testament readings. Consequently it is possible that Old Testament readings

[241] Remley, *Biblical Verse*, p. 88.
[242] For example, see his use of the Passover story in II.xv or similarly in II.xxxv when he offers a translation of part of the Book of Job before expounding on it.
[243] Upchurch, R. K., 'Catechetic Homiletics: Ælfric's Preaching and Teaching during Lent', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. H. Magennis and M. Swan (Leiden, 2009), p. 216.
[244] Palazzo, E., *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, transl. M. Beaumont (Collegeville, MIN, 1993), p. 86; Martimort, A., *The Church at Prayer: The Eucharist*, transl. M. J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MIN, 1983), p. 128; Jungmann, *Roman Rite* 1, pp. 393-396.

were part of the Anglo-Saxon Mass despite it not being a Roman practice.[245] However, while Augustine may have brought Gallic practices to England, there is little evidence to suggest that reading from the Old Testament was a common part of the Mass in late tenth-century England. For example, none of the surviving booklists refer to priests having copies of the Old Testament, only gospel books and epistolaries.[246] On the other hand, Ælfric also may allude to Old Testament readings in the thirty-fifth homily of his second series which translates part of the Book of Job. Ælfric claims that Job was read on the first Sunday in September, but he does not specify that it was read at the Mass. When he says that Job is read at the 'service' (*ðenungum*) of God he uses a term that he employs elsewhere when referring to the Office rather than the more usual terms for the Mass like 'mystery' (*geryne*) or 'sacrifice' (*onsægdness*).[247] A recurring element of this homily is the need to justify the abbreviation of Job to learned audience members. In this homily, Ælfric treats the Book of Job in a manner similar to how he and other homilists used the lives of saints on their feast days. He abbreviates Job and, unlike his treatment of the Gospels and Epistles, does not quote the Latin. Rather, he just offers his translation suggesting that his 'unlearned' audience would not have heard the Latin as they did with the Gospel and Epistle reading. While Ælfric intended this homily for the Mass on account of its good moral example, there is no evidence that Job itself was read at the Mass. Rather Ælfric alludes to Job having been read and expounded at the Office.

While the average lay Anglo-Saxon would have had limited knowledge of the Old Testament, there were a few exceptions to this. In the preface to his translation of Genesis, addressed to Ealdorman Æthelweard, and in his letter to Sigeweard, Ælfric clarifies that some high-ranking laity did commission vernacular translations of the Old Testament to share with their family members. For example, Ælfric encouraged Sigeweard to share the example of Judith with his sister who aspired to become a nun.[248] A collection of such vernacular translations is extant in the so-called *Old English Hexateuch*, which survives in several complete and fragmentary versions, and consists of vernacular translations by various authors

[245] Hoping, H., *My Body Given for You: History and Theology of the Eucharist* (San Francisco, CAL, 2015), p. 137.
[246] For example see Ælfric, 'Letter for Wulfsige', c. 52, in *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church: I A.D. 871-1066*, ed. by D. Whitelock, M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), no. 40, p. 207.
[247] Ælfric, II.xxxv, l. 1; Ælfric, 'Old English Preface', c. 1, in *Old English Lives of Saints* vol. 1, ed. and transl. M. Clayton and J. Mullins (Oxford, 2019), p. 9.
[248] Menzer, 'Preface and Admonition', p. 31.

of the first six books of the Bible.[249] The translations in the *Hexateuch* are not word-for-word. Its authors attempted to simplify and sanitise the material to make it more accessible to a non-religious audience. For example, Deuteronomy is heavily abbreviated, probably due to concern that ignorant readers would attempt to observe the Mosaic Law.[250] Likewise all discussion of circumcision is removed and various episodes of patriarchs and matriarchs behaving badly have either been removed entirely or altered to shift blame for their behaviour onto others.[251] A book such as the *Hexateuch* would have been expensive and beyond the reach of all except the wealthiest, so it seems probable that it and other Old Testament translations would have been specifically elite products. It is possible that even if only nobles could afford a book similar to the *Hexateuch* they would lend it to others or read to their household from it thus spreading some Old Testament knowledge, although this would not spread it far.[252] Besides the *Hexateuch* there is also the wealth of poetry based on the canonical and deuterocanonical Old Testament such as *Genesis, Exodus,* and *Daniel* in the Junius manuscript and *Judith* in the Beowulf manuscript. As suggested above, such vernacular poetry may have been used by teachers to teach their students both eloquence and religion. The poetry was composed in a Latinate, literate environment since it is modelled on Latin Christian poetic epics from Late Antiquity; *Exodus* especially mirrors their non-linear and metaphorical style.[253] Beyond the circle of the Church and noble households, though, it is much harder to tell how widely the Old Testament was known.

Since the Old Testament was apparently so mysterious to most of the laity, it is easy to see why Anglo-Saxon homilists would focus overwhelmingly on the New Testament and related material. However, some homilists opted to discuss the Old Testament despite its relative obscurity to general audiences. This choice suggests the kind of audience for whom they intended their work. Vercelli XIX-XXI, for example, are homilies for Rogationtide. As a result, they are mainly catechetical and addressed to a larger than average congregation so this must have shaped the way their author employed the Old Testament.[254] His/her choice to use the Old Testament at all is unusual since most Rogation homilies do not do this. The homilist seems to have been influenced by *De doctrina christiana* to use biblical stories as a method of

[249] Marsden, R., 'Translation by Committee? The "Anonymous" Text of the Old English Hexateuch', in *The Old English Hexateuch: Aspects and Approaches* ed. R. Barnhouse and B. C. Withers (Kalamazoo, MI, 2000), pp. 41-89.
[250] Barnhouse, R., 'Shaping the Hexateuch Text for an Anglo-Saxon Audience, in *The Old English Hexateuch: Aspects and Approaches* ed. R. Barnhouse and B. C. Withers (Kalamazoo, MI, 2000), pp. 91-92.
[251] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-105
[252] Menzer, 'Preface as Admonition', pp. 17-19.
[253] Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet,* p. 52.
[254] *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies,* ed, J. Bazire and J. Cross (Toronto, 1982), pp. xv-xxiv.

catechesis by explaining their deeper meaning. This inspired him/her to use the Old Testament to dramatise salvation history as an instructive tool.[255] To achieve his/her catechetical end, when referring to the Old Testament the author of Vercelli XIX-XXI consistently alludes first to the point of the story before summarising it and then restating its significance. For example, in the discussion of the Rogationtide fast in Vercelli XIX, the homilist alludes to the three-day fast of the Ninevites in the Book of Jonah, before summarising the story of the book, and finally restating how it highlights the importance of the fast.[256] In his discussion of the use of the Jonah story in Old English homilies, Paul Szarmach noted that Anglo-Saxon treatments of it differed from patristic practice as exemplified by Maximus of Turin (d. 408-423). Where Maximus focused only on the third chapter of the Book of Jonah and the Ninevites' fast, the English authors presented the entire story, but with less of an emphasis on its psychological struggles and more emphasis on its supernatural elements.[257] Szarmach suggests that the English homilists treated the story in this way because they appreciated its narrative value.[258] However the treatment of Jonah seems more practical than artistic since it would accommodate any laity unfamiliar with the Old Testament. Such accommodation would have been especially necessary on the Rogation Days when larger than average congregations were common. By employing the Old Testament, the author of Vercelli XIX-XXI attempted to push the boundaries of vernacular preaching and realise a patristic ideal in the vernacular. To do this, s/he knew that s/he would need to compensate for the limited Biblical knowledge of the audience through detailed summary of unfamiliar narratives.

The use of the Old Testament in Vercelli III has none of the narrative or practical flare of Vercelli XIX-XXI. The homily, based on a text in the homiliary of St Perè-de-Chartres, is modelled on a penitential handbook and sets out the main practices of confession and penance: it enumerates the major sins and major virtues, it advises how the penitent should approach their confessor, and it sets out why the particular acts of penitence like prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are of vital importance.[259] Throughout, the homilist defends these practices with examples from the Old and New Testaments but with no attempt to explain who most of these figures were or the details of their stories. Despite the demanding nature of this homily, others

[255] Fox, M., 'Vercelli Homilies XIX-XXI, the Ascension Day Homily in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 162, and the catechetical tradition from Augustine to Wulfstan', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 261-262.
[256] Vercelli XIX, ll. 104-148.
[257] Szarmach, P., 'Three Versions of the Jonah Story: an Investigation of Narrative Technique in Old English Homilies', *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), 184.
[258] *Ibid.*, 184-188.
[259] Scragg, D., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 70-72.

deemed it fit to preach since three other versions of it survive in Bodley 340, Bodley 343 and CCCC 198 where, unlike in the Vercelli Book, it is explicitly placed in the liturgical year.[260] In Bodley 343 it is given as a homily for the first Sunday in Lent, while in Bodley 340 and CCCC 198 it is given as a homily for the second Sunday.[261] The homily would be appropriate for the first Sunday because it sets out the observances expected of the laity in the coming season of Lent, a preoccupation of all other first Sunday homilies, for example Blickling III and Ælfric Catholic Homilies I.11. However since the homily is based on a penitential it is also linked thematically to the second Sunday, the Sunday of the Canaanite woman, whose subject was a model for the ideal penitent thus making a discussion of penance appropriate.[262] The treatment of the Old Testament would also make the piece more suited to the second Sunday. To judge by how few second Sunday homilies are extant it was not one of the especially significant days of the calendar. Therefore, its audience may well have been smaller than that which gathered for the first Sunday or for the Rogation days. However, the possibility cannot be ignored that the author of Vercelli III simply was not a good preacher.

Vercelli VII, along with a handful of related pieces in the book, is an even more complex issue. The homilist uses a litany of Old Testament references to make his/her case that toil leads to virtue, but s/he offers no explanation for his/her audience about who any of the figures referenced were or how they relate to the theme. This would seem to make the author of Vercelli VII a poor preacher. However, it is questionable whether Vercelli VII was preached in a public setting. The homily is a vernacular translation of the second half of Mutianus Scholasticus' Latin translation of John Chrysostom's twenty-ninth homily on the Epistle to the Hebrews.[263] The Greek source and the Latin translation were both intended to be preached, the original to the elite of Constantinople and the Latin translation to the monks of Vivarium.[264] While the Greek and Latin sources were used for preaching, Vercelli VII may not have been since it does not conform to the usual structural features of an Old English homily. For example, it has no clear introductory section addressed to the audience but begins with 'further more' (*butan tweon*) which is otherwise unheard of as an opening to an Anglo-Saxon homily.[265] Besides this opening, the piece also does not conclude with 'amen' which again is unusual for an Old English homily. These peculiarities may be due to Vercelli VII not coming from a

[260] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[261] Irvine, S., *Old English Homilies from MS Bodley 343* (Oxford, 1993), p. lv.
[262] See Ælfric II.8
[263] Zacher, S., 'The Source of Vercelli VII: An Address to Women', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 99, 112.
[264] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[265] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

homiliary. Vercelli VII is part of a block of texts (VII-X) that are numbered II-V, indicating that they came from a common source that was not arranged liturgically since there is no impression that they followed the liturgical year.[266] Of these pieces VIII-X follow usual homiletic conventions. This raises the question of why Vercelli VII does not do likewise and why it was not edited to follow them. The obvious answer is that the source collection was not meant for preaching and so the unusual features of Vercelli VII were not an issue.

Comparison with the only other Vercelli homily to eschew conventional structure may also be helpful. This other homily is Vercelli XXII, a text built entirely out of quotations by Isidore of Seville which, like Vercelli VII, also lacks an introduction and a concluding 'amen'. The peculiarities of these homilies may come from the composite nature of many Old English homilies.[267] Paul Szarmach demonstrates that the creator of a composite homily would begin with a theme and then build a new homily by picking appropriate extracts from other texts with which s/he was familiar.[268] These extracts were not copied and pasted but were instead altered to match the style of the homilist, they would also need to be linked together requiring some skill in vernacular prose composition.[269] This raises the question of where homilists got this material and how they learnt to compose effective vernacular prose. It has long been recognised that homilies rely heavily on formulae and stock images.[270] Given the importance of eloquence in early medieval education, it should be seriously considered that vernacular homilies and other prose could be used to teach eloquence, just as was poetry. This would also give aspiring preachers exemplars from which to work, as well as a stock of tropes and formulae from which to draw when crafting their sermons. This also raises the question of *ad hoc* preaching where the priest did not read from a homiliary. A preacher could use learned formulae to engage in sermonising if he did not or could not use a written text. The formulaic quality of vernacular sermons lends itself to the teaching of eloquence and composition.

Another possibility is that texts like Vercelli VII-X and XXII may have been used for preaching within a religious community. The Chapter Office was a long-established practice in the monastic tradition. Usually it would involve reading from the Rule or the life of a saint,

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[266] Scragg, D., 'The compilation of the Vercelli Book', *ASE 2*, p. 190.
[267] Wilcox, J., 'Variant texts of an Old English homily: Vercelli X and stylistic readers', in *The Preservation and Transmission of Anglo-Saxon Culture: Selected Papers from the 1991 Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists,* ed. P. E. Szarmach and J. T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, MICH, 1997), pp. 335-351; Teresi, L., '*Ælfric of Not? The making of a *Temporale* Collection in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation,* ed., A. J. Kleist (Turnhout: Brepolis,2007), pp. 303-309.
[268] Szarmach, 'Style and Structure', p. 251.
[269] Scragg, *Dating and Style,* pp. 5-12.
[270] Knappe, 'Classical Rhetoric', 27-28; Wright, C., *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 11-15, 49-76, 215-270.

but on feast days the reading would be from the Gospels. After the reading, the prior was to explain its significance.[271] Chapter probably was known to some English ecclesiastics prior to the late tenth century on account of its being mandated in earlier religious customaries, for example in that produced by Chrodegang.[272] It is unclear if preaching at Chapter would be in Latin or in the vernacular. Unlike the homilies used at the Night Office, Chrodegang clarifies that preaching at Chapter was to be original 'according as the Lord shall inspire him (the prior)' (*prout Dominus dederit dicatur*).[273] The Chapter sermon did not need to use a patristic exemplum, so it could have employed Latin homilies or sermons more akin to those preached at the Mass. Vercelli VII and XXII may be associated with this kind of preaching due to their structural similarities with later Chapter sermons. Jean Leclercq argues that Chapter sermons from the twelfth century, *sententiae*, rarely followed homiletic structure but seem more like notes to be studied and used by the prior.[274] Vercelli VII and XXII differ from these *sententiae* in their length: while *sententiae* are short, Vercelli VII and XXII are of roughly similar length to other Old English homilies.[275] However they mirror the *sententiae* in their rejection of usual preaching structure and in their reliance on translated texts that could be excerpted or memorised. This leaves open the question of language. The bulk of liturgical activity within religious communities was performed in Latin, but given that Chapter preaching was explicitly instructional it is possible that Chapter preaching was done in the vernacular (although it would be difficult to prove this). Vercelli VII and XXII may have been used for the Chapter Office. They may also have been used for private reading since they may have been used in multiple ways within a religious community.

While preaching is the most likely context for Old English homilies, and the laity their most likely audience, not all the Vercelli homilies seem to have been written with this audience in mind. Some do not even seem to be homilies in the usual sense even though they are still exhortatory content. How various homilies use the Old Testament helps to show this. Most of the homilies resemble XIX-XXI and were designed to suit a general audience. Others, like III, are more problematic since they are less suitable for a general audience. VII-X and XXII hint at another audience of authors using homilies and other prose texts to help create new

[271] *Regularis Concordia*, c. 21 in *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks of the English Nation,* transl. T. Symons (London, 1953).
[272] Chrodegang of Metz, *Regula Sancti Chrodegangi*, c. 8, in *The Chrodegang Rules: The Rules for the Common Life of the Secular Clergy from the Eighth and Ninth Centuries. Critical Texts and Translations with Commentary*, transl. J. Bartram (London, 2005), pp. 32-34.
[273] *Regularis Concordia*, c. 21.
[274] Leclercq, J., *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study in Monastic Culture*, transl. C. Misrahi (New York, NY, 1961), pp. 168-172.
[275] *Ibid*., pp. 168-169.

composite homilies. Besides preaching and creating new homilies, these texts could also have been used for devotional reading and education within a religious community. The homilies alone point to several assumed audiences and, when the poetry is factored in, more potential audiences emerge. The poetry was meant to be read and aimed to inspire. It could also be used in the instruction of students to improve their eloquence. Individual Vercelli homilies do not share a clear common audience.

ii) The Audience of the Compiler

While the contents of the Vercelli Book do not cater for a single audience, the themes they touch on are consistent. Eschatology, penance, devotion to the saints and the Cross, the saintly life, are all discussed repeatedly. Seemingly, the compiler sought texts that fitted his/her interests, and so it is likely that the compiler either meant the book to reflect his/her own interests as a personal book, or that it was meant for another member of the community.[276] The book could have been a private devotional book, like the one owned by King Alfred, in which the compiler copied poems and homilies that spoke to him/her personally.[277] It is also clear that the book was not only read by the compiler, since the volume and/or its sources were read and copied by other scribes and spread throughout England into the twelfth century. Also, the book at some point travelled from England to Vercelli, possibly with the compiler or other members of the community, either the same community that created the book or another to which it travelled, suggesting that it may have been shared by multiple people.[278] All of this raises the question of who the compiler was and where s/he worked.

It is theoretically possible that the compiler was a layperson since some laity such as Alfred and Æthelweard collected books and put great stock in Latin and vernacular religious literature.[279] However, the diverse themes discussed in the book suggest that a lay compiler is unlikely. Not only did s/he have access to several poems, but s/he also had access to several kinds of homily and other prose texts. It is most likely that the Vercelli Book was created in the library of a religious community.[280] What kind of community it was though, clerical or monastic, is not clear. Traditionally scholars emphasised the penitential and ascetic aspects of

[276] Ó Carragáin, É., 'How did the Vercelli Collector interpret *The Dream of the Rood?*', in *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen,* ed. P. Tilling (Coleraine, 1981), pp. 66-67; Randle, J. T., 'The 'Homiletics' of the Vercelli Book Poems: The Case of *Homiletic Fragment I'* in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 196.
[277] Asser, *Vita regis Ælfredi*, c. 88.
[278] Sisam, 'Marginalia', pp. 116-117.
[279] Manzer, 'Preface as Admonition', pp. 19-21.
[280] Lapidge, M., *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), pp.53-62.

the Vercelli Book to argue for a monastic audience.[281] More recently scholarship has stressed that the book seems to deviate from monastic, or at least Winchester-reformed monastic, standards and so is more likely to have served a community of 'secular clergy'.[282] As demonstrated below, these claims that the book is unfit for monks are overstated and made at the expense of instances where the authors espouse ascetic ideas. The community responsible for the Vercelli Book does not seem to have followed the *Regularis Concordia*, but other than this it is not obviously clerical or monastic. It is doubtful too whether such a bipartite characterisation is appropriate. The positive reception of Vercelli homilies among later churchmen suggests that there was nothing inherently unacceptable about them to those who also read Ælfric and Wulfstan. The distinction between cleric and monk was somewhat fluid and there is no discernible difference in what they read and what they preached.

The audience intended by the compiler is not much clearer than that of the individual authors. The compiler most likely was a member of a religious community and his/her book became part of its library where it was apparently regarded as valuable enough to read and even take on pilgrimage. Probably this was the audience the compiler intended for his/her book, but even with this in mind the nature of the audience remains shadowy. The book lacks specificity about the kind of audience its authors intended. All the themes and ideas presented are generally religious and could apply to any devout ecclesiastic. However, not all scholars who discuss the Vercelli Book have recognised this, and this has given rise to a misconception that the compiler must have been a 'secular cleric' who wrote for others like himself.

iii) Themes and Audience

This question of clericalism versus monasticism is the most important question that can be asked of the Vercelli Book. The answers to it must shape how the manuscript, its contents, and its context are to be approached and understood. It is also a somewhat misleading question since it seeks to interpret the book in light of a dichotomy that the compiler and his/her community apparently did not recognise. While scholars tend to emphasise those parts of the book that seem 'clerical' they do this at the expense of other parts that align more with a 'monastic' outlook. The book suggests that such binary categories did not concern the compiler or his/her community.

[281] Ó Carragáin, 'How did the Vercelli Collector', pp. 66-67; Clayton, 'Homilaries', 227.
[282] Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII', pp. 203-227; Zacher, 'Rereading the Style and Rhetoric', p. 181; Wright, 'Vercelli Homily XV', pp. 170-179.

The 'clericalism' of certain Vercelli themes has been overstated since there is no consistent attitude on any of these matters. On fasting, for example, many pieces in the book do indeed explicitly reject extreme fasting. However, they still acknowledge the need for fasting as a spiritual discipline. In one homily – Vercelli XXIII, a homily based on the *Vita sancti Guthlaci* – the author praises Guthlac's moderate fasting as well as his life as a hermit, hardly suggesting that the author attempted to downplay the value of asceticism. It is also worth noting that there is no evidence that 'extreme fasting' refers to monastic fasting: this is rather an inference made only by modern scholars, and in fact evidence exists to suggest that wariness of extreme fasts is in fact a typically monastic concern.[283] In fact, it is such a typically monastic concern that other scholars argue interest in moderation was only revived in Anglo-Saxon communities by monastic reform.[284] Both views overlook the level of continuity between the comments about moderation found in the Vercelli Book and those of reformed authors like Ælfric. Reformed writers urged quite rigorous fasting regimes, for example the fasting practices described by Ælfric throughout his *Letter to the monks of Eynsham,* but whether these regimes were 'excessive' is debatable; there is also nothing in the call for moderation found throughout the Vercelli Book which implies a criticism of these fasts per se, so long as they were undertaken properly:[285]

> '[I] do not teach that men kill themselves with hunger, but that they enjoy as much as may help them both for health and sustenance so long as it [is] sufficient [for] the body to fulfil the works of the soul. Truly, excess can in no way stir the soul, but it mars the fellowship of soul and body. But [even] though one be the wisest of all men, if he fulfils his lust, he condemns himself, either through fornication or through other evil. Truly the hungering belly cannot give rise to one evil desire any more than a moderated fullness can. But from excess come those illicit desires and [it is] like [how] worms propagate in stagnant water, and from moderation [come] good deeds and [it is] like [how] from clean earth [come] good fruits. Therefore, I teach that we not harm our bodies with excess, but [that we] adorn [them] with moderation'.[286]

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[283] Zacher, S., *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto, 2009), pp. 34-36.

[284] Lees, C., 'Reluctant Appetites: Anglo-Saxon Attitudes towards Fasting', in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. S. McWilliams (London, 2012), pp. 181-182; Clayton, M., 'Suicide in the works of Ælfric', *The Review of English Studies* 60 (2009), pp. 361-363.

[285] *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham,* ed. and transl. C. Jones (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 119, 139.

[286] Vercelli VII, ll. 104-115: 'Ne lære [ic] þæt men hy hungre acwellan, ac ðæt hy swa mycles brucan swa him ægðer ge to hæle ge to fostre helpan mæge þ*æt* þone lichoman lyste þære sawle worcu*m* fulgan. Witodlice ne mæg sio oferfyl nænigþinga to þære swale þwerian, ac hio þære swale 7 þæs lichoman geferscipe gewemmeð. Ac þeah ðe hwa eallra manna wisost sie, gif he his luste fulgæð, he hine genyðerað, oððe þurh unrihtæmed oððe ðurh oðer yfel. Witodlice ne mæg sio hungriende wamb ænne unrihtlust acennan ne sio gemetegode fyl þo ma. Ac of þære oferfylle cummað þa unrihtan lustas gelice 7 on meresteallum wyrmas tyddriað, 7 of ðære gemetegunge god

The Vercelli VII homilist regards excessive fasting as essentially suicidal and instead urges moderation as this is conducive to the harmony of body and soul. The echoes a comment made by Ælfric:

> '*Omnia nimia nocent et temperantia mater uirtutum dicitur*. That is in English: All excessive things [are] harmful and moderation is [the] mother of all virtues. Excess in eating and drinking makes a man sick, and makes his soul hateful to God, as our Lord said in His gospel. Then on the contrary, immoderate fasting and too much abstinence in eating and drinking makes a man sick and brings [him] into great danger, as books tell us, that some men fasted so that they afflicted themselves greatly, and got no reward [for] that great affliction, but they were farther from the mercy of God [because of] it. A man can easily find how he can destroy himself, but we must know that no suicide, that is a self-killer, can come to the Kingdom of God'.[287]

Just as with Vercelli VII, the warning here links excessive fasting with suicide and encourages moderation as a harmonious path of virtue. The idea that moderation is 'clerical' is incorrect since Ælfric also endorses moderate fasting in similar terms. Mary Clayton, in her study of suicide in the works of Ælfric, notes that his warning against excessive fasting may have been influenced by the works of John Cassian.[288] Allen Frantzen has also drawn attention to the fact that several works produced by monastic reformers, principally the Old English translations of the *Rule* of Chrodegang and the *Capitula* of Theodulf both of which were created at Winchester, also strongly encourage moderation in fasting.[289] Neither Clayton nor Frantzen mentions the Vercelli connection, but their discoveries have clear implications for the interpretation of the Vercelli Book. Despite what some scholars suggest, moderation in the Vercelli Book does not reflect a rejection of monasticism and is therefore not a sign of clericalism. If Clayton is correct and anxiety about excessive fasting was a product of familiarity with works in monastic tradition, then we cannot rule out monastic influence on the community that produced the Vercelli Book.

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wiorc gelices 7 of clænre eorðan / gode wæstmas. For þan Ic lære þ*æt* we urne lichoman nu oferfylle ne gwemmen, ac mid gemetegunge gefrætewigen'.

[287] Ælfric, *De octo uitiis et de duodecim abusiuis gradus*, in Clayton, 'Suicide', p. 362: '*Omnia nimia nocent et temperantia mater uirutum dicitur.* Þæt is on Englisc: Ealle oferdone þingc deriað and seo gemetegung is ealra mægna modor. Se oferlyfa on æte and on wæte deð þone man unhalne, and his sawle Gode læðetteð, swa swa ure Drihten on his godspelle cwæð. Eft þærtogeanes ungemetgod fæsten and to mycel forhæfednyss on æte and on wæte deð þone man unhalne and on mycelre frecednysse gebringð, swa swa us secgað bec, þæt sume men fæsten swa þæt hi geswencton hy sylfe forþearle, and nane mede næfdon þæs mycclan geswinces, ac þæs þe fyrr wæron from Godes miltsunge. Eaðe mæg se mann findan hu he hine sylfne amyrre, ac we sceolan witan þæt nan sylfcwala, þæt is agenslaga, ne becymð to Godes rice'.

[288] Clayton, 'Suicide', pp. 363-369.

[289] Frantzen, A., *Food, Eating and Identity in Early Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 240-243.

The other theme used to suggest a 'clerical' audience is the ambiguous attitude to personal possessions found in the Vercelli Book. Charles Wright cites examples where the homilists appear to downplay calls for rejection of worldly goods and uses this to suggest their opposition to reform.[290] However this permissive attitude is not seen throughout the collection. In Vercelli XXII, for example, the rejection of worldly things is stressed in clear and forceful terms. The same is true of *Soul and Body I* which, as part of the larger soul and body dialogue motif found in many of the Vercelli homilies (including Vercelli XXII), runs counter to the supposed permissive attitude towards worldly ties with its graphic imagery of bodily decay and spiritual punishment for neglect of God.[291] The soul and body motif that underlies most exhortations to reject worldly things in the Vercelli Book is closely with eschatology, for example Vercelli II and XV. Vercelli II does not condemn wealth, only miserliness, while XV condemns priests who are obsessed by wealth and neglect their duties. While some homilies such as Vercelli VII are permissive, others like Vercelli II, XV, and XXII voice extreme rejection of private property. On the whole, treatment of the subject is ambiguous meaning that some relationship with monasticism cannot be ruled out.

The other case for the 'clericalism' of the Vercelli Book depends on the condemnation of young rulers in Vercelli XV. A significant portion of this homily is based on the *Apocalypse of Thomas* but the criticism of young rulers is one of several additions made by the author of Vercelli XV.[292] Wright suggests that the young rulers in question may have been King Edgar and Pope John XII.[293] This claim is interesting but virtually impossible to prove since is rests entirely on when Vercelli XV was written. The book was created in the last quarter of the tenth century, probably closer to the 970s than to 1000. King Edgar died in 975 at the age of about thirty-one/thirty-two and was succeeded by his son Edward who was in his early teens. In 978 Edward died mysteriously and was succeeded by his half-brother Æthelred who would also have been in his early teens. If Vercelli XV existed before the compilation of the Vercelli Book, it may date from early in the reign of Edgar, but by the time it was included in the Vercelli Book Edgar was no longer especially young. It the compiler did not realise that Vercelli XV was referring to Edgar, then this may be unimportant. Vercelli XV may instead refer to Edward or Æthelred, but this is just as speculative. Similarly, while the comment may have referred to John XII, it is impossible to tell if the author intended the comparison. Neither were the rulers

[290] Wright, 'Vercelli XI-XIII', p. 207.
[291] Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, pp. 140-141.
[292] Wright, 'Vercelli Homily XV', pp. 172-174.
[293] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

of the English Church especially young when the book was created. The youngest of the reforming bishops, Oswald, would have been in his forties in 975 and consequently the comment probably does not refer to any of the reforming bishops either. Since Oswald was ordained a deacon in Fleury before his return to England in 958, and traditionally ordination to the diaconate required the recipient to be around twenty-five, in 975 Oswald would have been at least forty-two.[294] Dunstan and Æthelwold, both of whose birthdates we know, would have been in their late sixties or early seventies. It is unlikely that the comment about young rulers in Vercelli XV is a reference to current events and therefore it is unlikely to be a criticism of Benedictine reform as Wright suggests it is. Add to this the additions criticising priestly wealth and it appears that s/he was not an opponent of the kind of enforced poverty that Æthelwold forced on the canons of the New Minster in 963. Instead his/her additions seem meant to depict the general misrule and chaos of the last days through priestly corruption and the rise of young rulers lamented in Ecclesiastes 10.16.

Based on these themes, scholars like Charles Wright and Samantha Zacher have suggested that the compiler of the Vercelli Book was an opponent of monastic reform.[295] The contents do not conform to ideas espoused by Winchester reformers, but this does not mean that the Vercelli compiler was a 'secular cleric' or that the compiler opposed monastic reform. The compiler of the Vercelli Book cannot be so easily categorised. The different attitudes represented in the manuscript suggest that for the compiler the boundary between clerical and monastic was not clear, at least from a modern perspective. While the Vercelli Book as a source is certainly more traditional in some of its attitudes than was reformed Winchester monasticism this does not mean that it is necessarily clerical rather than monastic. It offers evidence that reflects multiple perspectives: an acceptance of fasting and spiritual discipline, an eschatological rejection of worldly ties, a toleration of moderate indulgence, and toleration of wealth so long as it is used in a Christian manner. The contents of the book must be seen holistically. What can appear to be an amalgam of contradictions apparently was not such for the compiler and in this contradiction may lie the key to his/her intended audience.

Through the audience of individual authors, the compiler, and major themes within the Vercelli Book, hints of the audience emerge. While it may have been suitable for higher rungs of secular society, it seems most likely to have been produced in a religious community, by a member of that community, for the community or for specific individuals within it. The

[294] Barrow, *Clergy*, p. 40.
[295] Wright, 'Vercelli XV', pp. 172-179; Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, pp. 34-35.

community library included religious poetry and homiletic prose that drew on various traditions of religious thought. It is difficult to say what this means for the kind of community that owned such a library. Chiefly this is because the compiler intended his/her book to promote a general good ethos for the religious life rather than a specific view attacking the activity of reformers. Consequently, it is unjustified to read such an intention into the book and any attempt to do so will ultimately fail. Even the claim – though it is perhaps correct – that the community responsible for the book is unlikely to have followed a reformed practice can be challenged. Partly this is because of the Winchester-focused definition of reform used by so many scholars. Elsewhere, at Worcester and Canterbury, reformist regimes looked quite different from that found at Winchester. This further undermines the applicability of Winchester norms to other communities in late tenth-century England. The Vercelli homilies were also enthusiastically adopted by later copiers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and used to bolster a corpus otherwise dominated by Ælfric. These individuals did not see their post-963 traditions and the contents of the Vercelli Book as incompatible. It is possible that something similar may have been occurring in the Vercelli community itself. This community was certainly religious. It was engaged in performance of the Mass and possessed preaching material for this purpose. Some homilies, like XXII, may have served preachers within the community at the Chapter Office. If so, this suggests a regular life which involved communal worship. The poetry may also attest not only to practices of devotional and communal reading, but also to vernacular education, probably alongside Latin education.

Conclusions

While the course of historiographical change has significantly advanced interpretation of the audiences of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, it has also some areas led to a swing from one set of problematic conclusions to another. This does not mean that these new conclusions are entirely wrong, only that they are also in need of revision on some points.

The Blickling Book is a homiliary and, given the evidence that preaching at the Mass was probably a standard practice in late tenth-century England, it is possible to conclude that the primary audience of the Blickling Book was probably one of laity and clergy gathered at the Mass. The way that the homilists approach their sources can create some uncertainty on this point since, at first sight, they seem to have inserted little local colour into their texts. In this, however, they do not differ from most other Old English homilists who favoured composite texts over wholly original work but always with some minor changes to make the

pieces suitable for a hypothetical audience gathered at the Mass. While this process of composition involved removing extracts from their original context, it was their effect in their new context which was most important. The effect of the Blickling homilies is to address major themes raised by a pericope and explain these in memorable and comprehensible terms to those assembled. All aspects of the Blickling Book point to this and, as a result, although some scholars have raised doubts, the usual assumption of a lay audience for the book seems to be correct.

It is more difficult to identify the audience of the Vercelli Book due to its being *sui generis*. The evidence suggests, however, that its audience does not conform to a strict 'clerical/monastic' binary. Instead, it contains a variety of pieces that reflect multiple different audiences. The community that produced the book was home to a religious library which contained pieces suited to many purposes: homilies for preaching, others for reading or possibly reference, and poetry that had both devotional and educational value. While such a library is theoretically not beyond a wealthy lay person, it fits more comfortably with a religious community. Whether the community was clerical or monastic is difficult to say, and in fact the texts in the book indicate that too firm a categorisation is inappropriate. Judging from what its members read, the community does not seem to fit easily into either category and this serves as a valuable reminder that, outside communities touched by Winchester-style monastic reform, the definitions of clergy and monks remained somewhat fluid.

The audiences of Blickling and Vercelli reflect the diversity and vitality of the English Church in the late tenth century. Pastoral care continued to be performed. The clergy read texts that reflected a diversity of views on major issues and continued to be influenced by both the pastoral and monastic traditions of Christian thought. This image at first seems confusing, but in fact it allows scholars to build some sense of the audiences of the books. It is only a partial sense, but this partially known audience is better than nothing and facilitates study of Christianity in late tenth-century England beyond the boundaries set by the Winchester reformers.

These first two chapters have addressed the subjects that continue to preoccupy academic discussion of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. These questions are important because they concern foundational questions of origin and use that inevitably influence any interpretation of the contents of the books. Now that the major foundational issues have been addressed, it is possible to examine the authors' treatment of the subjects and themes which most occupied them, and to compare their views to those of other writers in a critical and informed manner.

The subjects which are most prominent throughout both books are the role of the priesthood, religious practice, and theology. These subjects are central to the religious culture of later Anglo-Saxon England and to the debates associated with monastic reform. Therefore, their treatment in the Blickling and Vercelli Books enables the changes in the late tenth-century Church to be viewed through a lens which prioritises the views of the anonymous authors rather than reformers, and which therefore challenges entrenched narratives and assumptions.

III

Priesthood and Reform

Introduction

> 'The mass-priests, who are the teachers of the churches of God, shall rightly teach their confessionals and give instruction just as our fathers have previously determined. Let no priest, neither for fear of a rich man, nor for reward, nor for any man's favour, be afraid of always deciding rightly, if he desires to escape the judgement of God. And he must not be too desirous of the wealth of dead men, nor be too little thankful [for] their alms [that they give] because they believe that he can absolve their sins. And the teachers must humbly teach and instruct sinful men so that they may know how to confess their sins correctly'.[296]

The priesthood was central to how the Blickling and Vercelli authors understood the Church. As Blickling IV shows, priests were required to fulfil their religious duties while also adhering to standards of personal holiness. Given the importance placed on the priesthood, to understand the views on the Church and its function found in Blickling and Vercelli, one must understand the authors' views on the duties and ideals of the priesthood. Understanding these views is especially important given the progress of Church reform in late tenth-century England. The clergy, but particularly priests, lay at the core of criticisms of the established order, as voiced by both the reformers themselves and by their heirs. The heirs to different reforming traditions, chiefly Ælfric and Wulfstan who offered the most expansive critiques of the old order, saw a decline in the dutifulness and morality of the clergy in recent history as a source of significant spiritual danger to the English nation.[297] Despite their differences, both men agreed on this point. And of the clergy, none were more important than the priests and bishops, whom the lower clerical orders supported in their ministry. Since Blickling and Vercelli offer unparalleled access into how non-reformed writers understood the role and burdens of the priesthood,

[296] Blickling IV, ll. 64-74: 'Þa mæsse-preostas þe Godes cyricena lareowas beoþ, þa sceolan heora scrift-bec mid rihte tæcan 7 læran, swa swa hie ure fæderas ær demdon. Ne wandige na se mæsse-preost no for rices mannes ege, ne for feo, ne for nanes mannes lufon, þ*æt* he hi*m* symle rihte deme, gif he wille sylf Godes domas gedegan. Ne sceal he eac beon to georn deadra manna feos, ne to lyt þancian heora ælmessan, forþon þe hie wenaþ þ*æt* he heora senna alyssan mæge. 7 þa lareowas sceolan synnfullu*m* mannu*m* eadmodlice tæcan 7 læran, þ*æt* hie heora synna cunnon onrihtlice geandettan'.

[297] Ælfric, 'First Old English Letter for Wulfstan', cc. 4-18, in *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church: I A.D. 871-1066*, ed. by D. Whitelock, M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), pp. 255-302; *Ibid*., 'Letter to Wulfsige', cc. 2-17, in *Ibid*., pp. 191-225.

comparing their views with those of near-contemporary writers presents an invaluable opportunity to gauge how accurately reformers characterised those they critiqued.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how ideas about the duties and responsibilities incumbent on the priesthood changed or did not change in the last quarter of the tenth century. If ideas had changed as much as Ælfric and Wulfstan suggest, then we could expect to see pronounced differences between ideas advocated in the 990s-1000s and those encouraged in the texts of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, dating from ca. 975. This chapter will demonstrate that, a few differences of opinion notwithstanding, in the late tenth century there was continuity in ideas about what priests and other clergy were expected to do. However, in terms of ideas about how these men should live and behave there is evidence for significant development over the period partly motivated by, and then itself further perpetuating, reform. Crucially these views developed out of recent Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian thought that reformers shared with the non-reformed. This chapter also demonstrates that some reformers, chiefly those promoting an episcopal attitude to reform like Wulfstan, were more conservative in their views than others. Consequently, just as there is diversity in the views expressed by the various Blickling and Vercelli writers, so too was there diversity in the views of reformers based on their background and interests.

Duties of the Priesthood

There was a broad consensus in the late tenth century about priestly duties. In Blickling and Vercelli these duties primarily revolve around sacramental pastoral care and focus chiefly on baptism, preaching and confession. These same duties occupy an equally central place in other late tenth-century discussions of the priesthood and their responsibilities. Baptism, preaching, and confession are not all that priests were expected to do, but these sacramental pastoral duties nevertheless consistently take centre stage. The sources discussing priestly duties approach them in two distinct ways. Some texts focus on describing all the duties performed by those in clerical orders, usually for the purpose of helping these men perform the services described, while others, like the homilies in Blickling and Vercelli, focus only on the most important duties at the expense of complete coverage. Since the texts in these books emphasise certain duties over others, it is possible to get from them a sense of how these duties were prioritised by different writers. All late tenth-century writers, non-reformed and reformed, shared common ideas about which duties were most important.

It is important first to get a sense of the full range of religious duties since while Blickling and Vercelli offer a tightly focused view of these, they assume a wider range of duties and practices. The most detailed descriptions of priestly duties in this period come from the works of Ælfric and Wulfstan. Ælfric, in the pastoral letters that he wrote for bishops Wulfsige and Wulfstan, sets out his understanding of both what the priesthood was and what it was expected to do. The letters in which he offered these views were intended to give Wulfsige and Wulfstan texts for instructing their cathedral canons.[298] Wulfstan in his own writings echoed many of Ælfric's views. His most direct and practical articulation of priestly duties can be found in his *Canons of Edgar* and *The Institutes of Polity*.[299] Both writers refer to six core clerical duties: Mass on Sundays and feast days, the divine offices, confession, baptism, anointing the sick, and burial.[300] While only a bishop/priest could perform all six of these duties, all the clerical orders were involved in some way: deacons helped the priest at Mass while minor orders like reader, bell-ringer, and door-keeper filled smaller specific roles in the Mass and the Office.[301] The details of some of these services varied between the reformed and the non-reformed. For example, reformers came to promote the Benedictine Office over the secular.[302] However, the core six duties did not change even though sometimes the details of their performance did. Both Ælfric and Wulfstan were influenced by the First Capitulary of Ghaerbald of Liège (d. 809).[303] They also corresponded with each other and in these letters discussed various issues of religious discipline, including standards to be expected of the clergy. Judging from their surviving letters, Wulfstan was the active party in seeking the advice of Ælfric although, as shown below, he did not always follow it. Thus, it is no surprise that these two men might share basically similar views on priestly and clerical duties. What is striking is that other sources which originated outside of this reforming dialogue nevertheless express similar views and repeat the same six core duties.

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[298] Hill, J., 'Reform and Resistance: Preaching Styles in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *De l'homélie au sermon: histoire de la prédication médiévale, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve* (Louvain, 1993), p. 23 ; Wilcox, J., 'Ælfric in Dorset and the Landscape of Pastoral Care', in *Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. F. Tinti (Woodbrige, 2005), pp. 56-57.
[299] Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 85-100, 101-124.
[300] Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', cc. 15, 22, 68, 69, in *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York,* ed. and transl. A. Rabin (Manchester, 2014), pp. 89-98; Ælfric, 'Letter for Wulfstan', cc. 4-18, in *Councils and Synods*, pp. 242-254; *Ibid*., 'Letter to Wulfsige', cc. 2-17, in *Ibid*., pp. 191-225.
[301] Barrow, 'Grades', pp. 42-43.
[302] Billett, J., *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c.1000* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 169-196.
[303] Godden, M., 'The Relations of Wulfstan and Ælfric', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004) p. 373; Elliot, M., 'Ghaerbald's First Capitulary, the Excerptiones Pseudo-Ecgberhti, and the Sources of Wulfstan's Canons of Edgar', *Notes and Queries* 57.2 (2010), 164.

All the sacramental duties described by Wulfstan and Ælfric are also found in the *Red Book of Darley* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422). This book is unusual among liturgical manuscripts in that, while it contains instructions for performing liturgy, its scope is more comprehensive than is usual. Like the *Canons of Edgar* and the pastoral letters, it offers a broader sense of the many services required of a priest, in contrast to the more restricted views typical of other liturgical books.[304] The *Red Book* is now in CCCC 422, a small but thick manuscript which, in addition to the liturgical material, also contains a mid-tenth-century copy of the Old English *Solomon and Saturn* that was bound together with the liturgical books in the twelfth century.[305] The *Red Book* can be dated based on its paschal table to approximately 1061-1098 and seems to have been created at the New Minster, Winchester, for use at Sherborne.[306] The book contains texts for a variety of rituals as well as computistical material. Besides the Canon of the Mass, it also contains votive Masses as well as Offices including the Canonical Hours, an Office for the Dead, and a text for the Easter Vigil.[307] Besides these, and mixed in among them, are various other rituals for diverse occasions including baptism, the visitation of the sick, burial, blessings for marriages, blessings for the candles used at Candlemas, diverse other blessings and prayers, and also texts used in the administration of justice by ordeal.[308] The contents of the *Red Book* offer one of the most complete overviews of priestly duties surviving from this period and demonstrates how active the priesthood were expected to be in the lives of their local lay community. In the essentials, the contents of the book cover all the duties discussed by Ælfric and Wulfstan as well as other blessings and services not mentioned by them. However, the book does not contain a rite for confession, and this is unusual given the prominence of that sacrament elsewhere. Why this should be the case is unclear. Possibly, the owner of the *Red Book* also owned a penitential which would include guidance for the sacrament of confession, meaning that it would not need to be included in the *Red Book*.[309] This may be supported by the inconsistency noted by Helen Gittos in how the author of the book treated different rituals. Some are given in full while others are abbreviated, which would seem to be inconsistent with the idea that the *Red Book* contained everything that a priest would need to perform their duties alone.[310] While the book is unusually thorough, it

[304] Gittos, H., 'Is there any evidence for the liturgy of parish churches in late Anglo-Saxon England? The Red Book of Darley and the status of Old English', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 68-69.
[305] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[306] *Ibid.*
[307] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
[308] *Ibid.*
[309] Frantzen, A., *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1983), pp. 165-168.
[310] Gittos, 'Is there any evidence', pp. 69-70.

is far from complete and would need to be supplemented with other manuscripts. Even with its omissions, however, the book highlights the variety of duties that a priest would be expected to perform. Not only did they perform the core six, but various other duties such as the blessing of weddings and ordeals were required which would bind the Church into the social fabric of the community.

Further duties are found in the *Leofric Missal* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 579). This multifaceted manuscript contains at its core a late ninth-century pontifical originating at Arras which, between 930 and 1000, was expanded with additional material at a community in England, probably at Canterbury.[311] Further material was added at Exeter during the lifetime of Bishop Leofric (d. 1072) although additions continued to be made under Leofric's successors.[312] Unlike the first additions, these Exeter additions are not liturgical. Instead they are mostly administrative and include a list of relics owned by Exeter, a series of manumissions granting slaves their freedom, and the record of an exchange of land between an Abbot Leofric and an Abbess Eadgifu. As a pontifical, most of the contents of the book are liturgical and focused on performing the Mass and the Office, as well as including related pieces like calendars and computistical material. Pontificals and sacramentaries are not dissimilar, what distinguishes a pontifical is the inclusion of benedictions and rites such as the dedication of churches that were performed only by a bishop.[313] In the original core of the *Leofric Missal* the episcopal rites are placed after the benedictions, the ordinary of the Mass, the votives and the Office for the Dead, and before the rites of baptism and extreme unction. The episcopal rites included are for the dedication of a church, the blessing of tools to be used on the altar during the Eucharist, and a selection of prayers and blessings to be said at the coronation of a king. As with the *Red Book*, the *Leofric Missal* required supplementation with other manuscripts. It also expands the scope of duties associated with the priestly grade by offering examples of episcopal duties. The *Red Book* and *Leofric Missal* together demonstrate that the duties of the priesthood went beyond the core duties of sacramental pastoral care described by Ælfric and Wulfstan. A priest was also required to be active in the local community, while a bishop also had to serve a role in perpetuating the existence of the Church and consecrating royal authority.

Sources like Blickling and Vercelli which focus on essentials do not repeat the full scope of priestly duties; they do not even reiterate the six core sacramental duties. Instead, they

[311] *The Leofric Missal*, vol. 1, ed. N. Orchard (London, 2002), 29-30.
[312] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[313] Palazzo, E., *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, transl. M. Beaumont (Collegeville, MIN, 1993), pp. 195-212.

distil the six into a more focused form which sheds light on how the duties of the priesthood were prioritised. Blickling and Vercelli demonstrate how the non-reformed ecclesiastics of the late tenth century saw the priestly vocation. By considering the evidence produced by reformers, it is also possible to see how little attitudes changed. Consistently Blickling and Vercelli prioritise the duties of preaching and confession while also linking these in a causal relationship. For example, in Vercelli IX, the homilist tells his audience that 'the souls who listen to the teachings of demons and live by their teachings and who will not turn to God through true confession of mass-priests and through true atonement' will be damned to Hell.[314] Likewise in Blickling IV the primary duty of a priest is to '[teach] their penitentials with right instruction and preaching'.[315] These statements complement each other. In two different contexts – eschatology and instruction – they imply the same causal relationship between preaching and confession in which Christians must remain attentive to preaching and put teaching into action by confessing their sins. When the laity came to confession, the importance of right faith and action would again have been stressed to them as the priest used the opportunity for instruction.[316] The causal salvific relationship is explained in Vercelli XVI by linking it to baptism. Baptism is only occasionally discussed in the Blickling and Vercelli Books. Usually it is assumed that all audience members had been baptised, but the discussion of baptism in Vercelli XVI demonstrates that it ranked alongside preaching and confession in terms of how important it was. In this homily the author claims that at baptism men are made children of God, but this status can be lost through sin and must be kept by performing good deeds.[317] Such an understanding of baptism is common in the period and the theology behind it will be discussed in a later chapter.[318] What is important to emphasise here is that the claim made by the homilist about the need to keep baptismal grace makes baptism the preeminent duty for the priest to perform, since the other duties of preaching and confession could only be effective if the layperson has already been admitted into communion. This is how non-reformed writers prioritised priestly duties. What is striking is that reforming writers of all outlooks also prioritised these duties in exactly this same way indicating a common understanding of the priestly vocation.

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[314] Vercelli IX, ll. 22-24: 'þam sawlu*m* þe hyra laru*m* hlystað 7 be hyra larum lybbað 7 to Gode gecyrran nellað þurh soðe andetnesse mæssepreosta 7 þurh soðe bote'.
[315] Blickling IV, l. 66: 'heora scrift-bec mid rihte tæcan 7 læran'.
[316] Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, pp. 152, 154-157.
[317] Vercelli XVI, ll. 21-23.
[318] See Chapter 5 below; Foot, S., *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600-900* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 297-298; Foot, S., '"By water in the Spirit": The Administration of Baptism in Early Anglo-Saxon England, in *Pastoral Care before the Parish* ed. by J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 172-3; Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, p. 103.

In his homily on the Lord's Epiphany, Ælfric describes how 'three high things [have been] established by God for the cleansing of man: one is baptism, the other is the consecrated host, third is penance'.[319] The three 'high things' are identical on two out of three points to the priestly duties discussed by Blickling and Vercelli. The one point of difference, the reference to communion, is consistent with the soteriological importance of that rite. Since most people would communicate only a few times a year, Ælfric does not repeat the reference elsewhere although he does encourage that the laity receive communion as frequently as possible. Instead preaching is emphasised in place of communion.[320] This suggests that Ælfric saw Mass and preaching as interchangeable indicating that in his mind Mass was the main context in which the laity would hear preaching. It also suggests that he viewed attending Mass and hearing preaching as having spiritual benefits even if one did not receive communion.[321] The organisation of the three high things (baptism-communion/preaching-penance) suggests that Ælfric also accepts a causal link between preaching and confession, based on baptism, like that found in Blickling and Vercelli. This can be seen in his first series Pentecost homily and in the homily for the First Sunday after Easter. In the former he contrasts the tongues of holy fire and human tongues to demonstrate that God calls humanity to repentance through the preaching of divinely inspired teachers.[322] In the latter he presents the sinful as resembling Lazarus in the tomb called forth by Christ and unbound from the fetters of sin by the apostles and their heirs, the clergy.[323] Thus if we look to Ælfric for his understanding of the most important duties, a priest had to perform, we find that he shares exactly the same attitude to that found in Blickling and Vercelli: the most fundamental duties were baptism, preaching, and confession.

The causal link is also found in the description of Oswald's ministry as bishop of Worcester as given by Byrhtferth of Ramsey. Here he speaks of Oswald ''pouring out oil and wine': the 'oil' of preaching for salvation, and 'wine' for the purification of soul and body'.[324] The logic behind this is that as oil and wine mixed form a healing ointment, so do preaching

[319] Ælfric, II.3 ll. 213-215: 'Þreo healice ðing gesette God mannum clænsunge: an is fulluht, oðer is husel-halgung, þridde is dædbot'.
[320] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth i*, pp. 45-47; Cubitt, C., 'Pastoral Care and Conciliar Canons: the provisions of the 747 council of Clofesho', in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), p. 197; Cubitt, C., 'Religion and belief 900-1100: the institutional church', in *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages - Britain and Ireland c.500-c.1100*, ed. P. Stafford (Oxford, 2009), p. 287.
[321] Foot, *Monastic Life,* p. 303.
[322] See Ælfric, I. xxii.
[323] See Ælfric, I.xvi.
[324] Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita Sancti Oswaldi* III.5, in *The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, ed., and transl. by M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2009): ''infundens oleum et uinum': oleum predicationis ad salutem, uinum ad purgationem anime et corporis'.

and confession when they are combined.[325] How they heal is not made clear, but given the testimony of Blickling, Vercelli, and Ælfric it can be inferred that the healing was of a salvific kind and rooted in baptismal grace. Byrhtferth did not know Oswald well and probably never went to Worcester.[326] His description of pastoral duties is based entirely on Scriptural references rather than actual knowledge. Regardless, this points to how universally accepted was the link between preaching and confession in the late tenth-century Church.

There was in the late tenth century a consensus on the duties of priests that transcended divisions of reform and lifestyle. Given the firmness of reforming rhetoric emanating from Winchester criticising those who the reformers there saw as non-monastic, the consensus on duties is noteworthy since it shows that these reformers did not seek to alter traditional conceptions of religious duties. Neither did other reformers like Wulfstan who were more muted in their attack on the non-reformed. The older texts shared the same sense of priestly function as that found in texts by reformers. Perhaps this is not surprising since the priorities of these writers must have been at least partially influenced by the dictates of institutionally sanctioned descriptive evidence. There was a common core of six duties that were universally promoted and so it makes sense that this core would be reflected in sources written by individual churchmen, thus creating consensus. The priesthood performed many duties, so it is significant that these writers consistently prioritise the same duties in the same way and suggest a causal link between them. This similarity is more than just coincidence.

Ideals of Apostolic Living

Since neither the reformed nor the non-reformed differed significantly in how they understood and prioritised the responsibilities of the priesthood, the cause of their disagreement must have been rooted in ideals which shaped how the religious were expected to structure their lives to fulfil their appointed duties. In fact, reformers of all backgrounds attacked the non-reformed clergy for lifestyles that they deemed insufficiently virtuous with chastity being a consistent theme in all reforming critiques.[327] The Winchester reformers offered the most developed critique based on an ideal of apostolic living, a perennial point of contention for reformers and

[325] Riedel, C., 'Debating the Role of the Laity in the Hagiography of the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reformers', in *Revue Bénédictine* 127.2 (2017), 336.
[326] Tinti, F., *Sustaining Belief: The Church of Worcester from c.870 to c.1100* (Farnham, 2010), p. 243.
[327] Byrhtferth, *VSO*, ii.2; Ælfric, 'Letter for Wulfstan'; *Ibid.*, 'Letter to Wulfsige'; Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', cc. 8, 68a, in Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 88, 98 ; *Ibid.*, 'The Institutes of Polity' c. 22, in *Ibid.*, pp. 116-118.

opinionated ecclesiastics throughout history.[328] The writings of men like Ælfric offer a black and white contrast between the ideals of reformers and those of the non-reformed. However, as this section will demonstrate, the reality was much more complicated than this image implies. In fact, many of the ideals deriving from the monastic tradition that especially influenced the Winchester reformers can also be found in texts deriving from non-reformed communities, such as that which produced the Vercelli Book. Therefore, it cannot be presumed that these communities were as ignorant as reforming rhetoric suggested. Similarly, there appear to have been differing degrees of conservatism among reformers deriving from their backgrounds and priorities. For example, the episcopal reforms promoted by Wulfstan encouraged attitudes similar to those found in the Blickling Book, much to the annoyance of more radical Winchester-style reformers like Ælfric. Ideals of apostolic living divided reformers from the non-reformed, despite their common views on the responsibilities of the religious vocation. However, the terms in which reformers attacked their forerunners are often highly rhetorical and reflect a black-and-white certainty that can obscure the much more complex evolution of apostolic ideals in late tenth-century England.

Due to the comparatively prolific career of Ælfric, the ideas of Winchester reformers became the rhetorical standard by which scholars have judged the late tenth century. In the early parts of his Old English pastoral letters for Wulfsige and Wulfstan, Ælfric offers the most detailed defence of the ideas circulating in Winchester. Central to his thinking is chastity (*clænnysse*) which he sees as a core component of the gospel and as typical of the apostolic example followed by the early Church.[329] In the letter for Wulfsige, he argues that the Council of Nicaea confirmed the teaching on chastity and made it uncanonical for any cleric to have a wife.[330] In the letter for Wulfstan, Ælfric sets chastity in the scheme of salvation history by arguing that there are three ages to the world: the age of fleshly lusts, the age of the Law, and the age of grace. By becoming incarnate through the Virgin Mary, Christ shows that he especially loves chastity and expects it of his servants.[331] Ælfric claims that the Apostles followed the teachings on chastity perfectly when they established the community in Jerusalem (Acts 2. 44-45 and 4. 32-35). Ælfric sees this event as the birth of monasticism, a claim that

[328] Lambert, M., *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford, 1977); Malcolm Lambert has demonstrated how important different ideas about the *vita apostolica* were in the emergence of heretical movements throughout the Middle Ages particularly for groups like the Waldensians (pp. 70-74), Cathars (p. 63), and the Apostolic Brethren (pp. 219-223).
[329] Ælfric, 'Letter to Wulfsige', c. 2; 'Letter for Wulfstan', c. 12.
[330] *Ibid.,* 'Letter to Wulfsige', cc. 7-13.
[331] *Ibid.,* 'Letter for Wulfstan', cc. 8-18.

makes a monastic way of life central to properly living by the apostolic example.[332] With these arguments, Ælfric also criticises the practices of English clergy in his own day. In both letters he says that his words will seem harsh to most of the clergy listening because they have allowed their error in taking wives to become customary and no longer realise that it is an error.[333] Instead they make false arguments from the example of the apostle Peter, not realising that he left his wife after his conversion. Through this mistake, he claims, the clergy show their ignorance.[334] It is significant that Ælfric begins both letters, which are mainly about pastoral care, with arguments in favour of clerical celibacy, a feature which demonstrates the importance of chastity as a general principle of the religious vocation as Ælfric conceived of it.[335]

The reverence for chastity and purity expressed by Ælfric derived from his education at Winchester under Æthelwold. From the Winchester refoundation charter (S 754), a document written by Æthelwold, it is clear that 'cleanness' was important to the understanding of reform promoted by Æthelwold and that he used it to justify expelling the canons of the New Minster in favour of a monastic community.[336] In the charter, Æthelwold argues that refusing to submit to live an obedient life made the clerics spiritually filthy like Lucifer and his rebel angels.[337] In his *Account of King Edgar's Foundation of Monasteries* Æthelwold presented the history of English monasticism as a decline from original concord, communality, and obedience into strife and discord, a state of affairs only rectified by King Edgar.[338] Throughout his work Æthelwold presents a vision of reform that closely matches the ideal of return to a lost state of community, obedience, and chastity described by Ælfric.

The emphasis on celibacy also appears in the work of other contemporary reformers: in several of these cases it seems to derive either from Ælfric himself or independently from Winchester, while in others it derived from different reforming traditions at Glastonbury and Ramsey. While Winchester formulated the most detailed argument in favour of celibacy, the

[332] *Ibid.*, c. 42.
[333] *Ibid.*, 'Letter to Wulfsige', cc. 14-17.
[334] *Ibid.*, 'Letter for Wulfstan', cc. 4-6.
[335] Wright, C., 'A new Latin source for two Old English homilies Fadda I and Blickling I: Pseudo-Augustine, Sermo App. 125, and the ideology of chastity in the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine reform' in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill*, ed. C. Wright, F. Biggs, and T. Hall (Toronto, 2007), pp. 252-255
[336] 'King Edgar's Privilege for New Minster, Winchester', in *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church: I A.D. 871-1066*, ed. by D. Whitelock, M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), No. 31, pp. 121-133; Barrow, J., 'The Ideology of the Tenth-Century 'Reform', in *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* ed. by P. Skinner (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 141-154.
[337] *Ibid.*
[338] Æthelwold, '" King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries"', in *The Old English Rule of Saint Benedict with Related Old English Texts*, transl. by J. Riyeff (Collegeville, MN, 2017), pp. 154-155.

interest in celibacy was not limited to Winchester reformers. It is found, for example, in the works of Wulfstan and here its prominence can probably be attributed to the influence of Ælfric. Wulfstan uses Ælfrician language of purity but reframes it in his own distinctly legalistic terms by equating clerical marriage with bigamy.[339] Wulfsige also was apparently influenced enough by Ælfric to reform Sherborne along the lines of Winchester. In the hagiographies of Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald composed by their students, the rigour and, implicitly, chastity of reformed monasticism is lauded over the laxity of non-reformed ecclesiastics even when these non-reformed were apparently perfectly correct in all other respects. In the case of Wulfstan Cantor, author of the *Vita sancti Æthelwoldi*, his view that the clergy were corrupt must also have derived from his experience of the tutelage of Æthelwold.[340] In the cases of B. and Byrhtferth, who were not primarily influenced by Winchester, the emphasis on chastity seems to derive from ideas promoted by Dunstan and Oswald respectively. B. praises the 'narrow' life practiced at Glastonbury, a reference to Matthew 7. 13 which relates to the need for self-restraint.[341] Likewise Byrhtferth echoes Wulfstan when he claims that married clergy used their income to fund their wives and not their churches.[342] Given the work of Oswald in securing ecclesiastical lands at Worcester, this view emphasising church property may reflect his influence on the outlook of Ramsey monks like Byrhtferth.[343]

The Winchester reformers argued that the non-reformed did not properly follow the ideals of virtue and obedience founded by the early Church. Clerical marriage was emblematic of this. Ælfric specifically makes three assertions about the practice of clerical marriage. He asserts that it was common, that it was accepted, and that it was defended with reference to erroneous teachings. The Vercelli Book indicates that attitudes to this practice were not as uniform as Ælfric suggests since the book may offer a glimpse of the justifications rallied for the practice, justifications that derive mainly from the same monastic tradition which influenced Ælfric and the other reformers. As noted in the previous chapter, moderation is an important theme of the Vercelli Book and, while some scholars have used it to suggest a non-monastic audience, the emphasis on moderation in fact derives from monastic sources and reflects concerns about bad faith and excessive self-mortification that Ælfric shared.[344] Where the moderation of the Vercelli Book differs from this tradition, however, is on the subject of

[339] Wulfstan, *Institutes*, c. 22, in *Political Tracts*, pp. 116-117.
[340] Lapidge., M. and M. Winterbottom, *Life of St Æthelwold* (Oxford, 1991), pp. iii-xv.
[341] B., *Vita sancti Dunstani*, chp. 15., in *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, ed. and transl. by M. Winterbottom and M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2011).
[342] Byrhtferth, *VSO* II.2, i; Tinti, *Sustaining Belief*, p. 26.
[343] Tinti, *Sustaining Belief*, pp. 88-120.
[344] Clayton, M., 'Suicide in the works of Ælfric', *The Review of English Studies* 60 (2009), pp. 361-369.

clerical celibacy and this difference would seem to fit with the claim made by Ælfric that what he saw as error had become customary in England. However, this is not entirely correct. Firstly, the ideals promoted in the book are framed by motivations similar to those discussed by Ælfric. Secondly, moderation reflects only part of the ideal expressed in the Vercelli Book. Alongside it there is also evidence for a more demanding attitude in some religious communities.

Vercelli VII offers the closest thing to a defense of clerical marriage. The piece is an Old English translation of the second half of a Latin version, made by Mutianus Scholasticus for the monks of Vivarium, of St John Chrysostom's twenty-ninth homily on Hebrews.[345] Moderation is a key theme of the text which presents it as a middle way between the dangers of both immoderation and intense abstinence.[346] As noted in chapter two, Vercelli VII is a problematic piece which does not seem to have been an *ad populum* homily because it does not follow the typical homiletic structure, and on account of the great deal of specific biblical knowledge that it assumes. Instead, the piece may have been used within a religious community, possibly for preaching at the Chapter Office.[347] If so, its specific defense of moderation becomes interesting for its implications about the practices surrounding clerical celibacy. The piece suggests that the arguments used to defend practices of clerical marriage were more sophisticated than the caricatures of Winchester reformers would suggest.

The moderation of Vercelli VII is focused on adhering to prescribed limits. The word translated as 'immoderation' (*oferfyllness*), demonstrates this due to its meaning of consumption past the minimum needed to satisfy a need. Thus, the use of *oferfyllness* in contrast to 'moderation' (*gemetegung*), characterises moderation as adherence to a healthy median that the author stresses must not be compromised by overindulgence or excessive abstinence. The implications of the word translated as 'fornication' (*unrihthæmed*) are telling due to its literal meaning as 'improper cohabitation'. Old English had several terms for fornication and adultery, most of which focused on the act of lying down with a person, so the choice here of a word emphasising cohabitation seems interesting particularly within an ecclesiastical context. The evidence of charters, wills, and the physical construction of church precincts suggests that it was not uncommon in later Anglo-Saxon England for some members of religious communities to have private houses, even if the churches in question also had dormitories and refectories. One reason for this situation may be that some community

[345] Zacher, 'Source', p. 99.
[346] Vercelli VII**,** ll. 104-115.
[347] *Regularis Concordia*, c. 21 in *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks of the English Nation*, transl. T. Symons (London, 1953); Billett, J., *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597-c. 1000* (London, 2014), p. 195.

members would live in these homes with their wives and children while others would follow a more communal life.[348] With this in mind, the reference to improper cohabitation stands out for the implication that some cohabitation is proper. The core of moderation in Vercelli VII is focused on performance of religious duties and the cultivation of virtue. As the author stresses, the benefits of *gemetegung* are that it allows the mind and body to be united and focused on God. Thus, its conceptualization of moderation is similar to the observation made by Ælfric that moderation is the mother of all virtue.[349] Similarly, the criticism of self-destructive abstinence was also echoed by Ælfric.[350] Where the Vercelli VII author deviates is in the kinds of moderation that s/he appears to tolerate. If *unrihthæmed* referred to a practice in which some community members lived with wives and others did not, then this is a level of moderation that Ælfric would never have accepted since he was explicit that the apostolic ideal required total celibacy. Of course, it is not clear if this is what the author of Vercelli VII meant, and the text is open to interpretation so it cannot be assumed to be a defense of clerical marriage. But the ethos that it implies in which plurality was accepted so long as sin was avoided, provided that one did not see clerical marriage itself as a sin, is one in which clerical marriage may not have been the taboo that it was for men like Ælfric. What this indicates is that the Ælfrician caricature of a cleric defending clerical marriage is just that, a caricature, and does not do justice to the ideas which motivated non-reformed writers. Vercelli VII instead suggests that non-reformed writers operated within a framework that at its core was like that used by Ælfric, although they did not share the focus on *clænnysse* which was so central to his theology. While in his eyes this constituted error, the suggestion that clerics defended their practices with erroneous claims about the marital status of St Peter seems not to present the whole story considering the defense of moderation made in Vercelli VII.

The ideas found in the Vercelli Book further help to undermine the portrayal of the non-reformed by reformers like Ælfric when it is recognised that the ideal of religious life presented in the book is not uniformly one of moderation. Rather there is another strand of idealism in the Vercelli Book which offers a robust defence of abstinence. Vercelli XXII, a piece comprising abstracted quotations from St Isidore, offers a harsher perspective on the matter than does Vercelli VII. In the homily it is claimed that 'abstinence causes men to draw near to

[348] Barrow, J., *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c. 800- c. 1200* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 40, 143, 291-292; Foxhall Forbes, H., 'Squabbling Siblings: Gender and Monastic Life in Late Anglo-Saxon Winchester', *Gender and History*, 23 (2011), 671-672.
[349] Ælfric, *De octo uitiis et de duodecim abusiuis gradus,* in Clayton, 'Suicide', p. 362
[350] Clayton, 'Suicide', pp. 361-369.

God. Where that abstinence abides, there abides God'.[351] To honour God properly the homilist says that Christians must 'desist from those innumerable feasts, and those hurrying acquisitions, and those frequent banquets, and those fornications'.[352] Vercelli XXII is not a homily. It does not follow a usual homiletic structure and has no clear theme. Its only aim seems to have been to collect interesting quotations by Isidore without trying to connect them. While the criticisms of Vercelli XXII are not necessarily that different from the call for moderation found in Vercelli VII – for example it uses the same term for unlawful sex, *unrihthæmed*, implying here that the term refers to any kind of cohabitation with a woman – the emphasis on rejection of worldly things is far more pronounced and flies counter to the defence of *gemetegung* offered in Vercelli VII. The need for renunciation of worldly things is also presented as especially important for the priesthood on account of their duties. A similar call for abstinence in those who perform Mass is found in Vercelli XIV where the homilist claims that those who offer the sacrifice of the Mass should first sacrifice themselves through abstinence from all sinful things.[353] Emphasis on priestly abstinence is also found in Vercelli XV where clerical wealth is linked to the decline of the Church and approaching apocalypse.[354] While VII called for moderation XXII, XIV, and XV pay little attention to moderation and instead emphasize purification and virtue through self-restraint in material and sensual things. Therefore, Vercelli shows the diversity of thought among the non-reformed and clarifies that reforming rhetoric, particularly that from Winchester, mis-characterised and oversimplified the ideas of the non-reformed.

While the ideal of clerical celibacy united reformers from different backgrounds, on other issues they were not united. For example, reformers disagreed on the extent to which clergy of all kinds should be engaged with the secular judicial system to act as agents of mercy. Ælfric was entirely opposed to the clergy passing judgement on criminals; Wulfstan was entirely in favour of it. In both his private letter to Wulfstan and Old English pastoral letter for the bishop, Ælfric explicitly says that clergy should not be involved in courts because no servant of God should be entangled in secular business and because they would be tainted on account of any death sentences that they handed down.[355] In the private letter, Ælfric even

[351] Vercelli XXII, ll. 163-164: 'Forhæfdnesse gedeð Gode. Þær sio forhæfdnesse wunað þær wunaðd God'.
[352] *Ibid.,* ll. 202-203: 'Oflinnan þara unarimedra [ofer]metta 7 þara gescyndendra gestreaona 7 þara oftrædra symla 7 þara unrihthæmeda'.
[353] Vercelli XIV, ll. 86-93.
[354] Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homily XV and The Apocalypse of Thomas', in in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book,* ed. by S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 170-172.
[355] Ælfric, 'Letter from Ælfric to Wulfstan', c. 15; *Ibid.,* 'Letter for Wulfstan', c. 201; Thompson, V., *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 2012), pp. 184-187.

seems to chastise Wulfstan personally by criticising his presumption in judging robbers and thieves.[356] However Wulfstan was not dissuaded by Ælfric. Not only did he play a major role in drafting laws for kings Æthelred and Cnut but he also explicitly commanded that other bishops and clergy proactively involve themselves with the legal system to promote mercy and justice in society.[357] While his laws make use of capital punishment, it is wrong to suggest that Wulfstan had no qualms with capital punishment. Wulfstan consistently shows reticence in prescribing the death penalty and instead he shows deep concern that the convicted be allowed to live so they may repent of their sins by favouring non-lethal punishments like mutilation and proscribed penance.[358] While the extent of his involvement in the legal system was unprecedented, there was a long tradition of bishops and priests acting as mitigating influences at legal hearings.[359] When the disagreement over the legal responsibilities of the clergy between Ælfric and Wulfstan is seen in the context of late tenth- and early eleventh-century evidence, it emerges that their backgrounds influenced their ideas as much as their common reforming sympathies did. Ælfric offers a monastic perspective on the issue while Wulfstan presents an episcopal one. There is no evidence, besides questionable later sources, that Wulfstan was a monk. The concerns expressed by Wulfstan suggest that his main interest lay in episcopal matters relating to pastoral care and the regularisation of ecclesiastical services.[360] This more episcopal attitude to reform may account for the disagreement between Wulfstan and Ælfric.

The large number of surviving manuscripts that record rituals for ordeals suggests that it was normal for clergy to play a central role in the legal affairs of their parishioners, depending on how regularly ordeals were required to prove guilt or innocence.[361] The Blickling Book indicates that the involvement of the clergy in legal matters survived into the late tenth century. Several of the Blickling homilies display what has been called a 'social conscience' concerned particularly with the promotion of Christian justice and mercy.[362] Blickling V, for example,

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[356] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[357] Wulfstan, 'Concerning Episcopal Duties', c. 9, in *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York,* ed. and transl. A. Rabin (Manchester, 2014), p. 63.
[358] Thompson, *Dying and Death,* pp. 182-183; Cowen, A., '*Byrstas* and *bysmeras*: The Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi as Anglos*', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), p. 403.
[359] Huscroft, *Making England,* pp. 160-161, 172.
[360] Hill, J., 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Reformer?' in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference,* ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 311-313; *Liber Eliensis,* II.87, in *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth, Compiled by a Monk of Ely in the Twelfth Century,* transl. by J. Fairweather (London, 2005); Rabin, *Political Writings,* p. 9; Barrow, J., 'Wulfstan and Worcester: Bishop and Clergy in the Early Eleventh Century' in in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference,* ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), p. 142.
[361] Gittos, 'Red Book', pp. 68-69.
[362] Dalby, 'Themes and Techniques', pp. 236-238; Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth,* pp. 129-130.

rebukes unjust judges who do not properly enforce good laws instituted by good men.[363] This 'worldliness' has in the past been seen as a sign that the Blickling Book was the work of the 'secular clergy'.[364] That ordained clergy would play a role in legal disputes can be seen in material predating the late tenth century.[365] Blickling and Wulfstan attest to the continuance of this ideal in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries and it remained the norm from then on. Ælfric rejected the custom as part of his ideas of *clænnysse.* Ælfric's ideal reform required the purity of the religious to facilitate a kind of spiritual trickle-down effect that would eventually lead to the spiritual renewal of society. While Wulfstan accepted the need for celibacy and purity deriving from Winchester, he emphatically repudiated the criticism of clerical legal involvement due to his view that such engagement with the machinery of state could be used to effect large-scale reform.[366] Wulfstan's aims were radical but their essence was conservative since on this subject he sought to maintain and strengthen the status quo of priestly involvement in the legal system. Because Wulfstan viewed the means of reform in a way that was more accepting of worldly involvement, in contrast to the ideas espoused at Winchester which required a more cloistered approach, this created conflict between Wulfstan and Ælfric.[367] The more episcopal views of Wulfstan caused him to adopt an attitude much more like that found in the Blickling Book which similarly focused on the clergy and their ability to spiritually improve society. This agreement between Wulfstan and the texts in the Blickling Book should be seen, along with the diversity reflected in the contents of the Vercelli Book, as evidence against the notion that non-reformed ideals were incompatible with all kinds of reform. While there were differences and areas of disagreement, there was also a great deal of similarity. This similarity rose out of the need for clergy to perform their duties while also maintaining a way of life distinct from that of the laity, both of which were concerns shared by reformers.

Conclusions

The treatment of priestly duties and ideals in the Blickling and Vercelli Books requires the reconsideration of the environment encountered by late tenth-century reformers. The chief conclusion is that, while the terms in which reformers articulated their ideals stands out, the

[363] *Ibid.*
[364] Dalby, M., 'Themes and Techniques in the Blickling Lenten Homilies', in *The Old English Homily and it's Backgrounds*, ed. P. Szarmach and B. Huppé (Albany, NY, 1978), pp. 236-238.
[365] Huscroft, R,, *Making England, 796-1042* (London, 2018), pp. 160-161, 172
[366] Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 14-15.
[367] Hill, 'Reformer?', pp. 314-315; Godden 'Wulfstan and Ælfric', pp. 373.

ideas themselves were not as novel as they would suggest. For example, all these authors see a core of priestly duties in baptism, preaching, and confession which make up the essence of the salvific mission of the clergy. While the views on priestly duties are consistent, the ideals of how they should live are less so.

The treatment of clerical celibacy especially is a grey area. While undoubtedly some clergy married, it is far from clear whether this was the norm as some reformers suggest. The Vercelli Book indicates that there was probably a diversity of opinion on this since some authors recognised the value of clerical marriage while others placed greater emphasis on the need for chastity and general abstinence. Crucially, the evidence suggests that authors of both opinions could rally ideas taken from the ascetic tradition in defence of their views. While from the perspective of men like Ælfric the error of clerical marriage had become entrenched, its defence was not entirely based on erroneous ideas in the way that he suggests. Rather, behind these differing views were ideals that were rooted in a common tradition of monastic thought which, by the late tenth century, were widely accepted in reformed and non-reformed communities.

Although their thought shares common touchstones, it is difficult or even impossible to say which non-reformed authors saw themselves as monks and which did not. This distinction is important since, as the contrast between Ælfric and Wulfstan demonstrates, one's background and self-identity could impact ideas about what was appropriate for the priesthood. It would seem that those like Wulfstan who envisioned reform through royal and episcopal authority were more open to the role of the clergy in society at large, while those inspired by Winchester favoured a more cloistered ideal and were hostile to the involvement of the clergy with worldly distractions.

Consequently, by considering ideas about the priesthood within the larger intellectual context in the late tenth century, it becomes clear that while the actual duties of the priesthood had become entrenched, debate over ideals continued. Throughout the history of the Church, debate over the proper ideals for priestly behaviour has been ongoing. Late tenth-century England is no exception. Blickling and Vercelli, however, provide voices to hitherto silent groups within this argument. Before now the testimony of reformers has dominated the interpretation of the evidence for how the clergy lived in this period. Although the evidence is still open to interpretation, Blickling and Vercelli offer hints of how practices among the non-reformed, like clerical marriage and priestly involvement with the legal system, were understood by the non-reformed who practiced them. They also help to highlight the internal divisions of the reformers' own ideas and how different camps seem to have developed. It is

also significant to note that these different reforming attitudes broadly correspond to divisions seen within the Blickling and Vercelli Books themselves.

IV

Practising Christianity in late tenth-century England

Introduction

> '"Remember this and know that my riches which I previously had are all gone and perished, and my dwellings are decayed and rotted. But turn you to yourself and turn your heart to counsel and merit that your prayers be acceptable to God Almighty." He then so sorrowfully and grief-stricken departed from the contemplation of dust and turned himself away from all the business of this world, and he began to study and to teach the praise of God and to love spiritual virtues. And through that [he] earned for himself the gift of the Holy Spirit and also delivered the soul of that other from punishment and released [it] from torments'.[368]

This scene, the conclusion of the conversation between the rich man and the bones of his dead friend in Blickling X, summarises the place of devotional and penitential practices in late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon thought. The rich man merits the grace of God for himself and his friend by undertaking to live a life of prayer, devotional reading, preaching, and virtue. Nowhere here is there anything analogous to Reformation ideas such as *sola fide* or the notion that good works are not meritorious. On the contrary, the view found here is that good works are essential in the life (and afterlife) of a virtuous Christian. The story in Blickling X also embodies the two major issues with much of the evidence for how Anglo-Saxons practiced their faith: firstly, the penitent man and his dead friend are both wealthy; secondly, based on the comment about his teaching praise of God, it seems that the rich man entered a religious community. Much of the evidence for how people practiced their religion was produced by the religious elite for the religious and secular elites. This leaves open the question of how those who did not fall into either category practiced their religion, since in many of these sources these groups are invisible.

The invisibility of ordinary laity in discussions of Anglo-Saxon religious practice highlights the need to look for evidence that can shed light on how the ordinary laity engaged

[368] Blickling X, ll. 118-128: 'Gemyne þis 7 oncnaw þ*æt* mine welan þe ic io hæfde syndon ealle gewitene 7 gedrorene. 7 mine herewic syndon gebrosnode 7 gemolsnode. Ac onwend þe to þe sylfum 7 þine heortan to ræde gecyr 7 geearna þ*æt* þine bena syn Gode ælmihtigu*m* andfenge. He þa swa geomor. 7 swa gnorngende. gewat from þære dustsceawunga 7 hine þa onwende from ealre þisse worlde begangum. 7 he ongan godes lof leornian 7 þ*æt* læran 7 þ*æt* gastlice mægen lufian. 7 þurh þ*æt* geearnode him þa gife Haliges Gastes 7 eac þæs oþres saule of witum generede 7 of tintregum alesde'.

with their religion. The Blickling and Vercelli Books offer just such an opportunity. 'Religious practice' can refer to many different things. In the Blickling and Vercelli Books, however, the authors repeatedly emphasise four practices in particular: prayer, vigils, fasting, and almsgiving. Based on how these four practices are discussed, they represent the four key penitential practices meant to maintain favour with God. The penitential nature of these practices is particularly visible in how closely vigils, fasting, and almsgiving are associated by the authors with penitential seasons like Lent and Rogationtide (possibly also Advent but neither Blickling nor Vercelli contains many texts dealing with that season). Several conclusions suggest themselves when the attitudes of the Blickling and Vercelli authors to these practices are seen in contrast to evidence in other homilies or in liturgical books. Chiefly, the ideas about religious practice promoted in the Blickling and Vercelli Books are direct continuations of ideas found in sources created for the religious and secular elite. However, the ideas found in Blickling and Vercelli are not just copies of older ideas; they are also simplifications of them, meant to accommodate an audience who had little to no Latin and who did not attend church especially regularly. We find almost identical simplifications in the homilies of Ælfric, although his demands of the laity became stricter in his later writings. This highlights not only that these adaptations suited a mixed audience at the Mass but also that the attitudes to religious practice found in Blickling and Vercelli were not unacceptable to those advocating reform. Even when Ælfric demanded more of the laity, his underlying principles in adapting practices for them remained continuity and simplification.

Prayer

In Blickling IV, during the pastoral section, the homilist offers to the congregation a simple guide for prayer for them to follow every day:

> 'The holy teacher says, "We [must] not cease, children of men, that we please God and vex the devil, day and night, and with the sign of the Cross of Christ bless ourselves, then that devil flies from us because to him [it] is a greater terror than [it] is to any man when [a] man strikes against his head with a sword." And to all Christian men [it] is commanded that they bless their entire body seven times [a day] with [the] sign of the Cross of Christ, first in [the] early morning, [the] second time at nine o'clock, [the] third time at midday, [the] fourth time at None (three o'clock), [the] fifth time in the evening, [the]

> sixth time in the night before rest, [the] seventh time at dawn. At all times he must commend himself to God'.[369]

The faithful are, the homilist says, to sign themselves seven times a day with the Cross and to 'commend [themselves] to God'. This prayer guide is one of only a few to survive from Anglo-Saxon England. Another prayer rule survives from London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi which, with Cotton Tiberius D. xxv, usually called '*Æ*lfwine's Prayer Book'. The book was created for *Æ*lfwine, dean of the New Minster (d. 1057), and apparently served him as he travelled the diocese as deduced from its compact size and because it contains a calendar, a collectar, prognostications, computistical material, and Offices alongside a collection of private prayers.[370] It was, in fact, a handbook for a busy ecclesiastic. The opening folios of the book record a rule to guide *Æ*lfwine in his daily prayers:

> 'Each Sunday you [should] announce the names of the Trinity, that is Father and Son and the Holy Spirit. And sing *Benedicite* and *Gloria in excelsis Deo* and *Credo in Deum* and *Pater Noster* with love for Christ, [it is] better when performed [each day of the] week. You [should] remain strong [so] that you [can] sing it each day when you first awake. And say then [to] Almighty God, 'because of your great mercy and because of these good words' power, be merciful [to] me, and give me forgiveness for my sins, and protection in times to come, and your blessing to all things and at last [let] my soul rest in eternal life and in your mercy.' And remember each Friday, that you [should] prostrate yourself on [the] ground [with] good thoughts and sing *DEUS misereatur nostri*. And do this secretly, where you are by yourself. And remember that He suffered on that day (on a Friday) for all mankind. No man can in his own speech, with labour and testing anxiety [as] happens to them, raise up God nor ask his mercy as perfectly as he can with such Psalms and with other like [songs]. If each day you sing your Offices well, you need never [go] to Hell, and in addition in this world you [will] have an agreeable life. And if when you are in difficulties and cry out to God, he [will] pity and be generous [to you], when you call to him. Amen.'[371]

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[369] Blickling IV, ll. 139-150: 'Cwæþ se halga lareow: Nu ablinnan we manna bearn þ*æt* we Gode cwemon, 7 deofol tynan dæg 7 nihtes, 7 mid Cristes rode tacne us gebletsian. Þonn*e* flyhþ þ*æt* deofol fram us, forþon hi*m* biþ mara broga þonn*e* ænigum men sy þeah hi[m] mon slea mid sweorde wiþ þæs heafdes; 7 eallum Critenu*m* mannu*m* is beboden þ*æt* hi ealne heora lichoman seofon siþu*m* gebletsian mid Cristes rode tacne, ærest on morgen, oþre siþe on underntid, þriddan siþe on midne dæg, feorþan siþe on nontid, fiftan siþe on æfen, syxtan siþe on niht ær he reste, seofoþan siþe on uhtan huru he hine Gode bebeode.

[370] Clarke, S., *Compelling God: Theories of Prayer in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2018), p. 106; Raw, B., 'Anglo-Saxon Prayerbooks', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vol. 1: c.400-1100*, ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 464-467.

[371] *Ælfwine's Prayerbook (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii)*, ed. B Günzel (London, 1993), ff. 2r-2v: '*Æ*lce sunnandæg bebeod þe ðære þrynnesse naman, þæt is fæder 7 sunu 7 se halga gast. 7 sing 'benedicite' 7 'Gloria in excelsis Deo' 7 'credo in Deum' 7 'pater noster' Criste to lofe, þonne gelimpð þe ealle

These two rules for prayer occur in different contexts. The Blickling rule is found in a homily meant to be preached at the Mass to a mixed congregation of laity and clergy on either the third or fourth Sunday in Lent. The rule of Ælfwine is found in a book meant for private use by a high-ranking ecclesiastic. The rules themselves reflect this difference. The Blickling rule is simple and emphasises physical action over words; The rule of Ælfwine is more elaborate and emphasises words over physical actions. Yet despite these differences, the core of both rules is the same. This core emphasises two key components of prayer: words and actions. In contrasting the similarities and differences between discussions of these elements, it is possible to get a sense of how ideas about the practice of prayer were presented to disparate groups.

On the words of prayer, the guide in Ælfwine's prayer book offers the most information. Besides the vernacular request for mercy, all the prayers referred to in this rule are in Latin. They also derive chiefly from liturgy: the *Benedicite* and Psalms are from the Office, the *Gloria, Credo,* and *Pater Noster* from the Mass. Ælfwine's prayer book and other later prayer books like that of St Wulfstan contain more liturgical texts than are found in earlier books like the *Royal Prayer Book* (London, British Library, Royal MS 2. A. XX) and the *Book of Cerne* (Cambridge, University Library, MS Ll. 1. 10).[372] In these earlier books, while many prayers were drawn from the liturgy, greater prominence was given to extra-liturgical prayers derived from Irish sources.[373] By the eleventh century these Irish prayers had largely disappeared and had been replaced with liturgical prayers like those found in Ælfwine's book.[374] As part of this replacement the role of the Psalms became more significant in these later books. Whereas earlier prayer books opened with extracts from the Gospels, these later books eschew these entirely in favour of Psalms.[375] With an increasing emphasis on Psalms, the books began the process of metamorphosis that would lead eventually to the emergence of books of hours in

wucan þe bet. Mihtest þu gewunian þæt ðu hit sunge ælce dæge, þonne ðu ærest onwoce. 7 cwæþ ðonne God ælmihtig, 'For þinre miclan mildheortnesse 7 for ðissa godes words mægne, miltsa me, 7 syle me minra gedonra synna forgyfnesse, 7 ðara toweardra gescildnessa, 7 þine bletsunga to eallum þingum 7 huru minre sawle reste on ðam ecan life 7 a ðine miltse.' 7 geþenc ælce firgedæge, þæt ðu strecce þe on eorðan godes þances, 7 sing 'DEVS misereatur nostri' 7 do þis dihlice, þær ðu sylf sy. 7 geþenc þæt he ðrowode on þone dæg micel for eall mancyn. Ne mæg ænig mann on his agen geþeode þa geswinc 7 þara costnunga nearonessa, þe him onbecumað, Gode swa fulfremedlice areccan, ne his mildheortnesse biddan, swa he mæg mid þillicum sealmum 7 mid oþrum swilcum. Gyf þu ælce dæge þine tidsangas wel asingst, ne þearf ðu næfre to helle, 7 eac on þisse worulde þu hæfst þe gedefe lif. 7 gyf ðu on hwilcum earfeðum byst 7 to Gode clypast, he ðe miltsað 7 eac tiþað, þonne þu hine bitsð. Amen'.

[372] Raw, 'Prayerbooks', pp. 463-466; Clarke, *Compelling God,* pp.100-106; *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile: Volume 1*, ed. by A. N. Doane (Binghamton NY, 1994), no. 283, pp. 52-59; Kuypers, A. B., *The prayer book of Aedeluald the Bishop, commonly called the Book of Cerne* (Cambridge, 1902).

[373] Clarke, *Compelling God,* p. 100, n. 201.

[374] *Ibid.*

[375] *Ibid.,* p. 106.

the later middle ages. These devotional books popularised religious Offices for a lay audience.[376] However, later Anglo-Saxon prayer books were not for the laity. Instead they all seem to have been used by ecclesiastics, but the ascendency of the Psalms marked a clear shift towards a more Office-like private prayer life. The contents of prayer books were not static, and they seem to have become more liturgical by the eleventh century, but the influence of liturgy had always been visible. Even when the books contained more non-liturgical prayers, the logic guiding the selection of prayers was the same as that found in the rule of Ælfwine: all the books avoid 'free prayer'.

So called 'free prayer', in which the words of prayer are to an extent self-generated, only became a valued form of prayer during the Reformation.[377] Prior to this, Christian writers as early as Tertullian (d. ca. 240), author of the earliest surviving treatise on prayer, and in unbroken continuity up to the early modern period, largely ignored free prayer in favour of the recitation of received prayers, principally the *Pater Noster* and Psalms.[378] Tertullian said that after reciting these prayers the believer could then make other requests of God, but whether this means free prayer is unclear.[379] When Anglo-Saxon writers like Bede and Alcuin considered the best way to pray, they returned always to the Psalms, Bede in the form of his breviated Psalter and Alcuin by listing particular extracts from Psalms for particular needs.[380] Thus even though they implicitly allowed for prayer based on individual will, as Tertullian did, this was nevertheless not free prayer. The rule of Ælfwine suggests a similar attitude when it states that 'no man can in his own speech… raise up God nor ask His mercy as perfectly as he can with such Psalms and with other like [songs]'. But what were these 'other like [songs]'? Given the use of the *Benedicite* and *Gloria* by Ælfwine it seems most likely that these other songs were hymns taken from Church liturgy and adapted for use by a lone precator.[381] Even the Irish prayers of the earlier books would not constitute free prayer since these too were written texts copied from older books and thus they were also imbued with some authority.

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[376] Duffy, E., *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers 1240-1570* (Yale, CON, 2006), pp. 5-6; Donovan, C., *The de Brailes Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in thirteenth-century Oxford* (1991), pp. 25-41.
[377] Branch, L., 'The Rejection of Liturgy, the Rise of Free Prayer, and Modern Religious Subjectivity', *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 29 (2005), 1-28; Skoglund, J., 'Free Prayer', *Studia Liturgica* 10 (1974), 137-150.
[378] Froehlich, K., 'The Lord's Prayer in Patristic Literature', in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifth Centuries* ed. R. Hammerling (Leiden, 2008), pp. 59-69.
[379] Tertullian, *De oratione* c.10, in *Tertullian's Tract on Prayer*, transl. E. Evans (London, 1953); Clarke, *Compelling God*, pp. 79-81.
[380] Ward, B., *Bede and the Psalter* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 1-14.
[381] Clarke, *Compelling God*, p. 106; Bzdyl, D., 'The sources of Ælfric's prayers in Cambridge University Library MS. Gg. 3. 28', *Notes and Queries* 222 (1977), 101-102.

The Blickling prayer guide is much less specific on what the faithful were to say when they prayed. The comment that the faithful 'commend [themselves] to God' implies speech, although it may also have referred to silent prayer. A hint of what kind of speech this may have been can be gleaned from two sources, a selection of vernacular prayers appended to the end of Cambridge, University Library MS Gg. 3. 28, a manuscript containing a selection of Ælfrician homilies, and a comment made in Blickling II. The additional vernacular prayers in MS Gg. 3. 28 include both the *Pater Noster* and translations of both the Nicene and Apostle's Creeds as well as ten other miscellaneous prayers all given in Old English. The heading to these prayers identifies that they are 'for laymen who do not know Latin'.[382] Donald Bzdyl has demonstrated that the first seven of the ten miscellaneous prayers are translations from various Latin liturgical manuscripts, the eighth is a translation of the prayer of the publican in Luke 18. 13, the ninth is to be recited when making the sign of the Cross, and the tenth has no known source but seems to be in part a translation of the *Gloria Patri* and in part a translation of Psalm 24. 2-3.[383] Bzdyl argues that since these prayers are collected into what is in effect a prayer booklet, then probably Ælfric meant for them to be memorised by the laity (with the help of the priest who owned the booklet) and used in their private devotions, as the heading implies.[384] In effect these prayers are simplified vernacular versions of the kind of prayers used by Ælfwine and this suggests that the trend towards a more liturgical prayer life was not limited to ecclesiastics but also was promoted among the laity. However, since only one copy of this booklet survives, it is impossible to tell how widely it circulated, if at all. In his own homilies, Ælfric seems to expect that most laity would not even know most of these prayers. In three of his homilies — homilies for Rogation Tuesday and Wednesday in his first series and in a homily against auguries in his *Lives of Saints* — Ælfric appears to suggest that the only prayer a faithful person needed was the *Pater Noster.*[385] Particularly in the homily for Rogation Tuesday he follows a tradition of patristic commentary on the *Pater Noster* which emphasised its value as a prayer for all occasions.[386] Following this, in the homily for Rogation Wednesday which focuses on explaining the Nicene Creed, he advises that the faithful should pray using the *Pater Noster* and then confirm their faith with the Creed.[387] Finally in the homily against auguries he offers another demonstration of the importance of the *Pater Noster* when, after

[382] *Ibid.*, 98-99.
[383] *Ibid.*, 99-101.
[384] *Ibid.*, 101.
[385] *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series Text*, ed. P. Clemoes (Oxford, 1997), I. xix, xx; *De Auguriis*, ll. 46-53.
[386] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, I.xix, ll. 11-232.
[387] *Ibid.*, I.xx, ll. 1-4.

condemning charms and divinations as heathen practices, he advises the laity to rely instead on the *Pater Noster* when travelling, trusting that through it God will keep them safe.[388] Possibly Ælfric created his booklet after writing these homilies, in which case the booklet may reflect the view of an older and more experienced author. But it is striking that, despite the explicitly educational purpose of the booklet, there are no signs in his own homilies that Ælfric attempted to teach any of the prayers besides the *Pater Noster* and the Nicene Creed. He insisted that the laity also know the Creed, but he framed this as a means to strengthen their faith while the *Pater Noster* was framed as a prayer proper which both glorified God and invoked his aid.[389] As already noted, in this Ælfric was following a long-established patristic tradition that had found an eager audience in Anglo-Saxon England, not just in his own work but also in texts such as the prose *Solomon and Saturn*.[390] This attitude is also found in Blickling II when the homilist, drawing on a Gregorian homily, explains that Christ wanted the blind man of Jericho to cry out to him, despite already knowing his need, because God desires human prayer. 'Fortunately', the homilist says, 'he taught and exhorted us [about] how we ought to pray, and yet he said 'Your Father that is in Heaven knows what [it] is you need before you ask him''.[391] The first part of this comment is a reference to the *Pater Noster*. The second suggests the unique authority of this prayer since it was given by a god who already knows the needs of the precator.

Nowhere in his/her prayer rule does the author of Blickling IV say that the faithful should use the *Pater Noster* or any other specific prayer when commending themselves to God. But given the general lack of free prayer in the early middle ages and the emphasis elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon evidence, even elsewhere in the Blickling Book, on the *Pater Noster* as the chief prayer, it seems plausible that the Blickling IV author had the *Pater Noster* in mind when creating the prayer rule. This would suggest that in terms of the words of prayer the basic logic was the same as that found in Ælfwine's guide to prayer. Rather than using free prayer, the faithful were to use authoritative forms of prayer, indeed the most authoritative of all prayers. This lay prayer was notably simplified compared to its ecclesiastical cousin. Judging from Blickling IV and the Ælfrician booklet it was more succinct and entirely vernacular, but the forms used still derived chiefly from the liturgy, just as they did in Ælfwine's and Wulfstan's prayer-books.

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[388] Ælfric, *Lives of Saints,* 'De auguries', ll. 46-5 in *Old English Lives of Saints* vol. 2, ed. and transl. M. Clayton and J. Mullins (Cambridge, MAS, 2019), pp.124-127.
[389] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, I. xx.
[390] Anlezark, D., *The Old English Dialogue of Solomon and Saturn* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 72-77.
[391] Blickling II, ll. 103-106, 'Gelimplice he us lærde 7 monade, hu we us gebiddan sceoldan, 7 hwæþere cwæþ 'Eower Fæder se on heofonum is wat hwæs eow þearf biþ ær ge hine o biddan'.

The other area of similarity between the instructions for prayer is their shared insistence on the physical actions of prayer. In The rule of Ælfwine, this is seen in the reference to prostration on Fridays as a sign of both repentance and awe at the sacrifice of Christ. This is consistent with the frequent references to prostration in the *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham* where the act is associated both with making confession and with awe. For example, the brothers must prostrate themselves and recite two Psalms at the end of every canonical hour on the days between Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.[392] In Blickling XIII, for the Assumption of Mary, Michael prostrates himself before Christ when the latter entrusts the archangel to guard Mary's soul:

> 'And then our Lord received her soul, and he gave it to St Michael the Archangel, and he received her soul with the humility of all his limbs'.[393]

The 'humility of all [Michaels'] limbs' is in fact a mistranslation of the Latin *Transitus Mariae* that served as the source for Blickling XIII. In the text the phrase translated as 'the humility of all his limbs', *exceptis omnibus membris,* refers to the lack of sexual differentiation in Mary's soul.[394] The translator badly misread the Latin or was using a corrupted text. However, the way they misread it is telling since even though they were mistaken they must have translated the scene in such a way that seemed plausible to them. Thus, by describing Michael prostrating himself they reveal something of how they understood the act of prostration. The translator regarded prostration as a sign of deference and humility. From pictorial evidence it can also be gleaned that prostration was a sign of adoration. For example, on folio 1r of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 4. 32 (2176), the *Glastonbury Classbook*, where a monk (thought to be a self-portrait by Dunstan, but based on an image in *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* by Hrabanus Maurus) lies prostrate at the feet of an enormous Christ beneath an invocation requesting protection for Dunstan.[395] There is also a penitential use of prostration in the introduction to the 'Scrift boc' which required the penitent to prostrate themselves as a sign of their sincere repentance.[396] Similarly, in Junius 121 the penitent is instructed to kneel at confession again as

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[392] Ælfric, 'Letter to the Monks of Eynsham', cc. 19, 30, ed. C.A. Jones, *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, (Cambridge, 1998).
[393] Blickling XIII, ll. 170-173: '7 þa onfeng ure Drih*ten* hire saule 7 he hie þa sealde S*ancte* Michahele þæm heahengle, 7 he onfeng hire saule mid ealra his leoma eaþmodnesse'.
[394] Clayton, M., 'Blickling Homily XIII Reconsidered', *Leeds Studies in English* 17 (1986), 33.
[395] *Saint Dunstan's Classbook from Glastonbury: Codex Biblioth. Bodleianae Oxon. Auct. F.4/32.*, ed. by R. W. Hunt (Amsterdam, 1961).
[396] Frantzen, *Literature*, pp. 166-167: Þonne *man to his scrifte gange, þonne sceall he mid swyðe myccelum Godes ege and eadmodnesse beforan him hine aþenian and hine biddan wependre stefne þæt he him dædbote tæce ealra þæra gylta þe he ongean Godes willan gedon hæbbe',* 'When (a) man comes to his confession, then he must with

a sign of submission and repentance.[397] This all points to a consistent understanding of prostration as a sign of humility and repentance and it is in such a light that prostration in prayer should be understood.

The directive in Ælfwine's prayerbook to prostrate oneself specifically on Fridays raises the question of what posture was used in prayer at other times. A description of prayerful posture can be found in Blickling XIII when Peter encourages the apostles to pray with him:

> 'Then St Peter extended his hands to God and was saying "*Domine Deus omnipotens, qui sedes super cherubin æt profundi*." "Lord God Almighty, you that sit on the Cherubim and above the depth of all abysses, we raise our hands in likeness of your Cross"'.[398]

The act of raising hands is referred to twice in this account of prayer and is said to symbolise the Cross. This posture also occurs in visual depictions of prayer. For example, on page 102r of the illuminated *Old English Hexateuch* (London, British Library, Cotton Claudius B.iv), the Israelites worshiping the golden calf are presented as standing with their hands raised. Besides images like this, archaeological evidence also suggests that most people would stand when they prayed. At the small manorial church at Raunds, and at other similar churches, there is no evidence that the nave contained any kind of seating suggesting that the faithful gathered for Mass would have been standing or sitting on the floor.[399] Given the importance of liturgy and the Mass in shaping prayer, it seems likely that the posture adopted during worship also would have been the posture of private prayer. Standing at prayer also has a long patristic history. As early as Tertullian, standing was the default posture of prayer. Kneeling in prayer was not unknown, but it was held to be inappropriate for prayer on Sundays. On other days it could be used out of preference rather than standing.[400] At the Council of Nicaea the bishops decreed that prayer was to be done standing facing eastwards, although again kneeling was also allowed.[401] Based on the visual and archaeological evidence, the default prayerful posture in the Anglo-Saxon mind was prostrate or standing with hands raised. Kneeling was not, it seems,

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very great fear of God and humility prostrate himself before him and he must ask with mournful voice that he present (to him) his penance for all those sins that he has done against God's will'.

[397] Foxhall Forbes, H., 'Affective piety and the practice of penance in late- eleventh- century Worcester: the address to the penitent in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121', *Anglo-Saxon England* 44 (2015), 335-336.

[398] Blickling XIII, ll. 58-64: 'Þa aþenede S*anctus* Petrus his handa to Gode 7 wæs cweþende, '*Domine Deus omnipotens, qui sedes super cherubin æt profundi.'* 'Drihten Ælmihtig God, þu þe sitest ofer cherubine 7 ofer deopnesse ealra grunda, 7 we ahebbað ure handa to þe on anlicnesse þinra rode'.

[399] Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 388-392.

[400] Hammerling, R., 'Introduction: Prayer – A Simply Complicated Scholarly Problem', in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifth Centuries* ed. R. Hammerling (Leiden, 2008), p. 11.

[401] *Ibid.*

the expected prayerful posture. Since Ælfwine's guide for prayer only mentions prostration on Fridays, it can be inferred that on other days the precator was expected to be standing. In this, Anglo-Saxon practice was in keeping with depictions of prayer found throughout the Latin and Greek worlds.

Blickling IV, while giving much more detail about physical action than words, still does not offer a wealth of information on the actions of prayer. The action at the heart of the rule for prayer is making the sign of the Cross. The emphasis on this sign may be another symptom of the simplification discussed above. The sign of the Cross would be a relatively quick and simple gesture to match a quick vernacular prayer like the *Pater Noster*. Ælfric included a prayer for making the sign in his booklet, and this may also have been known to the author of Blickling IV, but it is not clear whether this was the case. The history of the sign of the Cross is mostly irrecoverable since the practice was apparently assumed to be common by most Christian writers back to the earliest centuries of the faith. As a result, it attracted little comment making its development difficult to trace. Nevertheless, it seems to have always been regarded as a practice open to all faithful because of its simplicity, suggesting that the Blickling IV rule to some extent follows in this tradition by making it the central act of lay prayer.[402] The faithful are instructed to cross themselves seven times a day in a scheme based on the seven Canonical Hours. In this the rule mirrors the adoption elsewhere of liturgical forms in the words of prayer by attempting to model lay prayer consciously around the Hours of the Office.

While they appear different, the prayer rules in Blickling IV and in Ælfwine's prayer book show how the same ideas and practices were received by different groups. Ælfwine's prayer rule reflects both his background as an ecclesiastic and how this shaped his private devotions. It is Latinate, multifaceted, and steeped in the words and phrases of liturgy, both the Office and the Mass. Blickling IV, in contrast, is simple and quick despite being spread out over the whole day. However, despite these differences, Blickling IV in fact represents a simplified version of the same ideas about prayer that underlie the rule of Ælfwine. It shares in the general silence on free prayer and relied on authoritative prayers, chiefly the *Pater Noster*. Certainly, Ælfwine held this view and built his prayer rule around prayers and forms taken from liturgy and Scripture to be certain of their authority. Likewise, Blickling also accepted the importance of physical actions in prayer, chiefly the sign of the Cross. Again, Ælfwine also reflects the same attitude, particularly in his comment about prostration. The sources for how

[402] Andreopoulos, A., *The Sign of the Cross: The Gesture, the Mystery, the History* (Brewster, MA, 2006), pp. 11-43.

Anglo-Saxons prayed are limited, but the rules for prayer in Blickling and in Ælfwine's prayer book offer unparalleled insights into the practices and ideas of prayer in the late tenth century and in the first half of the eleventh. When seen side by side they shed light on prayer practices through their agreements and disagreements. The resulting image demonstrates the extent to which the Blickling IV rule reflects both a simplification of and continuity with older ideas that were most fully practiced in the prayer of those at the top of the ecclesiastical and social hierarchies. These popularised ideas were preached at the Mass to a more general audience and helped to spread Christian ideas and practices out to society at large.

Vigils

There were three kinds of vigil practiced by the late antique and early medieval Church: the formal/liturgical vigil, the informal vigil, and the vigil Mass. The former included both the annual all-night Easter vigil — in which the time between sunset and cockcrow would be taken up with readings, prayer, and psalmody — and shorter vigils held the evening preceding a feast.[403] Informal vigils saw individuals and groups staying overnight at the shrines of saints to pray, often for healing but also as acts of devotion and penance. They had been hallmarks of lay devotion since Late Antiquity as attested by the canons of the Synod of Elvira (c. 300) regulating vigils undertaken by the laity without clergy present. Vigil Masses comprised Masses performed on the eve of major feasts and in memory of the recently deceased.[404] Some lay attendance was expected at these. It is less clear whether the laity were to attend formal vigils. Some ecclesiastics, such as Caesarius of Arles, encouraged attendance.[405] He frequently harangued the laity for their inattentiveness and absence from vigils, complaints that were echoed in the early eleventh century by Wulfstan. However, it must be remembered that such criticisms may well be rhetorical.[406] The example of laymen like King Alfred, who had a taste

[403] Bradshaw, P., *Daily Prayer in the Early Church: A Study in the Origin and Early Development of the Divine Office* (London, 1981), p. 114; Jungmann, J. A., *Pastoral Liturgy* (London, 1962), pp. 108-111; Cubitt, C., 'Memory and narrative in the cult of early Anglo-Saxon saints', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* eds. Y. Henn and M. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 35-36.
[404] For example, see the prayers in the *Leofric Missal* discussed below and also hagiographic accounts of vigil masses in memory of religious community members such as that held in honour of Oswald in Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita Sancti Oswaldi* V.17-18, in *The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, ed., and transl. by M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2009).
[405] Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, pp. 121-122; Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, p. 110.
[406] Wulfstan, *Canons of Edgar*, c. 28, in in *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* ed. and transl. A. Rabin (Manchester, 2014), p. 91.

for attending evening services alone, mitigates against the negative rhetoric of Caesarius and Wulfstan.[407]

While their references to vigils could include both formal and informal vigils, the sanctoral homilies of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, and other homiliaries, would have been part of the vigil Mass preceding important feast days, as well as providing the homily for the day itself. It must be noted that not all formal vigils saw the performance of vigil Masses: such Masses were limited to the eve of particularly important feast days. The practice of holding a vigil Mass on these evenings is attested in early Roman Missals and was carried over into Anglo-Saxon liturgical books.[408] That some laity were expected to attend these can be demonstrated by considering the prayers for vigil Masses found in such liturgical books. For example, in the *Leofric Missal*, the prayers for feast days are preceded by other prayers for the *uigilum*. These prayers suggest that on the feasts of particularly significant saints the laity would attend these vigils since some prayers are said to the people (*ad populum*). At the vigils for less-important feasts the book only records prayers said to the choir (*ad chorum*).[409] Elsewhere in the book, in the prayers offered for less important feasts of minor saints, there are no *ad populum* prayers, only prayers directed to the choir, suggesting that on these occasions the laity were not expected to be present.[410] This is consistent with the performance of vigil Masses and indicates that some lay presence was expected.

Yet when the Blickling and Vercelli authors, and others, promote lay attendance at vigils they were not referring to vigil Masses. It seems, rather, that they referred either to lay attendance at formal vigils to which the Missal does not attest, or they are referring to informal vigils. The only times that the Blickling and Vercelli homilies explicitly encourage the laity to partake in vigils are during Lent and Rogationtide. The practice is particularly emphasised on the first Sunday in Lent and Rogation Monday, the first days of their respective periods, to emphasise vigils along with other practices. The tone of many of these passages are explanatory, for example in Vercelli III:

> ‘To the penitent the vigil is certainly worship because it lifts up to heaven the fruits of repentance. Therefore, it is becoming [for us to be] always awake…

[407] Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis Angul Saxonum,* c. 88, in *Alfred the Great: Asser’s Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* transl S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (London, 1983)
[408] Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, p. 111.
[409] For example, see the vigil for St Matthew the Apostle on f. 192v.
[410] For example, see the prayers for the feasts of Sts. Cornelius, Cyprian, and Nichodemus found on f. 191v.

> my brethren, therefore the watching is for all believing men, because devotion to the watch has been made known to all saints.[411]

Here the homilist both justifies and explains vigils. They are signs of repentance and sanctity which involve the faithful staying awake and praying for extended periods of time. Most of the discussions of vigils are like this, which implies that homilists felt some need to remind their congregations of the practices expected of them in these penitential periods. This suggests that the laity would not necessarily undertake these practices in the rest of the year, but that they were required to participate in them at these times of year. This depends, though, on whether the authors are referring to formal or informal vigils. If the former, then it is difficult to see how regular formal vigils would be accessible to any laity without access to a minster church. In the *Red Book of Darley*¸ for example, the only formal vigil included is the Easter Vigil.[412] This suggests that its owner was expected to perform a vigil at Easter, but not necessarily at any other time of year. In contrast, the *Leofric Missal* belonged to a community that regularly performed vigils throughout the year.

Informal vigils leave far less evidence for historians and thus it is much more difficult to say when they were performed. Hagiography suggests that informal vigils were not bound to any particular season and would instead be held when needed, usually in cases of sickness or death.[413] For example, the practice of devotional vigils by Dunstan, Bede's accounts of healing miracles in book four of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and the repeated references to informal vigils by Ælfric in his account of the miracles of Swithun.[414] Vigils, presumably informal periods of wakefulness and prayer, are also a common penance in penitential texts.[415] The use of vigils is attested both in the more practical penitential texts such as the *Scrift boc* and the *Old English Introduction* as well as in the more legalistic texts associated with the episcopacy.[416] The common use of vigils in both kinds of penitential manuscript suggests the

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[411] Vercelli III, ll. 64-66, 84-88: 'Þam hreowsiendan is sio wæcce witodlice to beganne, for þam þe hio [to] heofonu*m* upahefð þæs hreowsiendan wæstmas. For þam us gedafenaþ wacian symle… Broðor mine, for þan is eallu*m* geleaffullum mannu*m* to wacienne, for þa*m* þe sio estfulnes þære wæccan is gehiwcuðlucud eallu*m* halgum'.

[412] Gittos, H., 'Is there any evidence for the liturgy of parish churches in late Anglo-Saxon England? The Red Book of Darley and the status of Old English', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 70-71.

[413] For example see Ælfric, 'Feast of Saint Swithun the Bishop', in *Old English Lives*, pp. 214-217, 224-227.

[414] *Vita sancti Dunstani* c. 17 in *The Early Lives of St Dunstan,* ed. and transl. by M. Winterbottom and M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2011); Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, cc. 10, 31 in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People,* ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969); Ælfric, *Old English Lives of Saints* vol. II, ed. and transl. M. Clayton and J. Mullins (London, 2019), pp. 214-217, 224-227.

[415] Frantzen, A., *Food, Eating and Identity in Early Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 224-225.

[416] Hamilton, S., 'Remedies for 'Great Transgressions': Penance and Excommunication in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 84-89.

penitential nature of the vigils. Since several penitential manuscripts attest to a desire among ecclesiastics for frequent lay confession, it is possible that some laity performed vigils and other penitential practices throughout the year.[417] The homilies, however, by confining discussion of penance to the penitential seasons, suggest that regular confession, and thus regular penance, was an ideal that was not always realised. The approach of the homilies echoes that found in the *Capitula* of Theodulf in which a bishop/priest would gather their flock in the week before Lent to instruct them and hand out penances.[418] While informal vigils were performed throughout the year as needed, the laity were especially encouraged to hold vigils during times like Lent and Rogationtide as part of a general penitential effort.

The laity seem most likely to have attended vigil Masses and informal vigils. It is probable that the lay practice of vigils varied substantially based on social rank. Those with the time for regular confession and penance may have attended vigils more often than those whose time was more limited. At other times, vigils seem to have been associated with penitential seasons, illness, or death. Given the internal contradictions in much of the evidence, it is difficult to tell how often the laity attended vigils. Certainly, they often attended for penitential reasons. The practice of vigils, as with prayers, seems to have taken distinct but related forms for the religious and the laity depending on whether they were formal or informal. In the case of formal vigils, the practice of those in religious life was more complex and demanding than that of the laity involving as it did the chanting of Psalms, readings, and other liturgical actions. For the laity, whose attendance at formal vigils was limited to vigil Masses, such vigils were mostly passive experiences, just as their attendance at Mass required little direct participation. Consequently, while vigil Masses must have influenced the attitudes of the laity to religious practice just as the weekly Mass did, the experience of formal vigils would vary significantly based on social position. In contrast, ecclesiastics and the laity experienced informal vigils in similar ways. The practice of praying at shrines overnight seems to have been undertaken by people of all ranks. However, given what was said above about the practice of prayer among the laity, the practice of informal vigils probably looked different depending on the circumstances of the individual. An ecclesiastic like Ælfwine probably would have recited more elaborate prayers at informal vigils than an ordinary lay person. The lay person may have prayed in a manner more akin to that described in Blickling IV. Vigils continue the trend seen above for lay religious practice to be in effect a simplification of the practices of the religious.

[417] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
[418] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

The common principle of vigils as valuable acts of devotion is clear, as is their association with particular feasts and times of need. While the practice of them could vary in appearance, the underlying ideas which drove their practice among the religious and the laity alike were common. Variations in performance were, as with prayer, mostly a means of accommodating the circumstances and abilities of different groups.

Fasting and Almsgiving

i) *Fasting*

In his letter for Wulfsige, Ælfric explained to the priests of Sherborne that they were to encourage all their congregants to observe a weekly fast on Fridays throughout the year, except for fast-free periods between Easter and Pentecost and between Christmas and the seventh day after Twelfth Night.[419] Ælfric also claimed that bishops must instruct the laity to fast in preparation for the feasts of Mary and the feasts of the Apostles.[420] Wulfstan also assumed in his writings a multitude of fast days throughout the year. For example, in his *Canons* he wrote that anyone hoping to receive communion must fast in preparation.[421] In his law-codes Wulfstan also instituted days of national penance which included fasting as one of several penitential acts and were backed up with the threat of legal punishment. On these days, he said, there were to be no feuds, markets, feasting and drunkenness, or sexual relations and the people were to consume only bread, raw herbs, and water.[422] Apart from this Wulfstan often also decreed fasting as part of penances for criminals used to mitigate their punishment.[423] Wulfstan in effect took penitential ideas about fasting from earlier penitential handbooks and imported them into his legal thought as part of his project to create a Christian society.[424] These later ecclesiastical sources all encourage demanding fasting regimes in which the laity were expected to fast regularly and to subsist on a restricted diet. However, the Blickling and Vercelli Books suggest that this view was heavily idealised and that it may not have always been the ideal promoted to the laity.

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[419] Ælfric, 'Letter for Wulfsige', cc. 154-156 , in *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church: I A.D. 871-1066*, ed. by D. Whitelock, M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), no. 40, pp. 225-226.
[420] *Ibid.*, cc. 157-158, p. 226.
[421] Wulfstan, *Canons*, c. 36.
[422] Wulfstan, *Canons*, cc. 23-27; V Æthelred cc. 18-19, VI Æthelred c. 25; I Cnut c. 17.
[423] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 185-187; Thompson, V., *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 2012), pp. 182-183; Cowen, A., '*Byrstas* and *bysmeras*: The Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi as Anglos*', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), p. 403.
[424] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 173, 175-176, 184; Frantzen, *Food, Eating, and Identity*, pp. 226-228.

Despite the acceptance that fasting was good and should be encouraged, there is a sense in some homilies that preachers only really insisted on the observance of the fast during Lent. The author of Blickling III, for example, seems to have accepted that some congregants would only fast during Lent and framed this fast as a 'tithe of days':

> 'We know well that in the year [there] are three-hundred and five and sixty days. If we then in the six weeks omit the six Sundays of the fast, then [there] are no more than six and thirty [fast-days], and if we live perfectly before God [on] those days, then we have given the tenth part of our days for God'.[425]

While not precluding fasting at other times, the tithe of days suggests that if a person fasted only in Lent, then this would be enough. This homily also suggests that Sundays were not fast days, even during fasting periods, a notion found in the seventh-century *Penitential of Theodore* which prescribes penance for those who observe a fast on Sundays.[426] This same notion of a tithe of days, expressed in similar language, can also be found in the first series homily for the first Sunday in Lent by Ælfric.[427] While in his letter for Wulfsige he specified that the laity should be encouraged to fast weekly, in the homily he takes a different perspective that presents the Lenten fast as the acceptable minimum. Any fasting beyond this was beneficial but not necessary. Since both Blickling III and the Ælfric homily present the same idea in similar language, the possibility should be considered that early in his career Ælfric was perpetuating an attitude to lay fasting that he had received from others before formulating his own position later in the early eleventh century. If correct, then this would suggest that the older attitude to lay fasting emphasised the importance of the Lenten fast as minimum acceptable observance for the laity at large.

But there are also homilies that attest to the promotion of another fast period, Rogationtide. In Vercelli XIX, when introducing the Rogationtide fast, the author asserts how important the practice is for the three days:

> '[These] are specially forbidden to us on these days. Though they are forbidden at every time, nevertheless [they] are especially [forbidden] in this time,

[425] Blickling III, ll. 159-165: 'Geare we witon þ*æt* on þæm geare bið þreo hund daga 7 fif 7 syxtig daga; gif we þonne on þæm syx wucan forlætaþ þa syx Sunnandagas þæs fæstennes, þonn*e* ne bið þara fæstendaga na ma þonne syx 7 þritig; 7 gif we þa dagas fulfremedlice for Gode lifgeaþ, þonne hæbbe we ure daga þone teoþan dæl for Gode gedon'.

[426] Lees, C., 'Reluctant Appetites: Anglo-Saxon Attitudes towards Fasting', in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis,* ed. S. McWilliams (London, 2012), p.167.

[427] *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies,* I.xi, ll. 187-195.

> frivolous speech and gambling and feasting, and that no man spills blood on these days nor any man presume to partake of food or drink before the ninth hour and before he has heard Mass, and has humbly visited with bare-feet the books of Christ and the signs of His cross and other holy relics. For everyone both young and old this fast is commanded that they must observe it profoundly and they are not allowed to break it any more than that Lenten fast'.[428]

The author explicitly claims that the Rogation fast is as important as the Lenten fast in a manner that suggests a lay audience may not have realised this. The practice of fasting entirely until Nones seems to have been taken from the practice of penitential fasts. For example, a penitential fast for Lent is found in CCCC 190 where a total fast until Nones each day is required. It is doubtful how widely practiced such a fast would be since, as Frantzen notes, the penitentials do not seem representative of religious practice among the bulk of the laity. [429] The Rogation fast described in Vercelli XIX is the only evidence that survives suggesting that such a penitential fast at this time was promoted to the laity before the career of Wulfstan. The insistence of the homilist that this fast be kept as faithfully as the Lenten fast may indicate that there was something novel about the practice described here, or at least that the preacher recognised how onerous the fast would be.

Another scheme for fasting survives in the poem called *Seasons for Fasting*, which survives only in early modern transcriptions due to the almost total destruction of the original manuscript, Cotton MS Otho B XI, in the Cotton fire of 1731.[430] In this text the poet refers to the four annual ember fasts which consisted of periods of three days in a week (traditionally Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday) on which people were to pray and fast.[431] The poet places the ember fasts at the first week in Lent, the week after Pentecost, the week before the autumn equinox, and the week before Christmas. This, s/he claims, is the practice established by Gregory the Great and so it is the custom that the English must observe. The poet also attacks Breton and Frankish practices and claims that these derive from Moses and are consequently

[428] Vercelli XIX, ll. 88-97: 'Us syndon syndorlice on ðyssum dagum forbodene, þeah hie on ælcere tide forbodene syn þeah swiðor on þysse tide, idele spæca 7 tæflunga 7 gebeorscipas, 7 þ*æt* nan mann o þyssu*m* dagum blod ne forlæte ne ne geþristlæce ænig man ætas oððe wætes to onbyrigenne ær þære nigoðan tide 7 ær he mæssan hæbbe gehyred, 7 barefotum Cristes bec 7 his rodetacna 7 oðre halige reliquias eadmodlice gegret hæbbe. Ælcum, ge geongum ge ealdum, þis fæsten is bebodan þæt hie hyt sceolon healice healdan, 7 hyt þe ma to abrecenne nagon þe ðæt lenctenfæsten'.

[429] Frantzen, *Food, Eating and Identity*, p. 243.

[430] A critical edition of this poem can be found in Richards, M. P., *The Old English Poem Seasons for Fasting: A Critical Edition* (Morgantown, WV, 2014).

[431] Kellner, K. A. H., *Heortology: A History of the Christian Festivals from Their Origin to the Present Day* (London, 1908), pp. 183-189.

antithetical to Christianity.[432] The ember days were placed equidistantly throughout the year, a plan that the poet undermines by tying the first ember day to the start of Lent.[433] The scheme of the poem for fasting both does and does not align with that found in the homilies. A significant deviation is omission in the poem of the Rogation days, the poet instead prescribes a fast after Pentecost. What is more the surviving homilies for Advent in the Vercelli Book (Vercelli V and VI) do not make any references to fasting. Nor is there any reference to a September fast in any of the homilies. The poem is idealistic, and doubts must be raised over whether it was intended for a lay audience how. The poem assumes quite a detailed knowledge of the liturgical calendar. Therefore, it is possible that it was aimed at a religious audience or at an audience of elite laity. The homilies, however, while also idealistic to some extent, present a more grounded scheme of fasting tied to the periods of greatest attendance at church. Consequently, their vision of fasting seems to be more suited to ordinary laity.

While most descriptions of fasting in the Blickling and Vercelli Books come from Lenten and Rogationtide homilies, references to the practice occur in three other texts (Blickling XVII, Vercelli VII and XXIII). Blickling XVII and Vercelli XXIII are both sanctoral homilies. They are therefore narrative, and this contrasts with Blickling III and Vercelli XIX, both of which were advisory and instructive. In both sanctoral homilies, fasting is described chiefly as a holy act. In Blickling XVII, a homily for St Michael, fasting is given as one of several practices instituted by the bishop of Sipontum to earn the mercy of God and the Archangel Michael following the strange death of a sinful noble named Garganus.[434] In this the homily, following its Latin source, anticipates the legal decrees of Wulfstan where fasting was an act of communal penance in response to tragedy. This opens the possibility that fasting could theoretically be practiced outside Lent and Rogationtide as an act of communal penance in response to freak events. However, this does not undermine the sense found elsewhere in the Blickling and Vercelli books that fasting was usually associated with Lent and Rogationtide since such uses of it as described in Blickling XVII were necessarily in addition to regular seasonal fasting rather than a replacement for it. Vercelli XXIII, a homily for Guthlac, as discussed above, goes into more detail but it differs from Blickling III, XVII, and Vercelli XIX because it describes specifically religious fasting rather than lay fasting. As Ælfric asserted, following his monastic influences, the religious should fast weekly and even more rigorously

[432] Hilton, C. B., 'The Old English *Seasons for Fasting*: its place in the vernacular complaint tradition' *Neophilologus* 70 (1986), 155-156.
[433] Kellner, *Heortology*, pp. 185-186.
[434] Blickling XVII, ll. 51-58.

than the laity. This is precisely what Guthlac is presented as doing in Vercelli XXIII when the homilist describes his practice of weekly fasting.[435] While this story inspired devotion it cannot be taken as a model for when or how most people would fast.

Vercelli VII is more complicated since it is instructional, and it is not clear if it was a homily meant to be used in the same way as other homilies. It may have some link to preaching at the Chapter Office and therefore may have shaped the practice of fasting within a religious community. The emphasis on moderation is consistent with the advice in the *Capitula* of Theodulf and the *Rule* of Chrodegang that monks and clergy undertaking a fast should remain conscious of their limits and avoid too harsh a fast.[436] The sense that Vercelli VII is not the same kind of text as Blickling III and Vercelli XIX is strengthened by the observation that in those homilies fasting is explicitly discussed in relation to the liturgical season, Vercelli VII contains no such associations. In this it is more like the general exhortation to fasting found in the sanctoral homilies but without their narrative element. The simplest way to reconcile this is to suggest that Vercelli VII was read by ecclesiastics, who fasted weekly through most of the year, rather than laity, who fasted mainly in Lent and (possibly) Rogationtide. This would explain why it is instructional but not associated with a liturgical season, and why the text has none of the structural features usually associated with Old English *ad populum* sermons.

It is not clear what foods were abstained from while fasting. Meat and wine were universally forbidden, but beyond this there are several grey areas. Blickling and Vercelli have more to say on when people should fast than how they should fast, but a suggestive comment is found in Vercelli XXI. The homilist asks his audience:

> 'What does it profit any man that he fast and that he restrains himself from meat and from wine and from other diverse things, from both food and from water?'[437]

The homilist is posing a rhetorical question about what good fasting does if we continue to sin, but the foods s/he refers to shed some light on how s/he imagined a proper fast. The reference to food and water echoes the total fast before Nones found in Vercelli XIX. Besides this the advice to fast from meat, wine and 'other diverse things' is in keeping with that found in penitential handbooks and law-codes where the typical fasting diet comprised bread, raw herbs,

[435] Vercelli XXIII, ll. 52-58.
[436] Frantzen, *Food, Easting, and Identity*, pp. 240-241.
[437] Vercelli XXI, ll. 29-30: 'Hwæt fromaþ ænigum men þæt he fæste 7 þæt he hyne forhæbbe fram flæsce 7 fram wine 7 fram oðerum myssenlicu*m* ægþer ge ætum ge wætum'.

and water.[438] However, there can be no doubt that Vercelli XXI, the handbooks, and law-codes present an idealised image of the fasting diet and, as the rest of this section will show, the realities of Anglo-Saxon fasting were probably not so stringent.

It is worth briefly dwelling on what exactly 'wine' means in this context and specifically whether it means wine or all intoxicating drinks. Patristic references to wine reflect the distinctly Mediterranean focus of the Roman Empire where wine was easily produced and thus cheap. The climate of England was less conducive to the production of wine, although there was some wine production in early medieval England.[439] As a result, wine was an expensive commodity in Anglo-Saxon England, and probably most people would drink it only occasionally if at all.[440] Other intoxicating drink like beer was much more common. It not only provided beneficial nutrients, but it also helped to avoid the risk of drinking unclean water.[441] The *Canons of Edgar* and the law-codes written by Wulfstan suggest that for him the abstinence was chiefly from drunkenness rather than from wine specifically.[442] It is not clear if this is what the author of Vercelli XXI had in mind, but some writers certainly knew that fasting from wine would not be difficult for many people and instead took the term to mean drinking until intoxicated.

Besides this there is also the question of what was meant by 'other diverse things'. Although it is not specified in Vercelli XXI, from other evidence it can be inferred that this phrase referred to a category of foods called 'white' (*hwit*) that included cheese, eggs, and butter.[443] The term comes from the Old English translation of the *Capitula* of Theodulf and also is found in several vernacular penitentials where *hwit* is always associated with the verb *forgangan*, suggesting that this food was forbidden during fasting periods.[444] However religious customaries mentioning *hwit* foods, such as the *Capitula*, do not say that it was forbidden but only that anyone looking to observe a great fast should avoid *hwit* while those

[438] For example, as seen in the decrees for national penance issued by King Æthelred in 1008 in Latin and Old English versions of VII Æthelred. VII Æthelred c. 2: Et instituimus, ut omnis Christianus, qui etatem habet, ieiunet tribus diebus in pane et aqua et herbis crudis, 'And we institute that all Christians who are of age fast for three days on bread and water and raw herbs' and VIIa Æthelred c. 1: 'Nu wille we þæt eal folc fæste to gemænelice dædbote þrig dagas be hlafe 7 wirtum 7 wætere, þæt is on Monandæg 7 on Tiwesdæg 7 on Wodnesdæg ær Michaeles mæssan, 'Now we will that all people fast as a general penance (for) three days on bread and herbs and water, that is on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Michaelmas'. *Councils and Synods*, no. 50.1 and 50.2, pp. 375, 379.
[439] Darby, H. C., *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 275-277.
[440] Banham, D., *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud, 2004), p. 25.
[441] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.
[442] Wulfstan, *Canons*, c. 28.
[443] Frantzen, *Food, Eating, and Identity*, p. 243.
[444] *Ibid.*

unable to fast fully should be allowed to consume it.[445] Chrodegang went further than this and asserted that cheese was acceptable to eat during Lent.[446] From the ubiquity of references to *hwit* in other sources it can be inferred that the 'various other things' of Vercelli XXI may be a reference to this category of food.

Besides meat, wine and *hwit* the other food that is usually mentioned in discussion of early medieval fasting is fish. Several scholars have claimed that fish was an accepted substitute for meat and that this explains the apparent upsurge in the number of fish bones found in various English settlements from the late tenth century on.[447] The argument for this fish event horizon runs like this: because of stricter enforcement of fasting rules following the Benedictine reforms fish, which had been rare in the Anglo-Saxon diet given difficulties in storing and transporting it, became a more sought after food among the laity for periods of fasting which lead to the increase in evidence for its consumption.[448] But, as Frantzen notes, the idea that fish was an accepted substitute for meat in the late tenth century has no supporting evidence. In fact, he shows that whenever fish is referred to in relation to fasting, it is always as a delicacy reserved for feast days during fast periods and never as a regular substitute for meat.[449] The fish event horizon may be the result of technological advances leading to more evidence for the consumption of fish coming to light but there not much evidence to suggest that the upsurge is related to fasting practices.[450]

For most of the Anglo-Saxon laity there is no firm evidence that fasting was expected to be much more than an annual, possibly biannual, practice before the early eleventh century. While clergy and monks were expected to fast regularly throughout the year, discussions of lay fasting are limited to homilies for Lent and Rogationtide. As with vigils, the penitential handbooks theoretically encouraged fasting throughout the year but, for the same reasons discussed above, in practice they probably strengthened the association between fasting and ecclesiastical seasons. Wulfstan consciously transported penitential fasting into a new context in his law-codes when he prescribed fasting on a large scale as a response to freak occurrences. Wulfstan and the law-codes he drafted required a full fast from the laity. It is difficult to say how widely such a fast was observed. Certainly, some homilies like Vercelli XIX-XXI suggest

[445] *Ibid.*, pp. 242-244.
[446] Chrodegang, *Regula Canonicorum*, c. 6, *The Old English Version of the Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang: Edited together with the Latin Text and an English Translation,* ed., and transl. B. Langefeld (Frankfurt, 1985).
[447] Banham, *Food and Drink*, pp. 63-64; Barrett, J., A. M. Locker, C. M. Roberts, ''Dark Age Economics' revisited: the English fish bone evidence AD 600-1600', *Antiquity* 78 (2004), 623-630.
[448] *Ibid.*
[449] Frantzen, *Food, Eating, and Identity*, pp. 238-242.
[450] *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

the practice of quite a rigorous fast. Elsewhere, however, there were many mitigations for those unable or unwilling to observe a full fast. These mitigations come especially from texts produced by and for the religious, so it is not clear how the fasts of the laity were mitigated. The universal expectation seems to have been a fast from meat, intoxicants, and possibly *hwit* foods, but beyond this is difficult to say. Probably the practice of fasting varied substantially. That it was encouraged on penitential grounds is clear, but details of the practice are difficult to recover not least because there is such variety in the views expressed by the primary evidence.

ii) Almsgiving

Fasting, although undeniably virtuous, did not alone constitute a devout life. Repeatedly throughout the homiletic evidence and other sources, it is made explicit that fasting must be combined with almsgiving for it to benefit the penitent. For example, the author of Blickling III explains that:

> 'No man [should] believe that the fast suffices for eternal salvation, unless he add to it with other good deeds: and he who desires to bring his fast as a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord, then he must perfect it with alms and with works of mercy'.[451]

Vercelli III, IV and XIX-XXI also stress the utmost importance of combining fasting with almsgiving to make sure that the acts are spiritually beneficial.[452] This deep-seated link between fasting and almsgiving stems from penitentials where almsgiving was a standard penitential practice along with fasting.[453] The clear importance of alms for religious practice raises the question of what precisely is meant by 'almsgiving' and how it fit into Anglo-Saxon culture. The views of the Blickling and Vercelli authors on this question are deeply indebted to Carolingian examples and, through these, to Caesarius of Arles. From him, they inherited a view in which alms were distinct from church dues. Whereas dues were paid out of obligation and supported the Church, alms were to be given out of charity and could take different

[451] Blickling III, ll. 190-195: 'Ne gelyfe þæs nænig mon þ*æt* him ne genihtsumige þ*æt* fæsten to ecere hælo, buton he mid oþrum godum hit geece; 7 se þe wille Drihtne bringan gecweme lac fæstan, þonne sceal he þ*æt* mid ælmessan 7 mid mildheortum weorcum fullian'.
[452] See Vercelli III, ll. 143-158; Vercelli IV, ll. 27-30, 63-65, 106-116; Vercelli XIX, ll. 160-164; Vercelli XX, ll. 28-35; Vercelli, XXI, ll. 38-47.
[453] Frantzen, A., '*Be Mihtigum Mannum*: Power, Penance, and Food in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by S. S. Klein, W. Schipper, and S. Lewis-Simpson (Tempe, ARZ, 2014), pp. 164-165; Frantzen, *Food, Easting and Identity*, pp. 224-225; Ker, N. R., 'Three Old English Texts in a Salisbury Pontifical, Cotton Tiberius C.i', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickens*, ed. by Peter Clemoes (London, 1959), pp. 262-79.

forms.[454] This view is consistent across both books, although in Blickling IV there is some confusion of terms. This is the exception, though, and the understanding of alms in Blickling and Vercelli is at its core consistently Caesarian.

Discussion of tithes and church-dues was intimately connected to views on almsgiving. Tithes in the Carolingian sense of a payment of one-tenth of annual produce do not seem to have become institutionally enforced in England before the tenth century. There is some evidence for older systems of church dues such as church-scot, a fixed-amount of wheat paid for each hundred of land that one owned. However, the evidence for the payment of church-scot is sparse and there seems to have been significant regional variation in practices.[455] While a system of church dues existed, the terms of payment are unclear. Things become slightly clearer with the first occurrence of tithes alongside church-scot in the first law-code of King Æthelstan (d. 939). In this code tithe payments are to be made annually both 'in livestock and in the yearly fruits of the earth'.[456] The crucial difference between church-scot and tithes is that the former was calculated based on the amount of land owned by the payer while the latter comprised one-tenth of their annual produce. Tithes were also to be paid to the church where Christians had 'received their Christianity', as Ælfric expressed it, indicating a link between tithes and sacramental pastoral care while church-scot seems to have been more of a land tax.[457] Tithes, therefore, were tied to the emergence of the parochial system.[458] The law-codes also refer to other church dues such as 'soul-scot', 'Rome-scot', and 'plough-alms' but these never achieved the same dominance as church-scot and tithes.[459]

In the homilies of Blickling, Vercelli and Ælfric tithes are the only church dues discussed. It is only Wulfstan who in his preaching situates tithes alongside other customary church dues. Francesca Tinti has suggested a link between this fastidiousness and the exhortatory aim of his preaching, contrasted with the expository aim of Ælfrician homilies, as well as his key role in drafting ecclesiastical law in the early eleventh century.[460] Blickling and Vercelli are also exhortatory rather than expository, yet they only discuss tithes when

[454] Shuler, E., 'Caesarius of Arles and the Development of the Ecclesiastical Tithe: From a Theology of Almsgiving to Practical Obligations', *Traditio* 67 (2012), 57-65.
[455] Tinti, F., 'The 'costs' of pastoral care: church dues in late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 28.
[456] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33; I Æthelstan, prol., 'on cwicum ceape ge on þæs geares eorðwæstmum', in *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church: I A.D. 871-1066*, ed. by D. Whitelock, M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981).
[457] Tinti, 'The 'costs' of pastoral care', pp. 32-41.
[458] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.
[459] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[460] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-41.

considering church dues. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, none of the anonymous authors seems to have had ties to the legal system like Wulfstan did and they did not share his interest in standardising practices across England. Secondly, they depend on much older sources which themselves only discussed tithes while remaining silent on other church dues paid in Anglo-Saxon England. The two most important sources for Blickling and Vercelli were the homilies of Caesarius and the report of the legatine council in 786. This report had included a decree instructing the payment of tithes and that alms be given out of the remaining nine-tenths. This injunction was used by Archbishop Oda (d. 958) in his so-called *Constitutiones*.[461] It also echoes a comment made in Vercelli XX.[462] While the report was influential, the principal influence on the views of the authors on tithing and almsgiving was Caesarius of Arles whose theology of almsgiving they appear to have shared.

In his sermons, Caesarius offered a theology of almsgiving that sought to synthesise differing patristic views in an increasingly wealthy Merovingian Church. Among earlier writers like Jerome, Augustine, John Cassian, and Julian Pomerius there was long-standing debate over how references in the Old and New Testaments to both almsgiving and tithing should be understood. Not only did they debate the meaning of terms like 'first fruit' and, therefore, what should be given by the faithful, but they were also animated by the spiritual benefits of giving out of choice compared to giving out of obligation.[463] Caesarius proposed a scheme in which tithes and alms were distinct categories. Tithes were an obligatory payment to the Church to support its ministry while alms were gifts given freely for the benefit of the poor.[464] This distinction also related to what was given, since tithes were effectively taxes while alms did not need to have economic value or even to be physical objects. The Caesarian view of alms as distinct from tithes was influenced particularly by John Cassian. In his *Conferences,* Cassian presented church dues as an obligation placed on all Christians and noted that performing an obligation is not enough to merit salvation. Instead, virtue lay in exceeding obligations. Therefore, a person should give away all their possessions and become a monk rather than observing the minimum obligation.[465] Caesarius adapted these ideas to the context of urban Christianity by stressing that alms, as charitable acts distinct from tithes, were a means of exceeding the minimum obligation of the Gospel and thus accruing merit.

[461] *Ibid* p. 30.; Schoebe, G., 'The chapters of Archbishop Oda (942/6) and the canons of the legatine councils of 786', in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 35 (1962), 76.
[462] Vercelli XX, l. 31.
[463] Shuler, 'Caesarius of Arles', 45-54.
[464] *Ibid.*, 59-60.
[465] *Ibid.*, 52-54; Cassian, J., *Collationes patrum in scetica eremo* XXI.1-8, in *John Cassian: The Conferences*, ed. and transl. B. Ramsay (New York, NY, 1997).

Caesarius' views influenced how Anglo-Saxons in the late tenth century understood the injunction to give alms. Mostly, Blickling and Vercelli seem to view alms as distinct from church dues. Vercelli III demonstrates this particularly well when the author remarks that there are three kinds of alms: bodily, spiritual, and catechetical:

> 'Truly [there are] three kinds of almsgiving: one is bodily: that is that man give [for the] good [of] the poor what he may; second is spiritual, that is that man forgive those who sin against him; third, that man correct the sinners and bring erring to the right'.[466]

In this description, Caesarius' view of alms as acts of charity between individuals is plainly visible. Similarly, in Vercelli XXI this emphasis on alms as charity is made clear when the homilist says that even the poor must give alms as they are able, even if this is only a drink of water to a thirsty man.[467] It is Vercelli XX, though, which takes this emphasis on charity and uses it to separate alms from obligatory tithes. After admonishing the people to give up sin and give a tenth of their produce to God, the homilist then says, 'let us eagerly distribute alms to the poor of God from those nine parts'.[468] In other words, alms are distinct from tithes just as Caesarius preached that they should be.

Alms, unlike church dues, are also to some extent reliant on the internal disposition of the giver. For example, the will of the giver is stressed in Blickling VIII when the homilist says that:

> 'The faithful man must give his goods in that time when he himself most desires to make use [of them]; and that must then be done with very good will that [which the] man does for God'.[469]

Acts of charity must be done with good will. This is similar to a comment made by Ælfric when he claims that prayers and alms are useless if they are not combined with genuine love for God and neighbour.[470] The emphasis on internal disposition may be linked to the penitential associations of alms. Just as penitentials like the *Scrift boc* place emphasis on the need for

[466] Vercelli III, ll. 154-158: 'Witodlice, þreo cyn synt ælmessena: an is licha*m*lic, þ*æt* is þ*æt* man þam wædliendan sylle to gode þ*æt* he mæge; oðer is gastlice, þ*æt* is þ*æt* man forgife þa*m* þe wið hine gegylteð; þridde: þ*æt* man þa*m* gyltendan gestyre 7 ða dwoliendan an rihtan gebringe'.
[467] Vercelli XXI, ll. 27-33.
[468] Vercelli XX, l. 31: 'utan georne of ðam nigon dælu*m* Godes þearfum ælmessan dælan'.
[469] Blickling VIII, ll. 81-83: 'Se getreowa man sceal syllan his god on þa tid þe hine sylfne selest lyste his brucan; 7 þ*æt* sceal þonne beon gedon mid swiðe godum willan þ*æt* man Gode deþ'.
[470] *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies,* I.iii, ll. 151-155 and I.xxxv, ll. 158-161.

genuine remorse by the penitent, so too acts of charity must be performed out of genuine good will rather than obligation.[471]

However, in the anonymous homilies, there is some blurring of the line between tithes and alms. Blickling IV, which mostly is a translation of a Caesarian homily on tithing, uses the terms 'tithe' (*teoþian*) and 'alms' (*ælmesse*) interchangeably. That the homilist is referring to tithes is made clear by the reference to the payment supporting the Church. Clearly these are obligatory payments and not alms in the terms defined by Caesarius and repeated in Vercelli III and XXI. The author of Blickling IV may be referring to the ritualised distribution of alms or to the practice, attested in Carolingian sources and in texts like the *Canons of Edgar*, of using part of tithe payments as alms.[472] Despite using the term 'alms', though, the homilist does not frame the payments in terms of charity but rather focuses on the need to support the Church materially.[473] Therefore, based on how alms are presented elsewhere, Blickling IV is referring to tithes, not alms. This use of terminology, though, should not distract from the basic claim of the homily that payments to support the Church are beneficial for the soul.

While discussion of alms in Blickling and Vercelli frames them in terms of individual charity and penance, in the late tenth century the distribution of alms was not limited to the work of individuals. Religious communities, confraternities, and guilds also played a significant role in almsgiving. Such cases of communal alms, though, were undertaken usually when the person on whose behalf the alms were distributed could not distribute them personally, for example when someone had died. In religious customaries like the *Regularis Concordia* and the *Letter to the monks of Eynsham*, which is effectively a summary of the *Concordia*, it was mandated that almsgiving be performed as part of the collection of special Offices and Masses performed in memory of the deceased.[474] Other communities would also commemorate the deceased in this way as part of larger networks of confraternities.[475] The laity also involved themselves in this practice through bequests of land to minsters recorded in their wills and in charters which requested the same commemoration as was given to dead community members, including almsgiving.[476] Less well-off laity could also receive this kind

[471] Frantzen, *Literature*, pp. 166-167.
[472] Tinti, 'The 'costs' of pastoral care', pp. 35-36; Constable, G., *Monastic Tithes: From their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 27-44; Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', c. 56, in *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* ed. and transl. A. Rabin (Manchester, 2014), p. 97.
[473] Blickling IV, ll. 59-63.
[474] *Regularis Concordia: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation*, ed. T. Symonds (London, 1953); Ælfric, 'Letter to the Monks of Eynsham'.
[475] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 217, 244-245.
[476] *Ibid.*, pp. 238-248; Tollerton, L., *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 233-251.

of commemoration by joining a guild which afforded them the same treatment as members of a religious confraternity.[477] Besides almsgiving in memory of the recently deceased, the anniversary of a death was also an occasion for commemorative practices such as almsgiving. Indeed, the performance of annual commemoration was often requested in charters and wills when land was given to a religious community.

The Caesarian vision of almsgiving is charitable and inspired by the injunctions of both the Mosaic law and the commandments of Christ. While scholars like Peter Brown have attempted to see the rise of almsgiving as a Christianisation of Roman euergetism, this essentially theological motivation should not be overlooked.[478] Brown's claim, however, highlights the importance of considering larger cultural attitudes to gift-giving and exchange as factors that may have shaped the authors' views on almsgiving. In Anglo-Saxon heroic and gnomic literature, generosity with gifts is often presented as a hallmark of good leadership, and these attitudes indicate views on gift-giving in Anglo-Saxon culture and in other ancient Germanic cultures.[479] Various cultures which prize the exchange of gifts see them as a source of social cohesion that also establish a clear social hierarchy. By giving gifts to followers, a ruler both rewards them for their service and earns loyalty for the future. A follower, by giving gifts to their lord, reciprocates the honour done to them and shows loyalty thus earning further gifts. In the Anglo-Saxon context, while the language of gift-giving in poetry is often explicitly militaristic and presents treasure as the chief form of gift, the same logic of the gift economy has been noted in other areas such as in the system of land exchange between a king and his followers.[480] While ecclesiastical authors are reticent about discussing alms in this way, some of their language surrounding them suggests that this economy of gift exchange was alive within the Church. For example, both the author of Blickling IV and Ælfric encourage the payment of tithes by commenting that the produce of the earth is a gift given freely by God and which, therefore, must be reciprocated to form a positive relationship with him.[481] While ecclesiastical authors were reticent to present alms as gifts, the treatment of alms in wills and commemoration of the dead may suggest that some laity saw alms in terms of gift and counter-

[477] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth,* pp. 247-248.
[478] Brown, P. *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, MAS, 2015), pp. 85-91.
[479] For example, see *Maxims I,* ll. 69a-70b, 154a-155; also see Thieme, A. L. J., 'Gift Giving as a Vital Element of Salvation in "The Dream of the Rood"', *South Atlantic Review* 63 (1998), 108-111; Mauss, M., *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London, 1954), pp. 62-82.
[480] Charles-Edwards, T., 'The Distinction between Land and Moveable Wealth in Anglo-Saxon England', in *English Medieval Settlement,* ed. P. Sawyer (London, 1979), pp. 97-100; Abels, R., *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Los Angeles, CA, 1988), p. 29.
[481] Blickling IV, ll. 52-63; Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies,* I.12, ll. 45-53.

gift. Since the deceased made a gift of land to the religious community, that community was then obligated to commemorate the deceased in various ways, including distributing alms.[482]

This gift-giving interpretation is only one way of reading these texts, though, and in terms of how alms were explained to the laity the language of the gift was inappropriate on account of the underlying theology of the authors. Crucially for Caesarius, alms had to be given without obligation out of genuine good will. The language of the gift implies obligation since a gift had to be reciprocated to remain in good standing with the giver. While gift giving is essential to understanding the logic behind the payment of tithes and other church dues, which in a Caesarian view were obligatory, it seems to have been inappropriate in almsgiving. In the views of the Blickling and Vercelli authors, the act of almsgiving was itself meritorious and it was to be done in addition to the payment of dues which created bonds of social cohesion. As the system of church dues was expanded in the tenth century, Blickling and Vercelli show how religious writers sought to harness these changes to advance the cause of Christian morality. To achieve this, they translated the ideas of Caesarius of Arles into the vernacular. This was not original since other writers also drew extensively on Merovingian and Carolingian theology in their discussion of tithing and almsgiving. Blickling and Vercelli, however, are part of a larger process by which these ideas were imported and adapted to fit an English context. While it is difficult to say that Blickling and Vercelli simplified views on almsgiving, since their views are mostly taken from older sources, they attempted to espouse a coherent theology of almsgiving in the vernacular suited to as wide an audience as possible. In doing so they were responding to changes first seen in law-codes and taking part in the long process of implementing and normalising these changes.

Conclusions

During this chapter, several common themes and concerns have come to light. Chiefly it has become clear that many homilists were concerned to make key penitential practices accessible to the laity. They all shared a conviction that the Christian life could not only involve receiving pastoral care. It also required actions by the faithful, even if that faithful person were poor and ill-educated. This ethos was summed up by Ælfric when he reminded his congregation that all Christians are siblings to God their Father and thus are all equal before him, unless they are

[482] McLaughlin, M., *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 2018) pp. 95-96, 192-194.

especially holy. Therefore, the rich should not think themselves better than the poor, particularly since the poor are spiritually purer in the eyes of God.[483] This chapter has demonstrated that this egalitarianism was not unique to Ælfric, since several of the Blickling and Vercelli homilists held similar views that they express in their discussion of religious practices.

Blickling and Vercelli can add to the limited pool of evidence for religious practice aimed at a more general audience. The bulk of the surviving evidence for practice is aimed at religious and secular elites, but in Blickling and some Vercelli homilies authors can be found writing specifically for as broad an audience as possible due to their intended use at the Mass. This is not to say that the homilies agree on all points, since they do not. For example, the insistence in Vercelli XIX that the laity observe a demanding Rogationtide fast does not sit easily with Blickling III, where the author only encourages the congregation to observe the Lenten fast. However, despite these differences, the homilies are strikingly consistent with what practices they expected of the laity. All focus on a quadrumvirate of prayer, vigils, fasting, and almsgiving (although prayer and vigils are sometimes treated as interchangeable). These also are the practices most often discussed elsewhere.

When the discussion of practice in these books is examined, several conclusions emerge. Prayer was expected to be a regular practice while vigils, fasting and almsgiving were particularly associated with Lent and Rogationtide. This link to the penitential seasons is unlikely to be a coincidence since these three practices are also the three most often mandated in penitential handbooks for all penitents. Behind this possibly lies the irregularity of laity receiving the Eucharist. Since most laity seem to have communicated only at major feasts like Easter and Ascension, it is probable that the periods of their penances to prepare for communion coincided with these penitential seasons. The, the trend in the homilies is for these practices to be mainly encouraged in the penitential seasons.

Ælfric is often cast as the great pedagogue and preacher of the Late Saxon period, and this reputation is deserved. However, his attempts to instruct and guide the laity were not, in fact, as innovative as they seem. Before him, the authors of the Blickling and Vercelli homilies were promoting Christian practice to the laity in ways suited to their circumstances, but which nevertheless were adapted from official liturgy and rooted in orthodox theology. In an opposite trend, some Vercelli homilies (chiefly Vercelli XIX-XXI) attempted to monasticise lay practice to an extent not seen again until the later works of Ælfric. While the author of Vercelli XIX-

[483] *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies,* I.19, ll. 40-52.

XXI could be said to be a poor teacher do to his/her demanding too much of the laity, s/he nevertheless attests to a kind of ascetic religious lifestyle that Ælfric and others claimed had largely disappeared from England. In contrast, the other discussions of practice in the Blickling and Vercelli Books suggest competency by their authors in instructing the laity comparable to that displayed by Ælfric. Therefore, not only do these anonymous homilies convey a sense of how elite ideas about practice were communicated to other groups, they also help to show that Ælfric and other reformers were not as ground-breaking as is sometimes claimed. Instead they had antecedents with similar attitudes and abilities to themselves who similarly accepted and adapted older ideas to help encourage penitential practices among the laity.

V

Theology I: Soteriology and Sacramentality

Introduction

> 'And [Christ] gave us the gift that now there is no need for any man that he seek Hell, but he is immediately led to eternal rest, after he forsakes this deathly life, if he now here in this world will perform truth and right in his life'.[484]

In the closing statement of Vercelli I, the homilist alludes both to soteriology, the beliefs concerning the workings of salvation, and to the need for soteriology to inspire good works. These relate back to the penitential religious practices discussed in Chapter 4, but here they are contextualised as responses to the saving gift of grace. If, as Vercelli I suggests, authors justified religious practices with reference to soteriological beliefs, then understanding these beliefs is essential to understanding the place of the Church in the lives of the faithful. The soteriological beliefs espoused in the Blickling and Vercelli Books mostly sit comfortably alongside those of other Anglo-Saxon writers like Ælfric and Wulfstan. There are some differences of emphasis, but these are more practical than theological. The chief way that soteriology affected the lives of the faithful was through the two main soteriological sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. How these sacraments were understood to affect their recipients is once again in line with the views of other writers. However, while they share common beliefs about what these sacraments did, the views of late tenth-century authors on how they worked varied notably. Once again, however, these differences are not due to differences in theology but rather due to the sources used. All late tenth-century English authors espoused common soteriological beliefs, and in their essence, these remained the most common views throughout the Middle Ages.

The terminology and outline of soteriology in Anglo-Saxon England was Augustinian. The authors accept the primacy of grace, original sin and the ransom theory of atonement.[485] Early medieval English theologians also accepted the modifications made to Augustinianism at the Council of Orange (c. 529). That council disavowed the views of Augustine on double predestination (the belief that God predestines some to salvation and others to damnation) and

[484] Vercelli I, ll. 294-297: '7 us þa gife forgeaf þ*æt* nu nis nænegu*m* m*en* þearf þ*æt* he helle sece, ac he bið sona to ecre reste gelæded, syþþan he þis deaþlice lif forlæteð, gif he nu her on worulde soð 7 riht in his life don wile'.
[485] Pelikan, J., *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago, IL,1978), pp. 9-49

affirmed the need for free will to cooperate with grace through works.[486] The ninth century saw certain Frankish theologians like Gottschalk of Orbais (d. 867) challenge the Augustinian synthesis by returning to the works of Augustine which not only revived the question of double predestination but also, following the pioneering allegorical interpretation of the Mass composed by Amalarius of Metz, allowed these writers to use Augustine's theory of sacramental signs to question established understandings of the Eucharist.[487] In England only Ælfric shows any awareness of these Frankish controversies and his use of them seems not to have led to any major shift in Anglo-Saxon theology.[488] Wulfstan echoed the conservative semi-Augustinianism of Blickling and Vercelli and, through composite homilies, this semi-Augustinian theology continued to be preached from English pulpits into the twelfth century.[489]

Soteriology

While comparatively few of the pieces in the Blickling and Vercelli Books deal directly with soteriology, nevertheless their views on living a Christian life and on ecclesiastical institutions are inseparably bound up with this branch of theology. The core of their soteriological ideas, belief in the continued effects of Adam's sin and the focus on the atoning Passion, is scriptural and by the late tenth century this scriptural core had been restated and expounded upon in the works of the Church Fathers. Soteriology by this point had also expanded to include consideration of topics not explicitly treated in the Bible, most notably the relationship between grace and free will.[490] In theory, all late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon theologians had inherited the products of almost a millennium of theological thought. In practice, most of them drew particularly from authors of the fifth and sixth centuries. Yet the soteriology of the Blickling and Vercelli Books specifically has rarely been discussed in detail. When the views represented in these books are considered two things stand out. Firstly, the theology described does not differ markedly from that of other contemporary writers. Secondly, this similarity is clear despite Blickling and Vercelli drawing their ideas from a small and quite conservative body of source material, at least when compared to other writers such as Ælfric. While there are some

[486] Pelikan, J., *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago, IL, 1971), pp. 293-307, 318-331; Kleist, A, *Striving With Grace: Views of Free Will in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2008), pp. 7-8.
[487] Pelikan, *Medieval Theology*, pp. 74-80; Chazelle, C., 'Figure, Character, and the Glorified Body in the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy', *Traditio* 47 (1992), 1-36.
[488] Grundy, L., *Books and Grace: Ælfric's Theology* (London, 1991), pp. 184-194.
[489] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, pp. 149-150; Treharne, E., 'The Production and Script of Manuscripts containing English Religious Texts in the First Half of the Twelfth Century', in *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Mary Swan and Elaine M. Treharne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 11-39
[490] Pelikan, *Medieval Theology*, pp. 9-49.

differences in emphasis, nowhere do these seem to stem from theological disagreements. Instead these differences arise from the intended audience of the authors or results from their use of sources. Thus, English theologians in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries could assimilate and adapt new materials without significantly altering their underlying theology.

Soteriology assumes that salvation is necessary, or at least desirable. In the Christian tradition, the necessity of salvation is rooted in the effects of sin on human nature. Anglo-Saxon authors thus needed to understand the consequences of sin before they could consider atonement and salvation. Following the thought of Augustine, the sinful nature of humans is a consequence of the sin in Eden.[491] Only Vercelli gives any indication of the nature of this sin. Vercelli II asserts that the first human sin was envy.[492] Similarly, Vercelli XVI presents the sin as disobedience to God born of pride.[493] Ælfric likewise explicitly identified it as disobedience.[494] This view of the first sin as a rebelling against obedience out of pride or envy highlights the influence of Augustinian theology on English views of original sin since he primarily understood the sin of Adam to be self-deification through pride.[495] From the act of primal disobedience, the Anglo-Saxons derived their two principal ways of understanding sin. The most common in homiletic works was the image of sin as continued forgetfulness and a proclivity to prefer worldly things to heavenly things. Blickling II, drawing on Gregory, offers a psychological image of sin by portraying the crowd restraining the blind man of Jericho from praying as demons tempting and distracting a faithful Christian.[496] Similarly Vercelli II, an eschatological homily with an as yet unidentified source, is filled with references to the sinful forgetting the coming judgement and neglecting their souls in favour of earthly indulgence. Likewise the author of *Soul and Body I* has the sinful soul single out the forgetfulness of the body and its propensity for feasting as the main cause for its damnation.[497] And, in one of the more unpleasant images, Blickling V warns the faithful not to abandon good works on account of forgetfulness, just like they would not vomit up good food and drink at a feast.[498] Ælfric similarly presents the innate propensity for sin in terms of distraction and forgetfulness. As he notes, in its fallen state humanity finds evil more pleasing than good and, because of this, Satan, as a last gambit before the Second Coming, has resorted to exploiting this by encouraging vices

[491] Pelikan, *Catholic Tradition*, pp. 293-307, 318-331.
[492] Vercelli II, ll. 83-89.
[493] Vercelli XVI, ll. 177-184.
[494] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies* II.XIII, ll. 6-9.
[495] Meconi, D. V., 'Saint Augustine', in *Christian Theologies of Salvation: A Comparative Introduction*, ed. J. S. Holcomb (New York, NY, 2017), p. 61.
[496] Clarke, S., *Compelling God: Theories of Prayer in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2018), pp. 255-258.
[497] *Soul and Body I*, ll. 39-41.
[498] Blickling V, ll. 31-38.

like fornication and gluttony.[499] Aware of tendency to prefer evil to good, Wulfstan also used his position as a law-maker to legislate for the proper observance of fasts and penance.[500]

Besides this most common view of sin as forgetfulness and proclivity for evil, Old English homilies are also filled with imagery relating to the motif of the penitential 'wounds of sin'.[501] In most cases this motif presents confessors as physicians ridding the body of sickness. For instance, Vercelli III explicitly frames confession in these terms while Blickling X refers to repentance as 'the better and… true medicine' (*þam selran 7… soþan læcdome*).[502] Likewise, the image of confessor as healer recurs in the homilies of Ælfric.[503] Wulfstan used a similar image of the 'wounds of sin', highlighting his debt to the penitential tradition.[504] Where Wulfstan deviates from the views of the Blickling and Vercelli authors is in the social implications of his theology. In his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, Wulfstan extends the physical wounding and decay caused by sin to the English nation as a whole as exemplified by the breakdown of proper order.[505] Elsewhere, specifically in his *Institutes of Polity* but also throughout his entire career, Wulfstan went to great lengths to set out an ideal social order based on hierarchy and obedience. This order was, he stressed, based ultimately on obedience to God, making any perversion of it into a repeat of the sin of Adam.[506] Taken as a whole, these images point to a view of sin that was broadly common to all these writers. They all saw sin as a deviation from the plan of God born from forgetfulness, negligence, or disobedience. This was also manifested in the transitory nature of the world and the physical body, which was wounded by sin through its sickness and decay. Sin was an inescapable fact of living in a fallen world that humans were themselves unable to remedy.

The only hope for salvation came from God himself through the Atonement. In the early middle ages the most common explanation of the Atonement was the 'ransom theory'.[507] In this theory, the death of Christ was effectively a trick to void the claim to human souls won

[499] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 99-103, also see Ælfric's homily on 'Memory of the Saints' in Ælfric, *Old English Lives of Saints* vol. II, ed. and transl. M. Clayton and J. Mullins (London, 2019), pp. 88-115.
[500] Thompson, V., *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 2012), pp. 182-183; Cowen, A., '*Byrstas* and *bysmeras*: The Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi as Anglos*', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), p. 403.
[501] *Ibid.*, pp. 401-403.
[502] Vercelli III, ll. 55-63; Blickling X, l. 6.
[503] Frantzen, A., *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1983), pp. 159-161.
[504] Cowen, '*Byrstas* and *bysmeras*', pp. 401-403; Wormald, P., 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society', in his *Legal Cultured in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London, 1999), pp. 231-240.
[505] *Ibid.*, p. 398.
[506] Rabin, A., *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* (Manchester, 2014), pp. 9-16.
[507] Hogg, D., 'Theologies of Salvation in the Middle Ages: An Introduction', in *Christian Theologies of Salvation: A Comparative Introduction*, ed. J. S. Holcomb (New York, NY, 2017), pp. 115-116.

by Satan at the Fall of Man. On account of the Fall, all humans were doomed to Hell, but since Christ was sinless, by claiming his soul after death Satan exceeded his rights and thus lost any claim to humanity.[508] This theory of atonement had received support from most of the patristic authorities, including Augustine and Gregory, through whom the English received it.[509] Blickling and Vercelli are filled with references to the atonement which clarify that their authors adhered to the ransom theory. Several of the anonymous homilies such as Blickling III and VII as well as poems like *Elene*, allude to this theory of atonement by explicitly framing the redemption in terms of feuding, plundering and the defeat of Hell through overconfidence. Beyond Blickling and Vercelli, this theory seems to have been commonly held by English writers. For example, there are several other poems that focus on it, such as *Christ and Satan* and *The Descent into Hell*, as well as various composite homilies of the twelfth century.[510] Ælfric also espoused ransom theory, but in addition to it he also emphasised the obedience of Christ (in contrast to the disobedience of Adam) and the typological link between Old Testament sacrifices and the Crucifixion.[511]

While sin and atonement are central to soteriology, Blickling and Vercelli focus most of their soteriological discussion on the good works needed for salvation. This raises the question of how grace relates to free will, since it was a core element of the Augustinian synthesis that grace must precede works and human will alone could not merit grace. Their emphasis on works could leave Blickling and Vercelli open to charges that they deviate from this view. However, they avoid this and instead derive their views mostly from the thought of Gregory and Caesarius, both of whom were fundamental in the creation of the Augustinian synthesis. This debt is most fully expressed in Blickling II, which is a close translation of the thirteenth gospel homily of Gregory the Great on the healing of the blind man of Jericho.[512] The Blickling homilist, following Gregory, takes the blind man to be a type of all humanity and uses him as an example to discuss both the nature of God's call to humankind, conceptualised as divine illumination, and of human volition:

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[508] Aulén, G., *Christus Victor: An historical study of the three main types of the idea of the Atonement* (London, 1931), pp. 4-7; Johnson, J., *Patristic and Medieval Atonement Theory: A guide to research* (Lanham, 2016), pp 32-51; Pugh, B., *Atonement Theories: A Way through the Maze* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 3-25.
[509] *Ibid.*
[510] Scragg, D., 'A late OE Harrowing of Hell Homily from Worcester and Blickling Homily VII' in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Honour of Michael Lapidge, vol. II*, ed. K O'Brien O'Keeffe and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2005), pp. 197-211.
[511] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, I.XIII, ll. 6-17
[512] Gregory, Homily 13, in Gregory, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, transl. D. Hurst (Kalamazoo, MICH, 1990), pp. 94-100.

> ‘All mankind was in blindness after the first people were expelled from the joys of Paradise, and forsook the brightness of the heavenly light, and suffered the darkness and hardships of this world. The Lord illuminated this world by His coming and restored the path to the way of life to all faithful men, that they may through the desire of their hearts, with good deeds, earn the light of eternal life’.[513]

The homilist emphasises that, through the Incarnation, knowledge of the divine, and thus divine illumination has been made available to all. This Gregorian understanding contrasts with the use made by Augustine and his heirs of the metaphor of divine illumination. Following his belief that on account of original sin human nature was totally depraved, Augustine argued that all people are blind unless God illuminates them with his grace.[514] Gregory (and also the translator of Blickling II) asserts conversely that, despite original sin, all people have inherited a capacity for divine illumination and that God, through Christ, has made divine enlightenment available to all:

> ‘The evangelist has said that when the Saviour drew near to Jericho that light returned to the blind. That signifies that the Godhead took on our weak nature, and then soon that heavenly light returned to mankind which the first people forsook’.[515]

While the homily asserts that the faithful can earn salvation ‘with good deeds’ it avoids contradicting the Augustinian synthesis by insisting that good deeds earn salvation only as a response to the ‘desire of [the] heart’ which is roused by divine illumination. This illumination is not given out based on merit, but rather it is offered freely to all. Good works are the only way to repay God for the mercy and humility of his gift.

A similar emphasis on the need to respond to the visible testimony of Christ can also be found in the homilies of Caesarius and, through these, was repeated in the Blickling and Vercelli Books. For example in Vercelli VIII, a homily that claims to be modelled on a Gregorian text but is actually based on a Caesarian homily, Christ chastises the damned at the Last Judgement for failing to respond appropriately to the call manifested in his life:

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[513] Blickling II, 46-53: ’Eal þis mennisce cyn wæs on blindnesse, seoððan þa ærestan men asceofene wæron of gefean neorxna wanges, 7 þa beorhtnessa forleton þæs heofonlican leohtas, 7 þisse worlde þeostro 7 ermða þrowodan. Drihten þa þurh his tocyme þysne middangeard onlyhte, 7 eallum geleaffulum monnu*m* heora gong gestaþelade to lifes wege, þ*æt* hie magon þurh þa lustfulnesse heora modes, mid godum dædum, geearnian leoht þæs ecan lifes’.

[514] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 134-135.

[515] Blickling II, ll. 57-61: ‘Cwæþ se godspellere, mid þy þe se Hælend genealæhte Gericho, þ*æt* leoht cyrde to þon blindan. Þ*æt* tacnaþ þ*æt* seo godcundnes onfeng ure tydran gecynde; þa cyrde sona þ*æt* heofonlice leoht to þyssum menniscan cynne, þe se æresta man forlet’.

> "What did you do for me?... For I received your pain in my body to the end that I wished that you would be ruling in the glory of the kingdom of Heaven. Why, oh man, did you abandon all this which I suffered for you? Why were you so unthankful for your deliverance?"[516]

The essence of this rebuke is that the example of Christ called all to salvation. The pointed question "what did you do for me?" also echoes the assertion in Blickling II that good deeds must be done in response to this call manifested in the desire of the heart. A similar interpretation of the Incarnation as an act of mercy to which human will must respond is found in *The Dream of the Rood.* This is evident for example when the poet claims that those who respond to the Passion by crucifying their own wills as a result carry the sign of the cross in their hearts and will be saved at the Last Judgement.[517]

Other writers such as Ælfric also stress the universal mercy of the Incarnation and the need to respond to it. For example, in his first series of *Catholic Homilies* Ælfric offered his own translation of Gregory's thirteenth homily in which he makes many of the same claims about divine enlightenment as the anonymous translator of Blickling II.[518] As well as this, Ælfric repeatedly insists that God wants all people to be saved.[519] Similarly, in his homily on the prayer of Moses found in his *Lives of Saints,* Ælfric imagines how 'the wisdom of God calls out… to all people with fatherly love, gently urging them' to reform their lives.[520] The importance of responding to this universal call with good works is a major theme in all Ælfrician preaching, but it is best exemplified in a sermon for the Sunday before Lent in the *Lives of Saints*. After citing Scripture to affirm the longing of God for the redemption of the sinful, Ælfric challenges his audience to never cease from good works and penances since only through them can we be certain to earn forgiveness and please God.[521] Similarly, the career of Wulfstan as preacher and law-maker was driven by a conviction that divine favour could be earned through penance.[522] The theology behind his most famous homily, the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos,* is predicated on the belief that God had shown grace to the English by allowing them

[516] Vercelli VIII, ll. 60-65: 'Hwæt gedydest ðu for me?... Þynum sare þe ic on minu*m* lichoman onfeng, to þan þæt ic wolde þæt ðu wære rixiende in heofona rices wuldre. For hwan, la man, forlur ðu þis eal, þe ic for þe þrowode? For hwan wær ðu swa unþancul þinre onlysnesse?'
[517] *Dream of the Rood*, ll. 110-21.
[518] Clarke, *Compelling God,* pp. 255-258.
[519] See Pope V, ll. 242-244; Thorpe XXIV, p. 340, ll. 13-17; Thorpe XVIII, p. 250, ll. 4-6.
[520] Ælfric, 'On the Prayer of Moses for Mid-Lent Sunday', ll. 313-314: 'Godes wisdom clypað… to eallum mannum mid fæderlicre lufe, … fægere tihtende'.
[521] *Old English Lives of Saints* vol. II, pp. 1-23.
[522] Cowen, '*Byrstas* and *bysmeras*', pp. 398-401.

to conquer the sinful Britons, but that since then the English have become distracted from God and thus have earned punishment which is manifested in Viking attacks.[523] Thus God's grace preceded English victory and required good works in response. Wulfstan too, like the other writers discussed here, saw grace as preceding works while also emphasising the need for works to cooperate with grace to earn salvation.

Belief in predestination could undermine the universality of this call to salvation. The view that God predestined the elect had been accepted since the Council of Orange.[524] The compromise reached at this council had been an attempt by the Gallic bishops to keep the Augustinian teaching on the sovereignty of grace while repudiating ideas about predestination to damnation. Double predestination not only compromised the idea that God willed only good, it also posed a major problem for preachers like Caesarius who strove to reform the morality of their congregations.

Following the conclusions of Orange, no Anglo-Saxon theologians taught double predestination. It is not surprising then that Blickling and Vercelli are consistent in insisting that no one is predestined to Hell. This is central to the complaint by the devil in *Elene*. The demon asserts that Judas was damned prior to his conversion, but now he is no longer damned thus showing that damnation cannot be predestined.[525] Similarly, in *Soul and Body I* the entire point of the poem, the need to remain cognisant of the fate of the soul and to respond with penance, implies likewise that damnation is not a predetermined fate since, if it was, then the complaint of the soul is useless and any penances would have been ineffective.[526] Likewise, in the homilies in both books it is also repeatedly stressed that, following the Atonement, no one is destined to Hell: this is clear for example in the quotation from Vercelli I which opened this chapter. Similarly, in Blickling VIII the homilist makes the same claim:

> 'Now there is no need that any man seek the deep abyss [of] the hot flame and the severe flame except that he, because of his own counsel in forgetfulness, forsake the commandments of God'.[527]

No one must be damned; instead damnation now only comes from failing to respond with faith to God.

[523] Wulfstan, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. D. Whitelock (New York, NY, 1963).
[524] Pelikan, *Medieval Theology*, pp. 80-81.
[525] *Elene*, ll. 902–904.
[526] *Soul and Body I*, ll. 1-126.
[527] Blickling VIII, ll. 112-115: 'Nis þ*æt* þonne nænig man þ*æt* þurfe þone deopan grund þæs hatan leges 7 þæs heardan leges gesecean, buton þa þe heora sylfra ræd on ofergeotolnesse Godes beboda forlætað'.

This general rejection of predestination to damnation is not surprising. What is more surprising though is the total silence in both books on the predestination of the elect. For example, in *Soul and Body I* after recounting the lament of the sinful soul to its body, the poet then imagines a speech by a saved soul to its body.[528] In this address predestination is totally ignored in favour of praise for self-mortification. Salvation is as much a result of human will as damnation. The penitential focus of the poem probably accounts for this since it seeks to encourage piety and penitential practices.[529] But the silence on this point is not limited to this poem. *Elene* too, just as much as it rejects predestination to damnation, also implicitly rejects predestination to salvation since Judas' fate has changed on account of his conversion: if he was always among the elect, then why would the devil lament at losing his soul? Likewise, in the prose of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, there are hardly any references to election. When these occur, for example in Blickling XI, it is not made clear whether the chosen were predestined or if it is a reference to their salvation at the Last Judgement.[530] The general attitude whenever the Blickling or Vercelli homilies discuss salvation echoes that found in *Elene* and *Soul and Body I*, that salvation is no more predestined than damnation and is earned by good works. As explained above, this view does not contradict the Augustinian synthesis since it is set against a backdrop in which the mercy of God has been extended to all through Christ, thus negating any claim that salvation is contingent on merit. However, there also are no explicit references to God having preordained the saved which, while not proving that non-reformed writers rejected the idea, casts doubt on claims that they espoused the belief.

In their silence on predestination of the elect, Blickling and Vercelli can seem unusual compared to other English authors. Bede, Lantfred, and Alfred all express belief that God has divine foreknowledge of all things and all affirm predestination.[531] Aaron Kleist sees in this evidence for an Augustinian tradition in Anglo-Saxon theology. For Kleist, Ælfric represents the culmination of this tradition. His views on predestination were an extension of his views about grace and works since just as he taught that humans could do no meritorious works without grace, so too he taught that the recipients of this grace were preordained by God before the creation of the world.[532] Therefore, before creation, God had chosen his elect making their

[528] *Soul and Body I*, ll. 127-166.
[529] Frantzen, A., 'The Body in "Soul and Body I"', *The Chaucer Review* 17 (1982), 81-83.
[530] Blickling XI, ll. 147-150.
[531] For discussion of these three writers' views see Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, cc. 3, 4, and 5.
[532] For example see I.VII, ll. 169-172: 'forðan þe nan man ne bið gehealden buton þurh gife Hælendes Cristes: þa gife he gearcode and forestihte on ecum ræde ær middangeardes gesetnysse', 'therefore no man is saved except through the gift of Christ the Saviour: that gift he prepared and preordained in eternal counsel before the foundation of the world'.

fates predestined. It is unusual for Anglo-Saxon preachers to affirm predestination of the elect so explicitly. Despite teaching it, Ælfric himself was not entirely comfortable with this idea as seen by the number of times he promoted it compared to the occasions in which he emphasised the value of works or emphasised the mercy of God. The latter far outweigh the former. That Ælfric taught predestination of the elect from before creation was unusual for a man in his position. This peculiarity, though, resulted from Ælfric's respect for Augustine and his personal drive to promote what he saw as orthodoxy.[533]

Wulfstan promoted a more works-based soteriology which left little room for predestination to salvation. Kleist argues that Wulfstan was influenced by *De adiutorio Dei et libero arbitrio*¸ found in Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Gamle Kongelige Sammlung 1595, a Latin text discussing free will based on John Cassian's *Collectio XIII*.[534] The text, and the manuscript as a whole, can be associated with Wulfstan because of notes made throughout in what has been identified as his hand. The text itself was written by someone other than Wulfstan, but clearly he read and gave his assent to it, as he did to the manuscript as a whole.[535] The problem with *De adiutorio* though is that, intentionally or unintentionally, it seems to suggest that grace can be given in response to human merit. The redactor of the text seems to have been aware of this and so at several points inserts references to Prosper of Aquitaine to balance the views set out by Cassian.[536] There is no reason to think Wulfstan accepted the views of Cassian, since he never preached in favour of them, but he did undeniably emphasise the importance of human will to righteousness over predestination.[537] Kleist argues that Wulfstan reflects an aberration from the Augustinianism of Anglo-Saxon thought.[538] However, in fact the opposite is true, since it was Ælfric who attempted to innovate on the dominant practices of Anglo-Saxon soteriological preaching. He did this by explicitly teaching predestination of the elect which is something that no other Anglo-Saxon preachers seem to have done. All the other texts to which Kleist refers were written for episcopal or elite audiences, not for general consumption by the laity. While Ælfric reflects an Augustinian tradition, he also represents an overreach of this tradition in his homilies which are Augustinian to a degree that other preachers seem to have rejected. In this they followed in the footsteps of others like Caesarius who, while accepting predestination, did not preach on it since he saw it

[533] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, pp. 169-176.
[534] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-163; Ker, N., 'The Handwriting of Archbishop Wulfstan', in his *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage* (London, 1985), pp. 9-26.
[535] Kleist, *Striving with Grace*, pp. 147-149.
[536] *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.
[537] *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.
[538] *Ibid.*, pp 149-150, 163-164.

as a stumbling block for the faithful. Seemingly, most Anglo-Saxon preachers shared this view and emphasised a works-based soteriology.

Despite differences in emphasis on some points, theologically these writers were all in broad agreement. Grace needed to precede works, but will also needed to cooperate with grace. The ransom theory of atonement was popular, and predestination was problematic. The differences between writers have their roots in issues other than theology. Ælfric is always the writer to differentiate himself most from the others, especially on atonement and predestination. In both cases, his reasons for doing so seem to be based on his own fastidiousness in his choice and use of sources. He repeatedly stressed the mercy of God to balance predestination, which indicates that Ælfric's ideas were closer to those of Blickling, Vercelli, and Wulfstan than they may at first appear. However, it is also important to note that Ælfric innovated (intentionally or unintentionally) in contrast to other writers who struck a more conservative tone. Thus, Wulfstan was influenced by the emphasis on obedience found in the writings of Ælfric and this inspired him to formulate a political theology. However, Wulfstan also dramatically used physical, often violent, penitential imagery, and this is more in keeping with the ideas expressed in Blickling and Vercelli. On predestination, too, Wulfstan seems to have aligned with the Blickling and Vercelli authors who ignored the issue in favour of promoting good works. This contrasts with the hesitant treatment by Ælfric. The more complex soteriology of Wulfstan highlights the value gleaned by incorporating Blickling and Vercelli more fully into discussions of Anglo-Saxon theology. Chiefly it shows that the impression given by Aaron Kleist, that Wulfstan deviated from the Augustinianism of Anglo-Saxon thought represented by Ælfric, is incorrect. In fact it is Ælfric who was breaking with tradition and innovating: Wulfstan instead rests in a tradition that was reflected in Blickling and Vercelli (and which continued into the twelfth century) of emotive, practical sermons meant to rouse people to action rather than explain theological complexities that could dissuade them from proper living.

Sacramentality

Both the Blickling and Vercelli Books were constructed around the aim of encouraging people to take an active interest in the fate of their souls through penance and other religious practices. But their soteriology did not accept that these practices were effective in themselves since anyone who lacked grace would get no merit from them, and no one was born in a state of grace on account of original sin. While all people could recognise and respond to the call of

grace, grace had to be conferred via the Church and the sacraments, specifically the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. Blickling and Vercelli presuppose that these rites would be performed and so they do not discuss details of their performance; instead they focus on the soteriological significance of the rites and their place within the life of the faithful. In this section, I will consider both baptism and the Eucharist and how they enabled soteriological doctrine to influence the lives of the faithful. Two caveats must be explained before proceeding. Firstly, the image of these rites offered by Blickling and Vercelli are inescapably idealised and so may not entirely reflect the reality of their performance. Secondly, I have opted to begin each subsection by focusing on the performance of these rites rather than their link to soteriology, since this link is more easily understood after a discussion of what these rites entailed and how they were regarded by late tenth-century ecclesiastics and legislators.

i) Baptism

Blickling, Vercelli, and other homilists like Ælfric presuppose that their congregants were baptised.[539] Except for Scandinavians who converted to Christianity, the expectation by most authors in the late tenth century seems to have been that baptism would occur while the recipient was an infant.[540] In the decrees of church councils like that held at Chelsea in 787, as well as in the rituals for baptism found in later sources like the *Red Book of Darley*, the authors refer explicitly to the baptism of infants.[541] The expectation of infant baptism is most clearly seen where the authors refer to the need to baptise babies quickly after their birth in case they should die. Consistently, failure to do this incurs a heavy penalty on the negligent priests or parents and, as Ælfric notes, allowing children to die unbaptised is tantamount to allowing them to die as heathens.[542] Wulfstan too in his law codes placed great emphasis on the need to baptise children soon after birth.[543] This concern for prompt infant baptism can be traced back as early as Bede who, in his letter to Egbert, expressed apprehension over the size of the diocese of York and the result that this delayed a person's baptism for years after their birth, thus endangering their souls.[544] Likewise, in his commentary on Mark, Bede frames the description

[539] For example, see Ælfric's comment in his Shrove Sunday homily that all his congregants are baptised in *Old English Lives of Saints*, pp. 10-13.
[540] Wulfstan, 'The Laws of Edward and Guthrum', c. 3.2, in Rabin, *Political Writings*, p. 57.
[541] Foot, S., '"With water in the spirit": the administration of baptism in early Anglo-Saxon England' in *Pastoral Care before the Parish* ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), p. 178; Gittos, H., 'Is there any evidence for the liturgy of parish churches in late Anglo-Saxon England? The Red Book of Darley and the status of Old English', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 70-71.
[542] Ælfric, 'Letter for Wulfsige', c. 72.
[543] Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar, c. 15.
[544] Bede, 'Letter to Egbert', in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* transl. L. Sherley-Price (London, 1955), pp. 339-340.

of baptism in the gospel in terms of infant baptism by commenting on the importance of parents and godparents learning the prayers and creeds to recite on behalf of their children.[545] This echoes a comment made much later by Ælfric about how pledges made by the godparents passed faith onto the infant despite its not comprehending the words.[546] Bede seems also to have inspired the bishops gathered at *Clofesho* in 747 where his injunction was repeated in the canons of the council.[547] Even before Bede, the *Penitential of Theodore* referred to infant baptism as the normal practice in England, although it also admits that occasionally parents failed to have it performed thus necessitating the baptism of adults.[548] For many centuries, at least since the time of Archbishop Theodore (d. 690), infant baptism had been the expected norm in England among preachers, exegetes, and other shapers of ecclesiastical opinion.

Liturgical books did not always reflect this norm and some of them kept the older association between baptism and Easter which derived from practices surrounding the baptism of adult catechumens in Late Antiquity.[549] However, by the tenth century some liturgical books had begun to reformulate their baptismal rites to accommodate the year-round demand for infant baptism. The separation of baptism from Easter is visible in both the *Leofric Missal* and the *Red Book of Darley* where baptism is offered as its own distinct occasional rite.[550] Both books are unusual though, and do not seem to have followed their sources closely. In contrast, books that more faithfully followed their sources like the *Winchcombe Sacramentary*, a book produced at Ramsey in the late tenth century and subsequently sent to Fleury, kept baptism as part of the Easter Vigil.[551] There is no linear chronological progression of these manuscripts, since both the earliest, the *Leofric Missal*, and the latest, the *Red Book*, isolate the baptismal rite, while those that fall between them chronologically are conservative. The baptismal rite of the *Leofric Missal* is an amalgamation of rites from various different sources.[552] It has been questioned whether it could actually be used by a priest performing baptism given that it is repetitive and copies several parts of the rite out of order.[553] However, despite drawing heavily

[545] Foot, S., *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600-900* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 301.
[546] Godden III, ll. 270-290
[547] Cubitt, 'pastoral care and conciliar canons', pp. 197-198.
[548] Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 301-302.
[549] The catechumenate was described by Egeria in the account of her pilgrimage to Jerusalem in chapters 45-46 see *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, ed. and transl. A. McGowan and P. F. Bradshaw (Collegeville, MIN, 2018), pp. 188-191; see also Cyril of Jerusalem's *Procatechesis* in Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*, transl. M. E. Johnson (Yonkers, NY, 2017); for the separation of baptism from the Easter Vigil in some late tenth century manuscripts see Gittos, 'Red Book of Darley', pp. 70-71.
[550] *Ibid.*
[551] *Ibid.*
[552] *The Leofric Missal*, vol. 1, ed. N. Orchard (London, 2002), pp. 113-117.
[553] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

on other manuscripts, this text nevertheless presents baptism as something separate from the Easter Vigil, suggesting instead that it was understood as a distinct rite rather than part of a larger ceremony. The baptismal rite if the *Red Book* is more clearly practical since it has been edited for the utmost clarity by outlining in detail the role and words of the godparents.[554] This would enable the officiating priest to prompt the godparents as needed.

Given the impression of the written evidence that baptism was common and expected, there is remarkably little physical evidence for it in Anglo-Saxon England. England lacked much of the infrastructure of baptism found in mainland Europe such as dedicated baptisteries.[555] The number of fonts surviving from the Anglo-Saxon period is also small, although the remains of areas within some churches designed to hold fonts suggests that they were more common than the evidence indicates.[556] However, it is difficult to tell how baptism may have been affected by the rise of proprietary churches in the late tenth century. There is no evidence that a small proprietary church like the one at Raunds had a font, for example. The fonts that survive, such as the stone font found at Deerhurst, are found in minster churches and would have been costly to produce, suggesting that they were mainly objects associated with wealthy churches.[557] This, along with the stipulation in the Andover law code of King Edgar that the 'old minsters' were to keep their traditional rights to church dues, may suggest that minsters still played a major role in the provision of infant baptism.[558]

The baptismal rite used in England appears to have been closely modelled on Roman practices, albeit with some Gallic additions.[559] Although piecing together the elements of the rite is difficult, not least since it is unclear how representative the liturgical books preserving baptismal rites are, it seems that some broad features of older Roman practices survived in England.[560] For example, the rite apparently kept the elements of exorcism that had been part of it from the beginning through a spoken renunciation of Satan, an affirmation of faith in the Trinity, and insufflation by the priest.[561] Since, as noted, infant baptism was the norm by the

[554] Gittos, 'Red Book', pp. 73-74.
[555] Blair, J., 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: a Topographical Review', in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 249-256; Cubitt, C., 'Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West,* ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), p. 446; Foot, 'Water in the Spirit', p. 182.
[556] Gittos, H., *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013), p. 204.
[557] Gittos, 'form and function', p. 202; Tinti, F., *Sustaining Belief: The Church of Worcester from c.870 to c.1100* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 235-237.
[558] Tinti, F., 'the 'costs' of pastoral care: church dues in late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 33-34.
[559] Foot "With water in the spirit"', pp. 174-175.
[560] *Ibid.*, pp. 176-178.
[561] Gittos, 'Red Book', pp. 71-72.

late tenth century, the vows taken were spoken by the godparents on behalf of the infant, a fact that Bede noted in his commentary on Mark.[562] The English also favoured full immersion in water in the name of the Trinity.[563]

While the practical details of baptism are obscure, the reason for its importance within the life of a Christian is not. Bede summarised it best when he said that it was only through baptism that one could enter the Church and, thus, only through baptism that a person could be saved.[564] Blickling and Vercelli similarly indicate that baptism is an essential component of the faithful life. For example, *Soul and Body I* presents baptism as the unique signifier of humanity when the poet observes that it would be better for the sinner to be born as even the lowliest animal than that they be born a human who must be baptised.[565] For the poet, baptism is something that all humans must undergo.

Soul and Body I also asserts that the grace of baptism is not a guarantee of salvation if it is not supported by good works. This Gregorian idea was the accepted position of late tenth-century writers. For example, Vercelli XVI explicitly makes this claim:

> 'Each of those men who is rightly baptised, he will be a child of God, if he then wishes to keep that baptism with good deeds'.[566]

Soul and Body I and Vercelli III clarify that this state of blessedness is liable to change unless combined with virtue. Ælfric made a similar assertion when he reminded his audience that the grace of baptism could not be kept by simply abstaining from evil, it had to be actively combined with good deeds.[567] Vercelli III explained the gracious effect of baptism thus:

> 'Therefore, in that baptism we are all consecrated as sons of God, to the end that we be spiritually brothers perfected in true love of God'.[568]

In baptism the faithful are consecrated so they may be perfected. In other words, baptism conferred the grace necessary for salvation.

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[562] Foot, *Monastic Life*, p. 301.
[563] Ælfric, 'Shrove Sunday', *Old English Lives of Saints* 2, pp. 10-13.
[564] Foot, 'Water in the Spirit', p. 172.
[565] *Soul and Body I*, ll. 86-87.
[566] Vercelli XVI, ll. 21-23: '*Æ*ghwylc þær[a] manna se ðe rihtlice bið gefulwad, he bið Godes bearn gif he þonne ða fulwihte mid godum dædum healdan wille'.
[567] Ælfric, 'Shrove Sunday', p. 11.
[568] Vercelli III, ll. 7-9: 'For þa*m* þe we sint ealle on þam fulluhte Godes bearn gehalgode, to þam þ*æt* þe we sien gastlice gebroðor an fulfremedre soðelufan æfter Gode'.

Apart from asserting that it communicates grace, neither Blickling nor Vercelli says much on how baptism was understood to work, their core conviction is simply that it does. Ælfric, on the other hand, closely follows Augustine in distinguishing between the material elements of a sacrament and its spiritual truth.[569] Thus baptismal waters are ordinary waters yet, in truth (*in veritas*), they can cleanse sins through the special consecration offered by Christ. Augustine had developed his theory of sacramental signs in response to the Donatists to explain why a sacrament like baptism was objectively holy and, thus, effective at communicating grace regardless of the personal virtue of any participant.[570] It is important to recall that Augustine had been a Neo-Platonist prior to his conversion and his theory is influenced by the Platonic idea of forms. Thus when Augustine referred to the material of a sacrament changing *in veritas*, he was referring to the essence of a thing which, in Platonic thought, was more real than its sensible material existence.[571] Although Ælfric was not a Platonist, he was participating in the continued Neo-Platonic influence on Christianity that dominated in the West until the resurgence of Aristotelianism under the Scholastics. Even though Blickling and Vercelli nowhere repeat the sacramental theory of Augustine, in their assumption that baptism as a sacrament is objectively holy they reflect a culture that had accepted the conclusions of the theory even if they were not aware of the theory itself. Vercelli III may allude to Augustinian ideas when it talks of God consecrating baptism, but none of the anonymous writers dwell on explaining sacramental theory.

Instead they emphasise the benefits of baptism to remind their audience of the duties it imposes on them if they hope to keep baptismal grace. As the author of Blickling X reminds his/her audience, people must remember their baptismal vows and live by them or face the consequences.[572] This can be linked to the comment in Vercelli III about the need for good works. Ælfric too believed that the grace of baptism alone was not enough. When he listed it as the first of the 'three high things' meant for human cleansing, along with the Eucharist and penance, he presented the sacrament as the first initiation into a life of constant striving to return to God.[573] He also sought elsewhere to stress that active virtue was needed to maintain the grace of baptism.[574] In this, despite the terminological differences between them, Blickling,

[569] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 180-181.
[570] Evans, R. F., *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought* (London, 1972), pp. 88-90.
[571] Hoping, H., *My Body Given for You: History and Theology of the Eucharist*, transl. M. J. Miller (Freiburg im Breisgau, 2015) pp. 113-117.
[572] Blickling X, ll. 46-47.
[573] Ælfric, II.3 ll. 213-215, 'Þreo healice ðing gesette God mannum clænsunge: an is fulluht, oðer is husel-halgung, þridde is dædbot'; Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 178-179.
[574] See his Shrove Sunday sermon in *Old English Lives of Saints* vol. 2, pp. 20-23.

Vercelli, and Ælfric all shared an understanding of how baptism worked in relation to soteriology and how it should affect the lives of the faithful. The terminological differences resulted from the sources used by these authors. Except for Vercelli III, all homiletic references to baptism in the Blickling and Vercelli Books derive from the work of Caesarius of Arles. Vercelli III is derived from a homily found in the homiliary of St Perè-de-Chartres which itself drew on various sources, most prominently the *Capitula* of Theodulf.[575] The poetry is drawn from two Latin traditions: *Soul and Body I* from Egyptian monastic traditions translated into Latin by John Cassian, and *Elene* from Latin legends about the discovery of the True Cross by the Empress Helen.[576] In contrast, once again, Ælfric drew directly on Augustine himself and his heirs.[577]

The theology of baptism must be seen in light of the practice of baptism. Despite the emphasis on good works and remembering baptismal vows, most people would have been baptised as children and only learned subsequently of the duties placed on them through preaching. However, since baptism was key to washing away original sin and making good deeds meritorious, it was in the best interest of the faithful to be baptised as soon as possible. While they were apparently not directly aware of the Augustinian theology of baptism, Blickling and Vercelli were products of a culture in which its conclusions, chiefly about the objective holiness of the sacraments, were accepted. Because of this, their primary concern was on how to cooperate with baptismal grace.

ii) The Eucharist

Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics did not significantly disagree with each other concerning baptism. A topic where Blickling and Vercelli do disagree with others, specifically with Ælfric, is on the Eucharist, particularly how the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist should be understood. All Anglo-Saxon theologians agreed on the central importance and great holiness of the Eucharist and that this was to inform performance of the sacrament. They also agreed that the faithful were to receive it after a period of purification through penance. But the theoretical frameworks that they used to explain it could differ markedly. This is yet again a result of conservatism on the part of the anonymous authors since there is no evidence that they

[575] Scragg, D., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford, 1992), p. 72.
[576] Di Sciacca, C., 'The "Ubi Sunt" Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105 (2006), 366-367; Di Sciacca, C., *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2008), pp. 109-138; Zacher, S., *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto, 2009), pp. 142-143; Moffat, D., *The Old English Soul and Body* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 28-35.
[577] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 175-182.

were familiar with ninth-century Frankish Eucharistic debates.[578] Ælfric, in contrast, had read the arguments of the chief debaters and incorporated them into his own thinking. The resulting difference between them has in the past been overstated. It is, for example, incorrect to suggest that Ælfric denied the real presence.[579] But the difference is notable and speaks to a larger trend in how the theologies of the Blickling and Vercelli Books differ from those of later writers.

The English of the late tenth century inherited the Roman Canon and, just like Carolingian and Irish theologians, they placed great emphasis on the proper performance of the Mass, particularly correct recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer.[580] This prayer was the heart of the Mass and it was during it that the transformation of the bread and wine was believed to occur.[581] The form of the Roman prayer had been finalised with the addition of the *Hanc igitur* under Gregory the Great and through his influence spread outwards to Francia, England, and Ireland.[582] Other forms of Mass with their own Eucharistic prayers existed — for example the prayers of the Gallican and Milanese rites — but these were replaced by, altered to mirror, or subsumed into Roman practice.[583] Once the Roman prayer had been established, it became customary for scribes to take great care in copying it exactly and to avoid any alterations or additions. Failing this, books would be corrected via glossing or marginal notes to identify any errors.[584] The heart of the Prayer were the 'words of institution' (*verba testamenti*) which repeated the words of Christ at the Last Supper and also acted, following the interpretation of Ambrose, as an epiclesis invoking the Spirit to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.[585] After this the priest would intercede for the Church and the people before leading the congregation in the *Pater Noster* and finally distributing the consecrated Host.[586]

The sense of holiness attached to the Eucharist is not only discernible in the drive for textual fidelity. It can also be seen in the emphasis on material and spiritual purity found in texts describing the sacrament. The need for things to be properly arranged was most visibly seen in decrees that the church and tools all be properly consecrated and maintained. Some of

[578] Hoping, *My Body Given for You*, pp. 175-188; Pelikan, *Medieval Theology*, pp. 74-80; Chazelle, C., 'Figure, Character, and the Glorified Body', 1-36.
[579] Grundy, L., 'Ælfric's *Sermo de sacrificio in die pascae*: *figura* and *veritas*', *Notes and Queries* 235 (1990), 265-269.
[580] Hoping, *My Body Given for You*, pp. 146-164.
[581] *Ibid.*; Jungmann, J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* vol. 2 (New York, NY, 1959), p. 194.
[582] Hoping, *My Body Given for You*, pp. 153-154; Jungmann, *The Mass* vol. 2, p. 180.
[583] Jungmann, J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* vol. 1 (New York, NY, 1959), pp. 44-103; Klauser, T., *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, transl. J. Halliburton (Oxford, 1969), pp. 72-85.
[584] Hoping, *My Body Given for You*, p. 140.
[585] *Ibid.*, pp. 108-111; Jungmann, *The Mass* vol. 2, pp. 187-217.
[586] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-293.

the earliest such rules survive from an Old Irish explanation of the Eucharist found in the late eighth- or early ninth-century Stowe Missal, one of the main points of which is to explain the tools, vestments, and books that a priest needs to perform Mass.[587] Similar lists were also written in Anglo-Saxon England, most notably those set down by Ælfric in his pastoral letter for Wulfsige and Wulfstan in his *Canons of Edgar*.[588] Both writers stress that, unless the priest is administering last rites, the church must be properly consecrated and all things in proper order to perform the Mass.[589] Besides this, they must have all vestments and tools in good condition. Wulfstan adds that the tools also must be made of an imperishable material like metal since God is imperishable.[590] They also must use fresh bread and wine. As both writers stress, if any of these things are lacking then the priest commits a severe dereliction of duty.

This emphasis on cleanliness and purity extended beyond the materials of the Eucharist to include proper spiritual purity of both the clergy and the laity. In his letter for Wulfsige and in his homily on the Paschal sacrifice, Ælfric underlines this same point by comparing the celebration of the Eucharist to Old Testament Temple sacrifices. Just as they were performed under the commands of God, particularly the commandments for ritual purity, so too with the Eucharist which is the culmination of the Mosaic sacrifices. But Ælfric also notes that in the gospel the requirements of ritual purity have been expanded to include chastity (*clænnysse*). While not espousing an Ælfrician view of *clænnysse*, Vercelli XIV does also emphasise the need for personal purity from those celebrating and receiving the Eucharist:

> 'We have then, dearly beloved, great need that we attend to these matters and examine our consciences, and that we through abstinence of bodily lusts and through abundant goodness and spiritual toil humble and cleanse our souls and bodies. We who celebrate that mystery of the divine passion, we must emulate in ourselves that which we do. Then that sacrifice is truly good and acceptable to God, if we will first sacrifice ourselves to Almighty God'.[591]

Vercelli XIV emphasises the need for self-cleansing by both the laity and the celebrant to make oneself fit to commune with God. This is a recurring theme in Anglo-Saxon Eucharistic

[587] Royal Irish Academy, MS D. ii 3, ff. 65r-67v in *The Stowe Missal: MS D.II.3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin* vol. 2, ed. G. F. Warner (London, 1915), pp. 37-42.
[588] Ælfric, 'Letter to Wulfsige', cc. 52-60; Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', cc. 38-43.
[589] Ælfric, 'Letter to Wulfsige', c. 106.
[590] Wulfstan, 'Canons of Edgar', c. 30.
[591] Vercelli XIV, ll. 86-93: 'Habbað we þonne, men þa leofstan, micle nydþearfe þæt we þas þing begangen 7 ure ingeþohtas geondsmeagen, 7 þæt we þurh forhæfednesse lichomlicra lusta 7 þurh mænigfeald god 7 gæstlic gewin ure sawle 7 ure lichaman gemedemige[n] 7 geclænsie[n]. We ðe þæt geryne þære dryhtenlican þrowunge mærsigað, we þæt sculon onhyrigan on us sylfum þæt we doð. Þonne bið sio [on]sægdnes soðlice Gode andfenge gif we selfe ærest Gode ælmihtigum onsecgan willað'.

theology and is often linked to the need for confession and penance.[592] For example Vercelli XIII, a homily for Rogation Wednesday, states that:

> 'If we with our bodily desires have done anything careless against the will of God in these forty nights (between Easter and Ascension), may he amend it in these days now and cleanse himself so that he may tomorrow, at the holy Ascensiontide of the Lord, be clean at the Lord's altar, and there receive the eternal power of the covenant that is the Body of Christ Himself and His Blood that we now name the Host.[593]

The emphasis on physical and spiritual purity echoes the focus on proper celebration seen elsewhere. The canons of the Council of *Clofesho*, for example, also emphasised that the laity should receive communion only when they had been cleansed of their sins.[594] Similarly various Carolingian texts such as the *Capitula* of Theodulf also stressed that confession should precede communion.[595] Vercelli XIII's comment on this issue sets out why this purity is so important: the Eucharist is a covenant with God and thus needs to be observed properly as a sign of faithfulness. Not doing this will cause what should be a communion for salvation instead condemning the recipient.

Due to the link between the Eucharist and confession, receiving the Eucharist is implicitly the culmination of a period of penance signifying the return of the penitent to the fold. It is interesting to note the distribution of comments about the Eucharist in the Vercelli Book (Blickling says nothing about the sacrament). In Vercelli, discussion of the Eucharist in homilies is limited to penitential periods preceding feasts like Christmas, Easter, and Ascension, or to the feasts themselves.[596] As noted in chapter 4, these periods were seemingly the main occasions for lay religious observance of penitential practices. It is thus unlikely to be coincidental that they also include the most detailed discussions of the Eucharist. From this

[592] Foxhall Forbes, H., *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England: Theology and Society in an Age of Faith* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 45-47.
[593] Vercelli XIII, ll. 12-17: '7 gif we mid ures lichaman lustum hwæt gimeleaslices dydon on þyssum feowertegum nihtum wið Godes willan, bete he þæt on þyssum dagum nu 7 clænsige hine, þæt he mæge beon þys mergenlican dæge æt þære halgan dryhtnes upastignestide clæne æt dryhtnes wiofode, 7 þær onfon weddes þæs ecan rices, þ*æt* is Cristes sylfes lichoma 7 his blod þæt we nu nemaþ husl'.
[594] Cubitt, C., 'Pastoral Care and Conciliar Canons: the provisions of the 747 council of Clofesho', in *Pastoral Care before the Parish* ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), p. 197; Cubitt, C., 'Religion and belief 900-1100: the institutional church', in *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages - Britain and Ireland c.500-c.1100,* ed. P. Stafford (Oxford, 2009), p. 287; *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: English churches during the Anglo-Saxon period: A. D. 595-1066*, ed. A. W. Hadden and W. Stubbs III (Oxford, 1871), pp. 360-376.
[595] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 45-47.
[596] For example, in Vercelli V for Nativity and Vercelli XIV which may be linked to Rogationtide in some way, Scragg, *Vercelli Book*, 237.

it could be suggested that the expectation among preachers was that most laity would receive communion only on these major feasts. Of course, the Vercelli Book probably was not for a lay audience and the religious probably communicated more regularly than the laity. But considering that the Vercelli compiler seems to have drawn on a collection of *ad populum* sermons, among other material, and that all the texts discussing the Eucharist fall into this category, the Vercelli Book despite its audience says something about the practices of lay communion. While writers like Bede, Ælfric and the bishops a *Clofesho* stressed regular communion as an ideal, sources like the Vercelli Book suggest that in practice most laity would receive the Eucharist at the most three times a year at these major feasts. [597]

Early medieval views on the Eucharist were intimately tied to belief in the real presence. The idea of the real presence is of great antiquity: the earliest treatise explicitly defending the idea was authored by Cyprian of Carthage in the third century.[598] It was Augustine, though, and his theory of sacramental signs, that set the tone for understanding of the Eucharist in the early middle ages. Augustine asserted that while the material figure (*figura*) of the bread and wine remained unchanged, in truth (*veritas*) they were imperceptibly transformed into the body and blood of Christ.[599] Two observations need to be made about this. Firstly, given his background, as a Neo-Platonist, Augustine regarded the 'truth' as more real than the 'figure'.[600] When he claimed that the Eucharist spiritually transforms while remaining materially the same he was not suggesting that the change was only metaphorical. Secondly, following his teacher Ambrose, Augustine believed that the Eucharistic body of Christ was one and the same with his historical body.[601] For Augustine Christ was really present in the Eucharist and his theory was, as noted, mainly intended as a rebuke to those suggesting that the sanctity of baptism and the Eucharist depended on the holiness of the officiant.[602] As with much that he taught, it became the accepted position of the Latin Church for many centuries.

However, in the ninth century there occurred the first major controversy over the real presence. The issue hinged on whether the Eucharistic body and historical body were one and the same.[603] The roots of this controversy can be traced back to Amalarius of Metz who in his *De liber officialis* pioneered an allegorical interpretation of the liturgy. Prior to this, allegory

[597] Cubitt, 'Pastoral Care', pp. 197-198; Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, p. 46.
[598] Cyprian, *Epistola 63*, in *On the Church: Select Letters*, ed. and transl. A. Brent (Yonkers, NY, 2006).
[599] Hoping, *My Body Given for You*, pp. 113-117; Chazelle, C., 'Figure, Character, and the Glorified Body in the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy', *Traditio* 47 (1992), 21-22.
[600] Hoping, *My Body Give for You*, p. 176.
[601] Chazelle, 'Figure, Character', 4-5.
[602] Evans, *One and Holy*, pp. 88-90.
[603] Chazelle, 'Figure, Charatcer', 10-12, 22-25.

had been used chiefly as an exegetical tool to discuss scripture.[604] This raised the possibility that the Eucharist may not involve a literal transformation into the historical body and blood of Christ, as Ambrose and Augustine had taught, but might instead be an allegorical transformation. The debate was ignited when the Frankish monk Paschasius Radbertus (d. 865) published a treatise in which he defended the Ambrosian teaching of the consubstantiality of the historical and Eucharistic body.[605] He argued that, while the bread and wine remained sensibly unchanged, the Host was transformed into the real body of Christ since the gospel accounts of the Last Supper gave no hint that the words of institution referred to anything other than a literal change.[606] Against this, and with the blessing of Emperor Charles the Bald (d. 877), another monk named Ratramnus (d. 868) wrote a counter treatise proposing that while change occurred, it was not a change into the historical body of Christ, since perceptibly the Host did not change, meaning that it could not become flesh and blood. Rather, the change was allegorical with the result that the Eucharist was done in memory of the Passion rather than repeating it.[607] The argument of Ratramnus was influenced by the Aristotelian modification of the Platonic theory of forms called 'hylomorphism'.[608] This holds that a thing's form is not located in an external realm of forms but rather is inseparably joined to its matter. Thus since the matter of the Host did not change, then for Ratramnus it could not have literally changed into the body and blood.[609] In the long term Paschasius won out with his restatement of the Augustinian position but the ideas of Ratramnus also remained in circulation.

Late tenth-century English theologians understood the Eucharist based on the earlier sources that they used. Considering what Vercelli has to say on the topic, the Eucharistic theology of the non-reformed seems to have been distinctly conservative. The Vercelli authors affirmed the presence of the real, historical body of Christ in the Host. The first discussion occurs in Vercelli V, a homily for Nativity based mostly on Gregory's eighth gospel homily:[610]

> 'We heard that our Saviour was placed in a manger when He was born. That was the place where they gave food to their animals. The manger betokens the altar of God, there it will be for the holy animals, that is, for the believing men; it will be spiritually given, the food of the body of Christ, which He left for us as a covenant so that we are the sharers of the kingdom of God, as He Himself

[604] Pelikan, *Medieval Theology*, pp. 78-79.
[605] Radbertus, *De corpore et sanguine domini. Epistola ad Fredugardum*, ed. by B. Paulus (Turnhout, 1969).
[606] Chazelle, 'Figure, Character', 10-12.
[607] Ratramnus, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, ed. J. N. Bakhuizen Van Den Brink (Amsterdam 1954).
[608] Cohen, S. M., 'Hylomorphism and Functionalism', in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. M. C. Nussbaum and A. O. Rorty (Oxford, 1995), pp. 58-60.
[609] *Ibid.*, 21-25.
[610] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, pp. 108-109.

> spoke about it: *"Qui manducat carnem meam et bibit sanguinem meam, in me manet et ego in eum"*. "He who eats my body and drinks my blood, he dwells in me and I in him". Those words are sweet for us to know, so that we cannot uncleanly receive that holy secret of the body of Christ and of His blood, but we must cleanse ourselves before and suitably receive that holy secret so that God will dwell in us and we in Him'.[611]

By using the Nativity to discuss the Eucharist, the homilist draws attention to the link between the Eucharist and the Incarnation. This link implies that the Eucharistic transformation is comparable to the physical incarnation of God. Thus, while it may be done 'spiritually', the implication is that the Eucharistic body and historical body are one and the same. Early medieval authors like Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great recorded miracles in their devotional and theological works that affirmed the real presence through visions of either a chunk of bleeding flesh or of a baby on the altar during Mass.[612] Consciously or not, the author of Vercelli V is echoing these miracles with his/her imagery. It should be supposed that they intended this homily to promote belief in the presence of the historical body. The reference to the food being 'spiritually given' and its nature as a 'holy secret' should not distract from this. Given the context, it seems to refer to either the miraculous element of the Eucharist or possibly to the imperceptibility of the change.

Both a similar identification of the Eucharist with the literal body of Christ and an emphasis on taking God into oneself cleanly are found in Vercelli XIV, a homily 'for such time as one wishes' which is based mainly on final chapters of Book IV of the *Dialogues* of Gregory but which also uses Caesarius as a source for its Scriptural exegesis.[613] Here the author reflects on the mystery of the Eucharist:

> 'Although He arose from death, after He suffered for the salvation of all mankind, and ascended again into the heavens where He ever afterwards, immortal, has ruled in eternity through the world of all worlds. Nevertheless, He is again in that holy mystery for us, where His Body and His Holy Blood

[611] Vercelli V, ll. 139-150: 'We gehyrdon þ*æt* ure hælend wæs on binne aseted þa he wæs acenned. Þæt wæs sio stow þær man nytenum hira andlifan sealde. Seo binne getacnode Godes wiofod, þær bið þam halgu*m* nytenum, þ*æt* is þam geleaffullum mannu*m*, bið seald þ*æt* gastlice gereord Cristes lichoman, ðe he us to wedde forlet þætte we sien dælnimende Godes rices, swa he sylfe be ðam to cwæð; *"Qui manducat carnem meam et bibit sanguinem me[u]m, in me manet et ego in [illo]."* "Se ðe eteð mine lichoman 7 min blod drinceð, he wunaþ on me 7 ic on him". Þas word us syndon sw[ið]e to ongitanne þætte we unclænlice ne onfon þam halgan geryne Cristes lichoman 7 his blodes, ac we sculon us sylfe ær clænsian 7 gedafenlice [libban 7 þonne clænlice] ðicgan þæt halige geryne, þæt God on us wunige 7 we on him'.
[612] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, p. 191.
[613] Scragg, *Vercelli Book*, pp. 237-238.

> are distributed, in each heart of faithful men for salvation and as a pledge of eternal life of those who receive Him cleanly and uprightly'.[614]

In this statement, which is taken directly from Gregory, the homilist presents the mystery of the Eucharist as the simultaneous presence of Christ in Heaven and in the host.[615] This homily is even more explicit than Vercelli V in identifying the Eucharistic body with the historical body. Likewise, the reception of the Eucharist cleanly is also stressed, this time by highlighting the nature of the Eucharist as a pledge to eternal life for those who receive it faithfully. If these writers were aware of the Carolingian debates on the Eucharist, they do not show it. They do not even refer to the possibility that some dissented from their views. This is not to say that no one in England did, but simply that these writers do not seem to have been trying to counter disbelief about the real presence suggesting they saw no dangers to it.

However, as has been noted by defenders of English Protestantism, Ælfric argued for something approaching an allegorical understanding of the Eucharist.[616] In his homily on the sacrifice of Easter, Ælfric draws heavily from the work of Ratramnus.[617] This immediately sets him apart from the Vercelli writers. From Ratramnus, Ælfric borrowed an idea of the Augustinian theory of signs that understood *figura* chiefly in terms of sensual experience. Since the host does not perceptibly change and is not like a human body it cannot be literally the same as the physical body of Christ; rather it is the body of Christ spiritually. This flies counter to the meditation in Vercelli XIV on the simultaneous presence of Christ in Heaven and in the Eucharist. Ælfric holds that 'the body of Christ which suffered death and from death arose, will henceforth never die, but is eternal and immutable' while 'that host is temporary, not eternal, corruptible and is distributed piece-meal, chewed between the teeth and sent into the belly'.[618] Thus the view of Ælfric is opposite to that of Vercelli V and XIV. But it would be incorrect to claim that Ælfric endorsed an entirely allegorical understanding of the Eucharist. After explaining his views based in the same manner as Ratramnus, Ælfric then cites two miracles affirming the bodily nature of the Eucharist, one from the *Vitae Patrum* of Gregory of Tours

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[614] Vercelli XIV, ll. 71-77: 'þeah þe he fram deaþe arise æfter þam þe he for ealles mancynnes hælo deaþ þrowode 7 on heofenas eft upstah, þær he siððan a undeadlice ricsode on ecnesse þurh eallra worlda world. Hwæðere he bið eft for us on þam halgan geryne, þær his lichama 7 his þæt halige blod dæled bið on þara geleaffulra manna hiortan, æghwylcu*m* to hæle 7 to wedde eces lifes þara þe him clæne 7 rihtlice onfengð'.

[615] Hoping, *My Body Given for You*, p. 119; Gregory, *Dialogues* 4.58 in *Gregory the Great: Dialogues* III (Lyon, 1978).

[616] Grundy, 'Figura and Veritas', 265.

[617] Grundy, *Books and* Grace, pp. 187-191.

[618] Ælfric, II.XV, 151-155: 'Witodlice Cristes lichama ðe deað ðrowade, and of deaðe aras, ne swylt næfre heononforð, ac is ece and unðrowiendlic. Þæt husel is hwilwendlic, ne ece; brosniendlic, and bið sticmælum todæled, betwux toðum tocowen, and into ðam buce asend'.

and another from the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great.[619] Both echo the physical imagery of Vercelli V and centre on people who see the Eucharist as a chunk of bleeding flesh immediately prior to consuming it only to find that it remains bread and wine. Interestingly Ælfric took this combination of miracles from Paschasius who used them as evidence that the consubstantiality of the Eucharistic and historical bodies.[620] The use of these stories by Ælfric is possibly meant to stress the reality of the spiritual change even though the host does not become the historical body. He supports this view with an appeal to baptism. The waters of baptism, he notes, are ordinary corruptible waters, yet through the blessing of the priest they become capable of spiritually washing away sins while also remaining corruptible, material waters.[621] Following the Augustinian theory of signs more closely than the Vercelli authors do, Ælfric thus distinguishes the physical reality of the Eucharist and its spiritual truth which, he holds, is just as real, if not more so than its physical reality.

While there is not much theological discussion of the Eucharist from Anglo-Saxon England, Vercelli suggests that the Ælfrician view was an innovation born of the Carolingian debates. The older view, apparently uninfluenced by these debates, was based chiefly on a passionate devotion to the Eucharist as God incarnate that came partly from Augustine, partly from Gregory, and partly from other sources. The apparent disagreement between Vercelli and Ælfric was chiefly the product of new sources arriving in England: the actual theological difference between Vercelli on the one hand and Ælfric on the other was not as great as the views of Ælfric can seem in a post-Reformation world. While he doubted the consubstantiality of the Eucharistic body and historical body, Ælfric nevertheless believed that Christ was really present in the Eucharist and, thus, he affirmed the traditional stance that the sacrament had a real, unrivalled holiness much as the Vercelli authors also believed. This resulted in Vercelli and Ælfric agreeing with the various other writers who stressed the importance of receiving the Eucharist purely following penance. Just as baptism inaugurated someone into the Church, so the Eucharist reaffirmed baptismal grace. Based on the words of the Last Supper that they who eat the body and blood of Christ dwell in him and he in them, those who partook of the Eucharist both were joined to the body of Christ (the Church) and also received Christ into themselves as sanctification. By comparing this to the spiritual effect of baptism and its joining the faithful to God all other baptised believers, it becomes clear that baptism and the Eucharist cannot be easily separated. Both are fundamentally salvific and the importance placed on them

[619] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, p. 191.
[620] *Ibid.*
[621] Ælfric, II.XV, ll. 113-131.

highlights the ability of soteriology to shape the lives of the faithful and even the laws of kingdoms.

Conclusions

The soteriology of late tenth-century English theologians reflected the Augustinian synthesis formulated by writers such as Gregory and Caesarius. Even as English writers became familiar with other authors, their theology did not noticeably change. The only English homilist who visibly tried to break with older ideas was Ælfric, and this aspect of his work did not apparently catch on since it was soon overwhelmed by older ideas in the composite homilies of the twelfth century. Even though Ælfric tried to emphasise some different aspects of soteriology compared to other writers, his basic theology of sin, atonement, and grace was essentially like that not only of Wulfstan but also of the Blickling and Vercelli writers. Anglo-Saxon preachers appear to have favoured a more works-focused soteriology over one that dealt with issues like predestination. Since the new sources used by Ælfric and Wulfstan were more often used to expound the same kind of soteriology found in Blickling and Vercelli rather than to challenge prevailing beliefs, it seems that the English did not regard soteriology as an especially controversial subject, meaning that perceptible theological change was limited.

An area where change is more perceptible is sacramentality, especially ideas about how baptism and the Eucharist worked. Again, views on the soteriological importance of the sacraments did not change, but with new sources came a greater awareness of ninth-century sacramental debates which challenged the literalist views espoused by the authors of the Vercelli homilies. Through the Augustinian theory of signs, Ælfric could spiritualise the effect of the Spirit on the materials of both baptism and the Eucharist, thus accounting for the lack of any perceptible change. It is important to note that this is not the same as allegorising the sacraments, since he still firmly espoused belief in their objective holiness, but the views of Ælfric were a far cry from the mystical views espoused by the Vercelli authors. However, it is difficult to tell whether this symbolic view of the sacraments was widely accepted. Since the outward form of the Mass changed little, the understanding of the Eucharist among the laity probably did not change significantly regardless of the personal views of the officiant.

In summary, there is clear continuity in soteriological beliefs in the late tenth century. This continuity directly translated to continued emphasis on baptism and the Eucharist as the sacramental means of communicating and restoring grace, in conjunction with other religious practices. Besides this, these doctrines also effected the organisation of society through law

codes regulating baptisms, penances, and tithe payments which, at their core, were all predicated on the soteriological mission of the Church.

VI

Theology II: Eschatology and the Church

Introduction

> 'But what is it that [is] more needful for a man to think [on] than about the need of his soul; and when the day comes that he must be parted from his body, and which guides he [will] have, and where he will be led, be it to misery [or] be it to glory'.[622]

Here the author of Blickling VIII alludes to anxieties surrounding the inevitability of death which, in accordance with Christian doctrine, s/he believed would usher the soul into a new condition of either joy or torment based on what they had earned in life. The branch of theology dealing with death and what comes afterwards, and with the end of the world, is called eschatology. When the Blickling VIII homilist encourages the audience to prepare for death with good works and religious practices s/he highlights how eschatological beliefs could, or at least were meant to, influence the behaviour of the faithful.[623] Consequently, much as with soteriology, it is necessary to consider the eschatological beliefs of the Blickling and Vercelli authors and how these impacted peoples' lives. Since the books collect various pieces by many authors, they offer a cross section of late tenth-century eschatology that, while not allowing for much in-depth study of specific topics in the way that the large bodies of work by men like Bede and Ælfric do, allows scholars to get a sense of the different beliefs that were circulating in late tenth-century England. Chiefly Blickling and Vercelli show that most authors shared similar beliefs concerning points of doctrine such as the individual judgement, the resurrection of the dead, etc. These views highlight the extent to which Anglo-Saxon theologians of the late tenth century were indebted to the work of those who had come before, especially prominent writers like Augustine and Gregory.[624] Yet eschatology, more so than any other area of theology, shows signs of fundamental theological differences between both the texts of the Blickling and Vercelli books and other Anglo-Saxon authors. However, these are exceptions and therefore are not representative. The Blickling and Vercelli compilers do not seem to have

[622] Blickling VIII, ll. 10-14: 'Ac hwæt is þ*æt* þæm men sy mare þearf to þencenne þonne embe his sauwle þearfe, 7 hwonne se dæg cume þe he sceole wið þæm lichomon hine gedælon, 7 hwylce latteðwas he hæbbe, 7 hwyder he gelæded sy, þe to wite, þe to wuldre'.
[623] Blickling VIII, ll. 74-83.
[624] Daley, B., *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MICH, 1991), pp. 219-22; Dal Santo, M., *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 11-16.

been bothered by these differences. These peculiarities notwithstanding, the sense from comparing the eschatology of the Blickling and Vercelli Books to that of other authors and sources is that most of the anonymous authors express beliefs that are broadly similar to those found elsewhere.

Anglo-Saxon authors did not speculate on eschatology in a vacuum. They inherited theological discussion of eschatological topics dating back ultimately to the early Church. English writers in the late tenth century were heirs to biblical eschatological hopes as they had come to be understood in the patristic age. By the end of the patristic period in the sixth century, four elements of eschatological hope had become universally established within Christendom and even authors who debated other aspects of eschatology accepted them as key elements of the faith. The four elements in question are: a linear view of history, belief in the resurrection of the body, belief in a universal judgement at the end of time, and belief in eternal reward for the righteous and punishment for the damned.[625] Brian Daley, in his overview of eschatology in the patristic period, also includes belief in an individual judgement after death and belief in the continued involvement of the dead in the life of the Church as universal eschatological beliefs, but more recent work by scholars such as Matthew Dal Santo and Marinis Vasileios has showed that in fact debate over these ideas continued in the Greek and Syriac Churches past the end of the sixth century.[626] In Anglo-Saxon England, however, these ideas were accepted.

Individual Eschatology

Death and preparation for what came after were major preoccupations for the authors of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. However, for all the emphasis that they place on it, these authors do not set out their individual eschatology in much detail.[627] Instead, their discussion of these topics takes the form of either practical reminders to pray for the dead or exhortatory calls to remember the 'need of the soul' and repent from past transgressions, from which their beliefs about individual eschatology must be inferred. Thankfully, the lack of detail found in Blickling and Vercelli can be supplemented by considering other sources from roughly the same period

[625] Daley, *Hope*, pp. 219-221.
[626] Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult*, pp. 8-13; Vasileios, M., *Death and the Afterlife in Byzantium: The Fate of the Soul in Theology, Liturgy, and Art* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 1-6.
[627] Cubitt, C., 'Apocalyptic and Eschatological Thought in England around the Year 1000', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (2015), 35-38; Grundy, L., *Books and Grace: Ælfric's Theology* (London, 1991), p. 234.

since these echo many of the anonymous writers' preoccupations with preparation for death and the afterlife. In the late tenth century Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics espoused a broadly accepted theology of death that was ultimately rooted in the patristic inheritance, but which also went beyond it by offering more detailed descriptions of some events such as the individual judgement. It is in these expanded topics that some differences of opinion can be identified. However, these reflect differing understandings of common theological principles rather than fundamental theological division. While none of the differences discussed here should distract from the underlying theological agreement, they nevertheless show that, despite this agreement, eschatological beliefs could vary considerably from person to person.

The best place to begin a consideration of individual eschatology is with the experience of death itself. On this experience Blickling and Vercelli say little, but what they do say is suggestive. Death, as the time when a soul left the body and entered the spiritual world, was taken to be a time of struggle between invisible powers that inhabited that world. The role of supernatural entities in death was alluded to in Blickling VIII when the homilist referred to the departing soul meeting 'guides' (*latteðwas*) which will lead it to the rewards or punishments that it earned in life. Elsewhere Blickling XVIII, a homily for Michaelmas, identifies angels and demons as the psychopompic entities in question when the homilist reminds his/her audience:

> 'But let us now entreat the Archangel St Michael and the nine orders of the holy angels, that they be our aid against the hell-enemies. They were the holy ones [prepared] to receive the souls of men'.[628]

Angels meet the soul when it leaves the body, but with them also come demons who vie for possession of the soul. Angels and demons are ever present in English accounts of the journey of the soul into the spiritual world, usually as protectors and adversaries respectively.[629] This struggle at death between supernatural forces is not a peculiarity of English writers: it has roots reaching further back into Christian history to texts such as the apocryphal *Visio sancti Pauli*, first composed probably in the fourth century but with additional recensions produced throughout the Middle Ages, which played a major role in influencing early medieval discussion of death and the interim.[630] In the Old English recension of the *Visio*, pseudo-Paul

[628] Blickling XVIII, ll. 234-237: 'Ac uton nu biddan þone heahengel S*anctus* Michahel 7 ða nigen endebyrdnessa ðara haligra engela, þ*æt* his us syn on fultume wið helsceaðum. Hie wæron þa halgan on onfenge manna saulum'.
[629] Sowerby, R., *Angels in Early Medieval England* (Oxford, 2016), p. 118.
[630] *Ibid.*, p. 115; Kabir, A., *Paradise, Death and Doomsday in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 15-20.

relates that he saw angels and demons flock to souls leaving their bodies where they engaged in a battle for them.[631] This corresponds with the comments in Blickling XVIII about guides and the claim that angels defend souls against demons. These ideas were also promoted by English writers, such as Boniface who, relating the vision of a brother at Much Wenlock in a letter written between 716 and 719, echoes vision of pseudo-Paul when he records how the brother saw angels and demons swarming around souls departing the body at death.[632] Dryhthelm too, whose vision was related by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* and was later translated into a homily by Ælfric, reported that upon dying he was led by an angel into the next world where he also encountered demons that menaced him.[633] Ælfric, in his homily for the Ocatve of Pentecost, asserted that at death those destined for salvation are met by an angel who takes them either to Heaven or to a realm of purgation, while the damned are met by a demon who takes them to Hell.[634] The sense that the departing soul needed angelic guides to protect against demonic attacks is also prevalent in liturgies for the sick and dying as well as in private prayer books. In the liturgies, antiphons prescribed for the moments after death called for angels to come swiftly and shepherd the soul into Paradise.[635] Similarly in eighth- and ninth-century prayer books like the Royal Prayerbook and the Book of Cerne, litanies to the saints also contain requests to Michael, not dissimilar to the comment made in Blickling XVIII, that he guard and lead souls into the next life.[636] While these prayers do not dwell so much on the dangers posed by demons, the threat is implied since some terrible fate would befall a soul not greeted by angels. Richard Sowerby has suggested that the English were uncertain about the fate of the soul at death since none of the sources discussing death present a 'road-map for the individual soul'.[637] It is correct that the accounts of death vary on minor details, but the overall image focused on the roles of angels and demons is consistent. Sowerby also suggests that the coming of guides was not believed to be certain since he cites some examples where no guides appear to direct the soul.[638] These stand out, but it is not clear to what extent this was actually a concern. Of the examples he gives in which no guides appear, all derive from hagiographical

[631] Sowerby, *Angels*, p. 115; *The Old English Vision of St. Paul*, ed. by H. A. diPaolo (Cambridge, MA, 1978).
[632] Foxhall Forbes, H., *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England: Theology and Society in an Age of Faith* (Ashgate, 2013), pp. 75-77; Boniface, 'Epistola 10', in *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. by M. Tangl (Berlin, 1916), pp. 8-15.
[633] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 207-208.
[634] Ælfric, 'Sermo ad populum, in octavis pentecosten dicendus', ll. 177-199, in *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol. 1, ed. by J. C. Pope (Oxford, 1967), pp. 407-452.
[635] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth* pp. 111-115; Sowerby, *Angels*, p. 124.
[636] *Ibid.*
[637] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.
[638] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-117, 130-132.

and historical writings which must have had a limited circulation among the non-religious population.[639] Of those texts which were explicitly meant to be public like the homilies and the liturgies, there is no ambiguity over whether a soul would have guides.

It is intriguing to consider how this belief in guides relates to the individual judgement at death. Belief in the struggle assumes that the dead in the interim receive reward or punishment based on their conduct in life, an assumption explicitly articulated in Blickling VIII. The struggle serves as a means of individual judgement. This is the implication of scenes like the vision of Hell by Guthlac in Vercelli XXIII or in the encounters with demons in the visions of Fursey and Dryhthelm.[640] In these texts, demons take on the role of attackers and accusers against the protective powers of angels. It is probable that the author of Blickling XVIII had a judgement such as this in mind when s/he spoke of angels aiding souls against demons. Elsewhere, in his homily for the Octave of Pentecost, Ælfric places less emphasis on the struggle at death.[641] Yet, despite this his reference to angels and demons guiding souls nevertheless indicates a link between spiritual guides and the individual judgement.[642] The trend to cast the struggle at death as the means of individual judgement became explicit elsewhere in Christendom in the late tenth century most notably in the Byzantine *Life of St Basil the Younger*, source of the controversial 'aerial toll houses' in which a soul is led to Heaven through 'toll houses' where it is accused of various sins by demons. If the soul cannot refute their charges, then it is led to Hell.[643] There is no evidence that Anglo-Saxon authors were familiar with contemporary Greek theology, although they may have received ideas similar to the toll-houses from Irish sources which repeated Egyptian visionary accounts which had helped to shape Byzantine eschatology.[644]

While the guides into the afterlife were most often presented as angels or demons, elsewhere the role is performed by saints, often those with a special connection to the deceased. For example, St Bartholomew guides the soul of Guthlac into Heaven at the conclusion of Vercelli XXIII:

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[639] *Ibid.*
[640] See Vercelli XXIII, ll. 87-152.
[641] Ælfric, 'In octavis', ll. 177-199.
[642] Sowerby, *Angels*, p. 115.
[643] For discussion of the aerial toll houses and their context in Orthodox theology see Rose, S., *The Soul After Death: Contemporary "After-Death" Experiences in the Light of the Orthodox Teaching on the Afterlife* (Platina, CA, 1980), pp. 64-87; for the *Life of St Basil* see Foxhall Forbes, H., 'Apocalypse, eschatology and the interim in England and Byzantium in the tenth and eleventh centuries', in A*pocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Gabriele and J. T. Palmer (London, 2019), pp. 150-153.
[644] For similar ideas in Egyptian and Irish literature see Stevenson, J., 'Ascent through the heavens, from Egypt to Ireland', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 5 (1983), 21-35.

> ‘Then suddenly came the inhabitant of Heaven, the holy apostle Saint Bartholomew, with heavenly brightness and shining glory amidst the dim darkness of that black hell. They then, those cursed spirits, could not remain there because of the fairness of that holy guest, but hid themselves in darkness… And then after that the holy Guthlac flew with the apostle, Saint Bartholomew, to the glory of the kingdom of Heaven’.[645]

Just as Michael and the other angels were presented as guardians against demons in Blickling XVIII, so too is Bartholomew shown as a defender who strikes fear into demons. Guthlac appears to have been particularly devoted to Bartholomew and took up his life as a hermit on the feast day of St Bartholomew.[646] Probably this accounts for the role played by Bartholomew as a psychopomp. Two similar tales of a saintly guide are offered by Byrhtferth of Ramsey in his *Vita sancti Oswaldi.* Here two different men, Abbot Fulbriht of Pershore and an unnamed oblate, have visions on their deathbed of St Benedict who welcomes them into Heaven.[647] Michael Lapidge suggests that these visions suggest an intense devotion of Byrhtferth to Benedict since saintly guides are far less common than angelic ones.[648] As Vercelli XXIII and the legend of Guthlac show, however, they were not unheard of. None of these examples seems to have been meant for a general audience. Felix and Byrhtferth both composed their hagiographies for the enjoyment of communities dedicated to their subjects and, in the case of Felix, at the request of King Ælfwald of East Anglia (d. 749).[649] Most homilies and liturgical texts emphasise the role of angels and demons as psychopomps rather than saints. While saints play an important role in some texts, their main role was not as psychopomps; that role mostly fell to angels.

The drama of death, as well as proclaiming faith in an individual judgement, also underscored a general conviction in the continued consciousness of the dead. This conviction was integral to another key element of Anglo-Saxon individual eschatology, that is, the continued bond of prayer between the living and the dead. Saints are the clearest example of this bond. As the author of Vercelli XII notes:

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[645] Vercelli XXIII, ll. 143-151: ‘Þa semninga com se heofones biggenga, se haliga apostol s*anctus* Bartholomeus, mid heofonlicre beorhtnesse 7 wuldre sciende betuh þa dimman þystro þære sweartan helle. Hie ða, þa werigan gastas, ne meahton [for þ]ære fægernesse þæs haligan cuman þær gewunigean, ac hie sylfe in heolstre hyddon… 7 þa æfter þam fleah se haliga Guðlac kid þam apostole, sancta Bartholomei, to heofona rices wuldre’.
[646] Colgrave, B., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac: Texts, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 4.
[647] Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita Sancti Oswaldi* IV.8, 10, in *The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, ed., and transl. by M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2009).
[648] Lapidge, M., ‘Byrhtferth and Oswald’, in *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influences* eds. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (Leicester, 1996), pp. 64-83.
[649] Colgrave, *Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 15-16.

> ‘And we honour all His saints and to us they diligently [offer] aid, and we desire their mercy, both at this time (Rogationtide) and at all times, because their strength is great with God… Here [they] are a very mighty help to those who now zealously remember them in this world’.[650]

This explanation of the cult of saints, which is offered as part of a general explanation of the activities surrounding Rogationtide, explicitly highlights the reciprocal bond of commemoration between the living and the dead. The saints were believed to take an active interest in the living. In his Octave homily, Ælfric asserts that the saints are the only dead who remain conscious of affairs among the living and are constantly praying for God to help us.[651] He also says that saints remember their friends, a statement that may refer to those like Guthlac and Fulbriht.[652] Various aspects of the liturgy invoked the intercession of the saints. Saints were commemorated at the Mass on their feast days and in the preceding vigil Mass. It was in this context that sanctoral sermons were preached to invite the faithful to reflect on the example if the saint while also offering a Mass in their honour. At such Masses, the choir would sing specially composed hymns and recite special prayers in honour of particular saints.[653] Examples of purposefully crafted liturgical pieces can be found in books like the *Durham Collectar* (Durham Cathedral A.IV.19) which contains collects for the Mass and Offices, many of which are dedicated to particular saints for use on their feast days.[654] In the late tenth century, while the community of Cuthbert was based at Chester-Le-Street, the *Collectar* was added to and annotated by Aldred, provost of the community, to include more collects for English saints, most notably collects and a colophon for Cuthbert himself.[655] Besides collects and homilies, litanies of saints and the cult of relics also offered means for the English to request the intercession of the blessed dead. Blickling IV asserts that through the Mass, the saints will look kindly on the faithful since ‘those that are in Heaven will intercede for those who are engaged in this song’.[656] Similarly, later in the same homily, the author urges the faithful to pay their tithes because ‘then will all the saints rejoice over you, and God Himself shall be with you’.[657] The cult of relics is also referred to in Vercelli XIX which speaks of the faithful going to the

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[650] Vercelli XII, ll. 37-44: ‘7 we wiorðian his þa haligan ealle 7 us to ðam mundbyrden geornlice, 7 wilnigan we hiora miltse, ge on þas tid ge on ægwhylce, for ðan hiera miht is mid Gode mycelo… Her [hie] syndon swiðe mihtige þam to fultumigenne þe hine nu giornlice in þysse worulde gemunaþ’.
[651] Ælfric, ‘In octavis’, ll. 236-268.
[652] *Ibid.*
[653] *The Durham Collectar*, ed. A. Corrêa (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 3-5.
[654] *Ibid.*
[655] *Ibid.*, pp. 76-79; Jolly, K. L., *The Community of St. Cuthbert in the Late Tenth Century: The Chester-le-Street Additions to Durham Cathedral Library A.IV.19* (Columbus, OH, 2012), pp. 71-109.
[656] Blickling IV, ll. 128-129: ‘þa þe on heofenum syndon, hi þingiaþ for þa þe þyssu*m* sange fylgeaþ’.
[657] Blickling IV, ll. 186-187: ‘þonn*e* blissiaþ ealle halige ofer eow, 7 God sylf biþ mid eow’.

shrines of saints during Rogationtide and praying there for aid.[658] Thus, through liturgical acts and tithe payments to support such acts, the favour of the saints was earned and a bond between the living and the dead established.

Prayer bonded the living and the dead. In keeping with the general opinions about prayer discussed in Chapter 4, authors do not seem to have meant ad hoc prayer by individuals, but rather by 'prayer' they meant Masses for the dead. Thus, the author of Vercelli XIV asserts that:

> 'We know not on what day or at what time death will come, that which each man must seek, both the lowly and the powerful, and then after [that] penitence and tears will be unfruitful. Therefore, it is best for us that before death we begin to make use of this given time. And that we daily send forth our prayers and our sacrifice [of His body] and His holy blood to Almighty God. The sacrifice then truly releases the soul from eternal torments.[659]

Besides repenting in life, the clergy should also offer Masses for the dead so that those who die with some sins unforgiven may be cleansed. The author of Blickling IV makes a similar claim when s/he notes:

> 'And this work [of the Mass] is the greatest harm to devils, because they have many souls in their power to whom God will yet show mercy on account of [the] power [of] their (the bishop and priest) commemorations, and on account of the prayers of earthly men, and of all the saints'.[660]

By implicitly placing the souls in opposition to earthly people, the homilist here seems to make a statement about the power of the Mass to help the dead by calling down the mercy of God upon them. Ælfric, drawing on Bede, concluded his translation of the vision of Dryhthelm with an exhortation to commemorate the dead at the Mass based on the story of Imma, which he also took from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. In the story Imma was enslaved in war but his chains continually and miraculously fell off due to the prayers said at Mass by his brother who

[658] Vercelli XIX, ll. 88-97.
[659] Vercelli XIV, ll. 62-69: 'We nyton hwycle dæge oþðe on hwylce tid se deaþ cymeð, se ðe æghwylcne man gesecan sceal, ge heanne ge ricne, 7 þonne syððan bið sio hreownes 7 þæra teara mægan unwæst[m]berende. For ðan us is selest ær ðam deaþe þæt we onginnan þisse forgiefenan tide brucan. 7 we dæghwamlice ure gebeda Gode ælmihtigum onsendan [7] ure onsægdnesse [his lichaman] 7 his þæ[s] hal[gan] blod[es]. Sio onsægdnes þonne soðlice þa sawle fra*m* ecum witum alyseð'.
[660] Blickling IV, ll. 135-139: '7 þis weorc biþ deoflum se mæsta teona, forþon þe hi habbaþ manega saula on heora gewaldum þe hi*m* wile git God miltsian for heora mægena weorþunga, 7 for eorþlicra manna gebedum, 7 ealra haligra'.

was a priest.[661] Ælfric also clarifies that he does not see the prayers of the laity as the chief benefit for the dead. Instead, he stresses the prayers of monks and those in holy orders do the most good for the dead.[662] The desire for such regularised commemoration is also highly visible in the surviving evidence beyond homilies. Wills offer detailed evidence of prayer for the dead in action. In these it is usual for the author to donate parcels of land or to make other bequests to religious communities in return for annual liturgical commemoration.[663] Wills like those of Ealdorman Æthelwold and of Æthelgifu provisioned clothing to the Old Minster Winchester and food to St Alban's respectively in return for regular and perpetual commemoration.[664] For the wealthy, commemoration was not limited only to minster communities. In the will of Siflæd, the deceased woman frees her personal priest, Wulfmær, and requests that he regularly sing psalms in her memory.[665] In contrast to the wills of Æthelwold and Æthelgifu, the will of Siflæd seems to refer to commemoration in a small proprietary church, like that found at Raunds, since Wulfmær was apparently a household priest. Besides wills, prayer for the dead was also facilitated by *Liber Vitae*, books recording the names of community members (usually of monastic houses) and of patrons, which were kept on the altar so that the names would be included in prayers said at the Mass.[666] By the late tenth century, religious confraternities and lay guilds had also begun to emerge and existed explicitly to foster links of prayer between disparate groups whenever a member died.[667]

This need for community and collective prayer in the face of death echoes the concern in the Blickling and Vercelli Books, and probably also among the laity, about the fate of those who died with some minor sins unshriven and who had not lived a perfectly Christian life. This problem was not a new one: Augustine had raised it in many his writings.[668] In a fundamental

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[661] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV.22 in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969); Ælfric, *Semones Catholici***,** II.21, in *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: the Second Series, Text*, ed. M. Godden (Oxford, 1979); Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, p. 208.
[662] Ælfric, 'In octavis', ll. 163-176, 199-216.
[663] Tollerton, L., *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (York, 2011), pp. 233-251.
[664] *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247.
[665] *Ibid.*, pp. 264-264.
[666] Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 213-215; Gneuss, H., 'Liturgical books in Anglo-Saxon England and their Old English terminology', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Firth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss, (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 140-141; Keynes, S., *The Liber vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester: British Library Stowe 944 : together with leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VIII and British Library Cotton Titus D. XXVII* (Copenhagen, 1996); Rollason, L., *The Thorney Liber Vitae (London, British Library, Additional MS 40,000, fols 1-12r): Edition, Facsimile and Study* (London, 2015); Rollason, D., and L. Rollason, *The Durham Liber Vitae* (London, 2007).
[667] Thompson, V., *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 112-113; Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, p. 247.
[668] For example, Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate* cc. 109-110, in *The Augustine Catechism: The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Charity*, transl. B. Harbert (New York, NY, 1999); also in his

sense it reflected problems raised for Christianity by its becoming an institutional religion. While it was still a minor movement facing persecution, writers like Cyprian had imagined an idealised Church of martyrs without sinful members.[669] After the conversion of Constantine, when Christianity became accepted, the problem of sinners within the Church became apparent and individual eschatology had to adapt to the idea that those who had died might not be worthy of immediate entry to Heaven, while perhaps also not deserving eternal damnation.[670] By the late tenth century, that there were such people had become an accepted reality and the authors of the Blickling and Vercelli Books took it for granted that there existed a group of 'not especially good people' (*non valde boni*).[671] Unlike Augustine, the anonymous Anglo-Saxon authors were confident that these people would ultimately be saved through purgation of minor sins in the interim.[672] By the late tenth century theological assumptions had evolved and now included the possibility of purgation in the interim.[673]

Above all, the Blickling and Vercelli authors stress that no merit can be earned post-mortem. Rather all merit must be earned in life and the purging of sins in the interim is dependent entirely on this accrued merit.[674] Intercession could not earn merit, but rather a soul must earn the good deeds done on its behalf prior to death. This is because, as Blickling VIII makes clear, the will of God is ultimately sovereign.[675] Therefore, intercession will not help those whom God does not wish to be saved on account of their merits (or lack of them), and anyone whom God wishes to save will be saved regardless of any intercessory prayers said on their behalf.[676] Intercession eases the sufferings of the dead and can help to speed their escape from torment.[677]

The nature of this torment is not clearly defined. In Blickling and Vercelli, the distinction between purgation and damnation seems to depend on how the soul is affected by punishment. The imprecise language used when discussing the interim suggests, intentionally

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Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum, 3.5.14; It is also worth noting that, while there are grave doubts over whether anyone believed the set of doctrines that Augustine called 'Pelagianism', his writings refuting these ideas, even if fundamentally rhetorical, nevertheless profoundly Latin Christian individual eschatology and the assumptions that early medieval writers about the interim, see Bonner, A., *The Myth of Pelagianism* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 1-28.

669 Brown, P., *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, MAS, 2015), pp. 4-8.

670, *Ibid.*, pp. 87-91.

671 Augustine, *Enchiridion* cc. 109-110.

672 Daley, *Hope*, pp. 137-141.

673 McLaughlin, M., *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 2018) pp. 192-194.

674 Blickling VIII, ll. 75-77, Vercelli IX, ll. 62-65.

675 Blickling VIII, ll. 22-30.

676 *Ibid.*, ll. 74-76, 84-88.

677 Blickling IV, ll. 118-128.

or unintentionally, that the damned and the *non valde boni* are both punished together. For example, this is the implication Blickling IV when the homilist refers to the effect of the Mass to rescue the dead from the power of demons, suggesting that those who will eventually be saved are given over to demons in the interim to suffer punishment.[678] Similarly, a reference in Vercelli IV to a tripartite cosmology with earth sandwiched between Heaven and Hell, leaving little room for other regions, supports the inference that those who were not taken immediately into Heaven were instead taken to Hell.[679] If the two groups experience the same punishments, then there must be something different in the condition of the *non valde boni* which allows them to be purged by punishment while others are not. In this, Blickling and Vercelli appear to presume a distinction between what later theologians would call purgative and punitive punishment.[680] Other writers like Bede and Ælfric also accepted that some punishments were purgative while others were punitive but in their writings they both suggest that the damned and the *non valde boni* experience the interim differently, sometimes is separate regions of an interim afterlife, which sets them apart from Blickling and Vercelli.[681] Given the influential work by Jacques Le Goff which emphasised the emergence of Purgatory as a distinct place, it is easy to get distracted by these references to regions of purgation.[682] What the comments made by the various Blickling and Vercelli homilists suggest, though, is that some Anglo-Saxon writers did not primarily understand Purgatory as a place but as a condition of the soul based on its accrued merit which influenced the effect that punishment had on the soul. A standardised terminology to describe this condition had not yet developed and as a result references to purgation could sometimes be expressed in terms that seem to anticipate descriptions of Purgatory. Elsewhere, though, in Blickling and Vercelli the authors emphasise purgation primarily as the effect of punishment on souls with enough merit. This focus on merit is in keeping with the emphasis in both books on penance, both in a pastoral context when addressed to the laity and in the personal context of *lectio divina*. These authors do not discuss the functioning of purgation in the interim because to them the fact that purgation is possible is of greater importance than the details of how it happens. In this they seem to address the same concerns expressed by Caesarius when discussing post-mortem purgation, that it could

[678] *Ibid.*, ll. 135-139.
[679] Vercelli IV, ll. 72-77.
[680] For example, see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Supplement, Appendix II*, Art. 2.
[681] Bede, *HE*, V.12, Ælfric, *CH*, II.21, *Ibid*., 'In octavis', ll. 177-267; Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 207-208.
[682] Le Goff, J., *The Birth of Purgatory*, transl. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, 1984), pp. 154-176; Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth*, pp. 203-206.

make the laity feel complacent.[683] By emphasising the importance of merit, the authors present purgation in a manner which highlights the value of virtuous living.

Individual eschatology touches on various aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture making it a somewhat daunting topic to discuss. The Blickling and Vercelli Books, when seen as part of this culture, show that writers in later Anglo-Saxon England shared a broadly consistent set of beliefs about individual eschatology. Richard Sowerby is correct when he says that the Anglo-Saxons did not offer a comprehensive map of the interim, but certain points like the involvement of angels and demons, the continued bond of the dead with the living, and the possibility of post-mortem purgation characterised thinking about death and the afterlife in this period.[684] Blickling and Vercelli offer insight into this individual eschatology and help tie together disparate practices and references associated with it. These beliefs appear to have been broadly espoused, with only Ælfric, yet again, espousing ideas that significantly differ from the apparently norm.

General Eschatology

While the preparation for death was a major concern for the Blickling and Vercelli authors, they devoted significantly more time to discussing general eschatology and the impending end of the world.[685] The core of biblical and patristic eschatology is the belief that the eschatological kingdom of God inaugurated by the Second Coming is the event which gives history its meaning and provides humanity with its ultimate purpose.[686] This is a view accepted by the authors of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. The elements of general eschatology that the anonymous authors discuss in most detail are omens and millenarianism, the conflagration at the end of time, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgement itself. The views expressed on these topics are for the most part thoroughly orthodox. There is one case, Vercelli XV, where an anonymous author presents views which are theologically problematic. However, Vercelli XV is the exception rather than the rule and most pieces in the Blickling and Vercelli Books express thoroughly orthodox views. It is significant how similar the ideas about general eschatology espoused by most of the anonymous authors are when compared to those of other authors like Bede, Ælfric and Wulfstan. Blickling and Vercelli show the range of eschatological

[683] Moreira, I., *Heaven's Purge: Purgatory in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 83-85.
[684] Sowerby, *Angels*, pp. 124-125.
[685] Cubitt, 'Apocalyptic and Eschatological Thought', pp. 36-38.
[686] Daley, *Hope*, pp. 219-221.

ideas which circulated in late tenth-century England while also suggesting that ideas like those promoted as orthodox by later writers were nevertheless also dominant among the non-reformed.

The Blickling and Vercelli authors believed in omens and signs of the apocalypse, as was normal among contemporaries. In several of the homilies dealing with the Last Judgement, the authors allude to the 'Little Apocalypse' discourses (Matthew, 24. 4-25. 46; Mark, 13. 5-37; Luke, 21. 18-36) in which Christ referred to various events such as wars, famines, and plagues which would herald the onset of the last days.[687] Despite the comment in the same discourse that none could know the day or the hour of the Second Coming, this did not stop Christians from attempting to discern the impending apocalypse in contemporary or historical events. While millenarianism had long been used to refer to the belief in an earthly rule by Christ for one thousand years after the Last Judgement, in the late tenth century millenarianism takes on a new but related significance as the belief that the Second Coming would occur around the year c.1000 and that therefore contemporary events had eschatological significance.[688] Ælfric drew on the works of Augustine and Bede to preach explicitly against this kind of millenarianism, while Wulfstan served as a mouthpiece for millenarian thinking by explicitly citing contemporary calamities as signs of the imminent rise of Antichrist.[689] Blickling and Vercelli reflect a middle ground between these two positions. While they speak frequently about omens, on only one occasion does any of their authors ascribe special significance to the year 1000 and none of them explicitly identifies contemporary events as omens of doom. They do urge watchfulness, which indicates apocalyptic expectations, and imply that the world is in an inexorable state of decline, but the diversity of views found in the books indicates that in later Anglo-Saxon England there existed several varieties and degrees of millenarianism rather than a simple for-or-against dichotomy.

The most famous millenarian comment in the Blickling and Vercelli Books, which is found in Blickling XI, is also the least representative:

> 'This world must needs end in this age which is now present, because five [of the signs of Apocalypse] are passed in this age. Then this world must end and

[687] For example, Blickling VII and X, and Vercelli XV.
[688] Cubitt, 'Apocalyptic and Eschatological Thought', pp. 27-35; Palmer, J. T., *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 189-226.
[689] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-50.

> [of] this the greatest part is passed even nine-hundred and seventy-one years in this year'.[690]

Besides offering a *terminus ante quem* for the book, this comment also says something of how the author thought about the End Times. Just prior to this, the homilist discusses the statement that only the Father knows the day and the hour of the Second Coming and, because of this, the homilist asserts that no one, not even the holiest saint or the highest angel, knows when the end will come. But s/he says it will be soon since all signs that Christ mentioned in the Little Apocalypse have passed except for the coming of the Antichrist.[691] Blickling XI is not representative of the views on this topic expressed in the other Blickling homilies. All other discussions of when the Second Coming will occur are ambiguous and refrain from saying much more besides claiming that it is imminent, a claim that all Christian writers made. For example, Blickling VII teaches that the Second Coming will occur at Easter and that it will be preceded by a week of extraordinary signs.[692] Beyond linking the event to a particular feast, the author refrains from making any further claims about when it will occur. Similarly, Vercelli XV, a homily that draws its list of omens from the same apocryphal *Apocalypse of Thomas* as Blickling VII, does not give a specific date for the Second Coming. The homily begins by claiming that its subject is 'when Antichrist will come' (*hwænne Antecristes cyme wære*) but it does not specify an answer beyond offering a distinctly vague and generalised description of social immorality and corruption preceding the coming of Antichrist.[693] Charles Wright has suggested that the homily offers an implicit attack on present events and thus it can be seen as encouraging belief in their eschatological significance.[694] However, Donald Scragg casts doubt on this reading by noting that the bulk of the homily is slavishly translated from the Latin, which would seem to militate against the idea that the author wrote with specific contemporary events in mind.[695] Besides this, the phrasing of the homily seems to indicate that the events it describes are still in the future rather than happening contemporarily but, even if the homilist intended to comment on the present, there is nothing unusual about claims that the world was in its final days. Despite their differing views on millenarianism, all three of these homilies

[690] Blickling XI, ll. 41-43: 'Þes middan[geard] nede on ðas eldo endian sceal þe nu andweard is; forþon fife syndon agangen on þisse eldo. Þonne sceal þes middangeard endian 7 þisse is þonne se mæsta dæl agangen efne nigon hun wintra 7 lxxi. on thys[se] geare'.
[691] Blickling XI, ll. 30-34.
[692] Blickling VII, ll. 1-7.
[693] Vercelli XV, ll. 2-3.
[694] Wright, C., 'Vercelli Homily XV and The Apocalypse of Thomas', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. by S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 172-179.
[695] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, p. 252.

agree that the end will come soon and that the world is in a state of apocalyptic decline, even if the events occurring in this decline are not themselves fulfilment of Biblical prophecy.

It is possible that the comparatively relaxed attitude to the millennium found in some Blickling and Vercelli homilies is a product of when the pieces were written. Donald Scragg has demonstrated that at least one of the Vercelli homilies existed in some form in late ninth-century Northumbria.[696] Similarly, at least one of the poems in the book, *The Dream of the Rood*, seems to have existed in some version before the Vercelli Book was created since a similar text appears in runes on the Ruthwell Cross.[697] Given that both Blickling and Vercelli are compilations of pieces by many authors, it is highly likely that more of their contents than these known examples predate the books themselves. It is not unreasonable to think that the attitudes of their authors to the millennium may reflect this. However, even if the pieces predate the books significantly, they were still copied in the last quarter of the tenth century by scribes who apparently saw no need to update them so as to reflect pressing millenarian fears. Even Blickling XI itself shows that proximity to the millennium did not necessarily result in overwhelming anxiety. While the dates of individual texts within the books are likely to remain uncertain, it is clear that they were seen as acceptable for devotional reading and even preaching in a late tenth-century context. This means that their views on millenarianism must have still been accepted by some, even if others were beginning to express concerns.

The tone of these homilies stands in contrast to that found in both the works of Wulfstan and Ælfric. The homilies of Wulfstan are suffused with eschatological anxiety. Again and again in his homilies Wulfstan presents the chaos and immorality visible all around him as confirmation of the looming apocalypse.[698] He does not link the apocalypse to the millennium, however, probably because many of his homilies were written after the year 1000. However, this did not blunt his anxiety which seems to have become more intense as time passed.[699] His eschatological concerns also affected the Anglo-Saxon state through his authorship of various law-codes all of which are deeply concerned with penance.[700] Ælfric, in contrast, followed in the footsteps of Augustine and Bede in condemning millenarianism.[701] While he accepted that

[696] Scragg, D., 'A ninth-century Old English homily from Northumbria', *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016), 39-49.
[697] Ó Carragáin, É., 'How did the Vercelli Collector interpret *The Dream of the Rood?*', in *Studies in English Language and Early Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen,* ed. P. Tilling (Coleraine, 1981), pp. 63-104.
[698] Wulfstan, *De Temporibus Antichristi*, ll. 193-194, in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS, Hatton 113, f. 56v, accessed 24.06.2020; Cubitt, 'Apocalyptic and Eschatological Thought', pp. 46-50.
[699] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.
[700] Palmer, *Apocalypse*, pp. 211-214.
[701] Augustine, *De Civitas Dei*, Book 20 in Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and transl. H. Bettenson (London, 1972); Bede, *De Temporibus Rationae*, c. 67, in Bede, *The Reckoning of Time*, ed. and transl. F. Wallis (Liverpool, 2004); Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, pp. 78-81, 105-116.

the world was in terminal decline, he also was keen to stress that the precise time of the Second Coming is unknowable. For example, he repeated Bede's claim that eclipses and comets are natural phenomena and should not be treated as omens.[702] Ælfric and Wulfstan struck two different tones, one of anxiety and the other of (relative) calm. The Blickling and Vercelli Books do not align fully with either of these later writers. Instead they present views that reflect elements of both. They all espouse apocalypticism, even millenarianism in the case of Blickling XI, but beyond this their perspectives vary quite widely, especially about omens and the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. In this, they are probably more representative of general opinion in the late tenth century than either Ælfric or Wulfstan.

Besides discussion of when the Second Coming will occur, the texts in Blickling and Vercelli also contain many descriptions of the Last Judgement itself. From these descriptions three areas of notable theological diversity stand out: the purpose of the fire of the Second Coming, the purpose of the resurrection of the dead, and issues raised by the highly unusual account given in Vercelli XV. The ways that different authors approach these themes vary widely, not only compared to other writers, but also compared to other texts within the books themselves. Beginning with the fire, it is usual for the authors to assert that all of creation will be consumed in a great inferno at the moment of the Second Coming of Christ.[703] This blaze burns away sins. Vercelli II comments that the fire will 'burn up this blood-stained world' and destroy all worldly possessions making them useless at the Last Judgement.[704] The sins and impurities of the world will thus be destroyed. Similarly, Cynewulf, at the end of *Elene*, compares the fire to a furnace in which gold is purged of its impurities.[705] These comments are similar to others made by Bede and Ælfric about the fire of the Last Judgement. For Bede the fire is necessary to burn away sin and allow for the world to be remade new, sinless, and eternal.[706] Ælfric similarly identifies the purificatory purpose of the fire claiming that it will test and cleanse those who were still alive at the Second Coming, thus compensating for their lack of interim purgation.[707] It is possible that Blickling and Vercelli accepted something similar.

There is one piece, though, which suggests that the fire will replace interim purgation. This is the claim made by Cynewulf in *Elene* when he claimed that all people will be cast into

[702] Ælfric, I.40, ll. 525-526.
[703] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 251-253; also see Blickling VII, Vercelli II, XV, and *Elene*.
[704] Vercelli II, l. 3: 'forbærnaþ þæne blodgemengdan [middan]geard'.
[705] *Elene*, l. 1309.
[706] Bede, *De Temporibus Rationae*, c. 70.
[707] Ælfric, II.50, ll. 242-245, 269-272.

the fire and divided into three groups. The topmost group, the righteous, will find the fire pleasant and gaze on God lovingly. The second group will be tormented by it, but only so that they are purged of minor sins and, once this is done, they too will join the righteous in Heavenly bliss. The third group, in the heart of the fire, will be burned and tormented for eternity on account of their sins and will be forever forgotten by God and the saints.[708] The description of the Last Judgement offered by Cynewulf is strikingly similar to that given by Bede in *De Temporibus Rationae*. While Bede is there reluctant to speculate too much on how judgement will occur, his discussion of features like the great fire and its purging effect bears more than a passing resemblance to the description in *Elene*.[709] So, for example, Bede says that the saved will be lifted into the air to meet Christ, while the damned will stay on earth amid the flames. He also speculates, citing Augustine and Gregory, that some minor sins will be purged in the fire. The idea of a third group placed between the saved and the damned seems to be unique to Cynewulf, but it is striking to see how similar these two descriptions of the Last Judgement are and it seems probable that Cynewulf used Bede as a source. The other references to fire in Blickling and Vercelli are less indebted to Bede. Where Bede and Cynewulf suggest that the fire plays some role in the judgement itself, the other writers more closely echo the suggestion of Ælfric that the fire is the prelude to the proper judgement that kills the living and cleanses their minor sins.[710]

Following the great conflagration, the dead will be raised and called to judgement. The resurrection of the dead had long been a generally accepted element of Christian general eschatology by the late tenth century.[711] However, views on the precise nature of the resurrection varied quite substantially, especially among Greek-speaking theologians influenced by Origen of Alexandria.[712] These writers rejected the 'vulgar' belief that the resurrection would be physical and emphasised the spiritual element of the raised body and its essentially alien nature compared to the present body.[713] In the West, these Greek controversies were largely unknown and the Augustinian understanding of the resurrection, which retained the emphasis on its physicality, dominated Latin eschatology.[714] Yet this eschatology was not always copied into the vernacular. The Vercelli Book demonstrates that even though views approximating those of Augustine were the most common, alternative perspectives which

[708] *Elene*, ll. 1277-1321.
[709] Bede, *De Temporibus Rationae*, c. 70.
[710] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 251-253; Vercelli II, ll. 2-5; Blickling, VII, ll. 174-176.
[711] Daley, *Hope*, pp. 219-22.
[712] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91, 195-196.
[713] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
[714] Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 253-256.

downplayed the physicality of the resurrection or added other caveats to it also circulated. The sources for these alternative views are not clear. Even among authors who followed the standard emphasis on the physical resurrection, there is a clear difference in how they understood the purpose of the event. Where writers like Bede and Ælfric taught that the resurrection was necessary for the full experience of eternity, Blickling and Vercelli instead emphasise the role of the raised body as a means of judgement with little to no discussion of its eternal fate. In this, their treatment of the resurrection echoes the focus on the lordship of the body over the soul in *Soul and Body I*, which Allen Frantzen saw as an allusion to penance through self-mortification.[715] The treatment of the resurrection in most texts in the Blickling and Vercelli Books share the penitential physicality of the *Soul and Body I* poet.

Throughout Blickling and Vercelli whenever the body is discussed in an eschatological context it is always presented as something meant to expose the virtues or vices of the person before God. This is the meaning behind the two most detailed discussions of the resurrected body in Blickling and Vercelli. The first, in Blickling X, claims that:

> 'The dead will stand up, [and] the body is then as clear as glass, [so that] none of its sins may be at all concealed'.[716]

The raised body, which is rendered incapable of concealment, becomes evidence at the cosmic tribunal. A much more detailed description of the role of the body as evidence is found in Vercelli IV, where the body serves as the definitive piece of evidence in the tribunal before God to test the veracity of the testimony of the soul. Of the righteous body the author records:

> 'Then the body broke into various complexions. First, he is in the appearance of a lowly man, then next in the appearance of the most beautiful man, so next he [has] the beauty of plants, lilies and roses, and then onwards so that he has [the] appearances like gold and silver and also [of] precious gems and stones, and next he glitters like stars, and like moonlight, and shines like [the] sun when it is shining brightest. Then next spoke the voice of the merciful judge: "In the appearance of this body one can see that it is like that [which] the soul imputes to him"'.[717]

[715] Frantzen, A., 'The Body in "Soul and Body I"', *The Chaucer Review* 17 (1982), 77-83.
[716] Blickling X, ll. 58-59: 'þa deadan upstandaþ, biþ þonne se flæschoma ascyred swa glæs, ne mæg ðæs unrihtes beon awiht bedigled'.
[717] Vercelli IV, ll. 155-164: Þon*ne* bryt se lichoma on manigfeadlu*m* bleon; ærest he bið on medmicles mannes hiwe, þon*ne* æt nehstan on þa*m* fægerestan manes hiwe, swa æt nehstan þ*æt* he þara wyrta fægernesse, lilian 7 rosan, 7 þon*ne* swa forð þ*æt* he hæfð gelic hiw golde 7 seolfre 7 swa þam deorwyrðesta[n] gymcynne 7 eorcnanstanu*m*; 7 æt nehstan þæt he glitenað swa steorra, 7 lyht swa mone, 7 beorhtaþ swa sunna þon*ne* hio

The forms taken by the body attest to the quality of its life and confirms the speech given by the soul before this scene in which she praises the body for its temperance and virtue. This contrasts with the sinful body described later in the homily:

> 'Then that dead flesh stands confused, and cannot give answer to his spirit, and [he] sweats a very disgusting sweat, and [it] falls form him in unlovely drops, and [he] breaks into many appearances. Now he is like a very loathsome man, then he becomes dark coloured, sometimes he is lurid and pallid, other times he is dark as coal'.[718]

In these three cases, the body acts as a tool in the judgement. All three espouse the idea that the virtues or vices of a person are reflected in their bodies; certainly this is the case with Vercelli IV.[719] This seems to link the treatment of the resurrection in the books to the same kind of penitential physicality that Frantzen identified in *Soul and Body I*. While none of the Blickling or Vercelli authors suggest that judgement is the only reason for the resurrection, they place emphasis on the implications of the resurrection for the living and use it as a means to promote penance, in a similar way to the use of physical decay in *Soul and Body I*.

This contrasts with the emphasis of writers like Bede and Ælfric, both of whom stress that the dead are raised so that the newly immortal body may be joined with the soul to intensify eternal enjoyment or suffering. Both note that the saints earnestly wish for Doomsday to come so that they may experience the joys of Heaven even more perfectly than they already do.[720] Moreover Bede asserts that the newly raised body shares its nature with the newly remade creation following the great fire: the new creation is cleansed of sin and is now immortal, so too the raised body is now immortal so that it can now stand in the presence of God without fear of death.[721] Both writers, following the example of Augustine, are aware that this emphasis on the body raises problems for those who are deformed or crippled or who died unborn. In response to this (and also following Augustine), they assert that the resurrected bodies will be made in their ideal form without blemish even if the person never had such a body in life.[722]

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biorhtust bið scinende. Þon*ne* æt nyhstan cwyð þæs mildan deman stefn: "On þyses lichoman hiwe man mæg gesion þæt hit is gelic þe sio sawl him on stælð."

[718] Vercelli IV, ll. 288-292: þon*ne* stent ðæt deade flæsc aswornod, 7 ne mæg *and*wyrde syllan þam his gaste, 7 swæt swiðe laðlicum swate, 7 him feallað on unfægere dropan, 7 bryt on manig hiw. Hwilu*m* he bið swiðe laðlicu*m* men gelic, þon*ne* wannað he 7 doxaþ; oðre hwile he bið blæc 7 æhiwe; hwilu*m* he bið collsweart.

[719] Hall, T., 'The Psychedelic Transmogrification of the Soul in Vercelli Homily IV', in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse*, ed. G. Jaritz and G. Moreno-Riaño (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 315-316.

[720] Ælfric, 'In octavis', ll. 217-267; Bede, *De Temporibus Rationae*, c. 70.

[721] *Ibid.*, cc. 69-70.

[722] *Ibid.*, c. 70; Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 253-256.

The emphasis of both writers is that the raised body will exist eternally in the new creation. Blickling and Vercelli, on the other hand, do not frame the resurrection of the dead explicitly in these terms, and instead they emphasise the penitential associations of the resurrection by highlighting the physicality of sin and its effect on the body.

Behind all authors' treatment of the resurrection lies the belief that deeds performed in life directly correlate to the outcome of the Last Judgement. Associated with this is the belief that the Last Judgement is final and that after judgement has been pronounced no further intercession is possible. All but one homily in the Blickling and Vercelli Books affirm this belief. The one which deviates from this, Vercelli XV, is part of a small group of texts which draw on an unusual motif concerning post-Judgement saintly intercession. Ælfric was aware of this motif and roundly condemned it for suggesting that the sinful could rely on saintly mercy rather than repenting in life.[723] While none of the other texts in Blickling or Vercelli acknowledges this motif, it is undeniable that it is incompatible with the penitential emphasis of much of their discourse around the Last Judgement. It is worth dwelling on Vercelli XV and related texts since they offer a unique example of significant theological deviation in late tenth-century England.

Following long-established tradition, most authors in the Blickling and Vercelli Books assert that the Last Judgement is final and not open to influence by intercession. Some writers, like the author of Blickling VII, stated this explicitly by asserting that 'God Himself will then take no heed of any man's repentance, nor will there be any intercession there'.[724] Other writers promoted this view in more implicit ways, for example, the author of *The Dream of the Rood* when s/he claims that God has a unique prerogative to judge humanity and that he alone will pronounce a just judgement.[725] Yet Vercelli XV directly contradicts this. In its concluding section the homily takes up the fates of the judged post-Judgement. The author presents a scene in which Mary, Michael, and Peter see the mass of the damned and one by one beg Christ to give them each a third of the damned who are thus allowed to enter heaven.[726] Christ relents each time and allows a portion of the damned to be saved despite having already been condemned by Christ in judgement. This intercession after the judgement is heterodox and stands in contrast to the views found elsewhere in Blickling and Vercelli. Since the book is

[723] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, pp. 249-252; Clayton, M., 'Delivering the Damned: A Motif in OE Homiletic Prose', *Medium Ævum* 55 (1986), 92-96.
[724] Blickling VII, ll. 236-237: 'God sylfa þonne ne gymeþ nænges mannes hreowe, ne þær nænige þingunga ne beoþ'.
[725] *Dream of the Rood*, ll. 107-109.
[726] Vercelli XV, ll. 141-171.

missing a folio immediately prior to the description of the intercession of Mary, the problematic scenes are lacking context.[727] It is possible that the author contextualised the intercession of the saints by using it to encourage devotion to the cult of saints, but this is speculative. There are two other Old English homilies which contain similar scenes: Assman XIV and a text found in both CCCC 41 and CCCC 303.[728] These texts must all be related given the common material they share. However, as Mary Clayton has demonstrated, none of them seems to be directly related to each other on account of substantial differences between them.[729] Clayton suggests that this motif was adapted from the *Apocalypse of Mary*, an account of Mary, Michael, and the Apostles interceding with Christ for the damned in Hell following the Assumption of Mary.[730] The authors of these homilies transferred the scene to the Last Judgement and, in doing so, introduce the theological problem of intercession after the condemnation of the sinful.[731] No English authors before Ælfric seem to have been aware of this source and its ideas. In his attack on it, Ælfric observes that the source undermines the call to repentance and religious practices, to which he as a homilist had dedicated his career.[732] It is unjustified though to think that because they did not comment on the ideas expressed in Vercelli XV that the other Vercelli authors agreed with these. On the contrary, the compiler of the book elsewhere encourages repentance and religious practice while also reasserting traditional views about the finality of the Last Judgment and the damnation of sinners. Perhaps the author of Vercelli XV was attracted to the material taken from the *Apocalypse of Thomas* despite the issues of this other material, perhaps they saw in the intercession scene an affirmation of saintly intervention on behalf of humanity, or perhaps they also just did not recognise the issues with the homily. There is no evidence that the other authors of either Blickling or Vercelli accepted or promoted these views. Instead their treatment of the Last Judgement and eschatology all serves their larger aim of promoting penance and religious practice, an aim that would put them in direct conflict with Vercelli XV. In this, they followed the long-established priorities of the English Church which Ælfric also made the cornerstone of his attack on the source of Vercelli XV.

There is one last element of general eschatology worthy of comment, and that is the relationship between the Last Judgement and the performative context of the homilies in the Mass. For the authors of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, the Mass was a type of the

[727] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, p. 249.
[728] *Ibid.*, pp. 249-252.
[729] Clayton, 'Delivering the Damned', pp. 94-96.
[730] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[731] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.
[732] Ælfric, *CH*, II.5, ll. 184-195.

eschatological kingdom. Their thinking on this point was shaped by their faith in the real presence:

> 'Which faithful man is there that has any doubt in his heart, that Heaven is revealed at the voice of the priest and at the time of the Holy Sacrifice (the Eucharist), and that hosts of angels stand by at the mystery of our Lord Saviour Christ, and that the highest is created for these lowly creatures and the heavenly is joined to the earthly'.[733]

This comment in Vercelli XIV is translated directly from the *Dialogues* of Gregory and this highlights the importance of Gregorian interpretations of liturgy for Anglo-Saxons in the late tenth century.[734] A similar sense of the place of worship as one which blurs the line between Heaven and Earth also informs Bede's *De Templo* where he uses the various allegorical and typological interpretations of the Tabernacle and of the Temple of Solomon to highlight how the buildings prefigure the Church of Christ both on Earth and in Heaven which includes the living, the dead, and the angels and unites all these groups in worship.[735] The author of Vercelli XIV refers to this same sense of the Church as a transcendent place during liturgy when s/he speaks of heaven and earth intersecting at the Mass. This sense of commingling also feeds into the ecclesiology of the books. When they discuss the nature of the Church, Blickling and Vercelli tend not to use the traditional images of the Church as the body of Christ or of Mary as a figure of the Church. Instead, they chiefly understood the Church as the restoration of peace between humanity and the citizens of Heaven which will be fulfilled at the Last Judgement.[736] Thus the comment in Vercelli XIV that the priest is surrounded by angels when serving at the altar and that his voice echoes those of the angels has eschatological significance as it puts the priest and, by extension, the congregation, into the heavenly kingdom alongside the angels and saints when they attend the Mass. This makes the Mass into a foretaste of Heaven and just as the sinful are excluded from heaven after death and at the Last Judgement, so too only those who have been cleansed of sin through confession and penance should receive communion. This view of the Mass, especially the close association between the clergy and angels, is not unique to the Blickling and Vercelli Books. Julia Barrow and Richard Sowerby

[733] Vercelli XIV, ll. 80-85: 'Hwylc geleaffullra manna is þæt þæs ænigne tweon an his mode hæbbe, þæt heofon ontyned sie to ðære stemne þæs saceerdes on þa tid þære halgan onsægdnesse, 7 þ*æ*tte ðær engla þreatas ætstodon on ðam geryne usses dryhtnes hælendes Cristes, 7 þæt ða hiehstan bioð to þyssum niðerlicum gesceapene 7 þa heofenlican to þyssum eorðlicum geþeodde'.
[734] Hoping, *My Body*, pp. 119-120, Gregory, *Dialogues* IV.58.
[735] Bede, *De Templo*, I.1, in *On the Temple* transl. S. Connolly (Liverpool. 1995), pp. 5-6.
[736] Sowerby, *Angels*, pp. 28-34; Grundy, *Books and Grace*, pp. 88-93.

have both noted that it was essential to the ideology espoused by Æthelwold when he reformed the New Minster at Winchester. Particularly in the refoundation charter, it was claimed that the monks introduced by Æthelwold represented angelic purity and obedience in contrast to the demonic dirt and disobedience of the cathedral canons.[737] This has a clear rhetorical effect, but the comments of the Blickling and Vercelli Books suggest that it was not just rhetorical. Rather, Æthelwold was adapting an older interpretation of the liturgy to his specific form of reforming Benedictinism. His chief innovation was to link the angelic quality of those engaged in the performance of liturgy to their lifestyles and consequently he concluded that only monastic communities could properly mimic the obedience of the angels alongside whom they celebrated the daily round of liturgy. Neither Blickling nor Vercelli express a similarly demanding view. The command for priests to purify themselves before the Mass through fasting and abstinence enabled them to celebrate Mass regardless of their lifestyle.[738] Despite this difference, however, all these writers accept the ultimately eschatological importance of liturgy and concourse between Heaven and Earth in anticipation of the Last Judgment.

The general eschatology of the Blickling and Vercelli Books, when viewed within their context, is more complex than their beliefs about individual eschatology. Most pieces in the books espouse theology similar to that of other Anglo-Saxon writers. The heterodoxy of Vercelli XV stands out when compared to the other pieces in the books since it is not representative of the views expressed by any other authors in the books. Consequently, while such beliefs were problematic from the standpoint of the self-proclaimed orthodoxy of someone like Ælfric, they were also problematic within the context of the Blickling and Vercelli Books themselves. Vercelli XV undermines the frequent claim that the Last Judgement is final and that it therefore must be prepared for with penance. The reasons for such peculiarities are not clear. They may be poetic licence, unintentional, or they may reflect genuinely divergent views. However, most of the other pieces in the books espouse ideas which, while they differ in emphasis, were informed by common principles that remained consistent within Anglo-Saxon eschatology. Thus the belief in the angelic destiny of humanity, the eschatological importance of the Mass, a belief in but also wariness of omens and millenarianism, emphasis on purging fire and resurrection as well as the finality of the Last

[737] Barrow, J., 'The Ideology of the Tenth-Century 'Reform'', in *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter*, ed. P. Skinner (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 150-153; see also Johnson, D., F., 'The Fall of Lucifer in Genesis A and Two Anglo-Latin Royal Charters', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 97 (1998), 500-21; Sowerby, *Angels*, pp. 34-38; 'King Edgar's Privilege for New Minster, Winchester', in *Councils and Synods*, No. 31, pp. 121-133.
[738] Vercelli XIV, ll. 86-89.

Judgement are all commonly expressed throughout both Blickling and Vercelli just as they form the bed-rock of general eschatology elsewhere. Therefore, regardless of the reason for their unusual comments, the general eschatology of the Blickling and Vercelli Books shows that a diversity of views could exist while nevertheless mostly adhering to common theological principles.

Conclusions

The eschatology of the Blickling and Vercelli Books is at its core concerned with justifying and encouraging religious practice. This can be seen in the emphases given to eschatological topics by the authors. The resurrection of the dead is a good example since, by emphasising the role of the body as a means of judgement, the authors linked general eschatology to the role of self-mortification in penances while highlighting how important such practices are to the fate of an individual. Similarly, their discussion of post-mortem purgation and the requirements to receive purgative punishment also incentivise participation in the penitential system. Their emphasis on intercession also helped to maintain the need for Masses and liturgical commemoration. Despite their many different authors, Blickling and Vercelli present strikingly consistent eschatological ideas. They also highlight the extent to which these ideas were shared with later writers. This thread of continuity can be traced back to the patristic inheritance and its understanding of eschatological hope, especially as filtered through the works of Augustine, Gregory, and Caesarius. Blickling and Vercelli received this inheritance and adapted its concepts to suit their aims, just as did writers like Bede, Ælfric, and Wulfstan. While the details of their eschatology could vary, they remained rooted in common beliefs about the fate of the soul and the course of salvation history.

However, Blickling and Vercelli also highlight the diversity of views that existed in late tenth-century England. While some authors, such as that responsible for Vercelli XV, express unusual ideas, most anonymous authors expressed ideas consistent with the prevailing attitudes found elsewhere. That these ideas shaped the habits of the religious and laity finds corroboration in wills and in burials. The real question, though, is how these aberrations should be treated. In the past they have been used as examples of the theological peculiarities of the books. When seen in the context of the books themselves, their peculiarities seem even more unusual since so much of what the books say is typical of early medieval eschatology, even if the terms in which they say it are distinctive. It is difficult to say what significance pieces like Vercelli XV have or why they were included in the Vercelli Book when introduce problematic

elements into the theology of the book. It is clear though that they are not representative of the eschatology of either book and should be seen as exceptions rather than as examples of the theology that the authors or compilers meant to promote. In fact, in their essentials these pieces contradict this theology and consequently also detract from the sense of pastoral exhortation that dominates all other eschatological texts in the books.

Conclusion

Non-reformed ideas in the late tenth century were not as different from reformed ideas as reforming rhetoric would suggest. Scholars have not always recognised this, largely due to the dominance of reformist views in the evidence. The Blickling and Vercelli Books, however, present an opportunity to view the late tenth century from a different perspective and to interpret the period with reference to attitudes other than those found in the rhetoric of Winchester reformers. This new interpretive framework challenges long-held assumptions about the non-reformed and the course of later Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical history.

Both Blickling and Vercelli originated in Southumbria. By considering the dialects used by their authors, along with the more novel approach of plotting their ever expanding influence into the twelfth century, I have shown that Blickling most likely originated in the West Midlands and Vercelli in the south east of England. In neither case is it possible to identify a specific institution with any certainty. Blickling probably did not originate in Worcester but rather in an as yet unidentified church in the West Midlands, while Vercelli was produced in the south east at a community with close ties to Canterbury such as Rochester or possibly even at Canterbury itself. These origins, along with the proposed dates of between 971-1000, place both books in regions of England under the influence of noted reformers, although not reformers following the example of Winchester. Audience is a more complicated issue, especially for the Vercelli Book, but the sense of uncertainty that currently surrounds both books is misleading. The Blickling Book most likely was created for an audience gathered at the Mass since, despite claims to the contrary, the history of Latin liturgical practices suggests that preaching at the Mass was commonly expected in late tenth-century England. Vercelli, on account of its mix of many genres, defies easy categorisation. Some prose pieces match the *ad populum* style of the Blickling homilies, others do not seem to be homilies at all, and the poetry could serve as a source for devotion or as an educational tool. The book is the product of a religious house with a decent library. It seems most likely therefore that the book was meant either for the community in general or for a specific member of that community. Given the mix of attitudes in the book, it is impossible to say what kind of community this was. Preaching at the Mass did presumably occur at this community, but some of the more ascetic pieces and the odd prose texts like Vercelli VII and XXIII, which may have been used at the Chapter Office, point to possible monastic or canonical practice. Ultimately, since the book does not offer a defence of any particular religious lifestyle, an attempt to read a particular lifestyle into it

ignores the apparently devotional aims of the compiler. What is clear is that the primary audience for it was probably ecclesiastical in contrast to the mixed audience served by Blickling.

Diversity has been a constant theme throughout my analysis of the Blickling and Vercelli Books. That Blickling and Vercelli present the views of many authors and that these are sometimes contradictory has been recognised for many years.[739] What has not been recognised are the implications of how these different authors contradicted each other and what this means for the value of the books as historical sources. These contradictions go right to the heart of why the term 'secular clergy' is so misleading since some views taken seem neither 'secular' nor 'clerical', although they are possibly canonical. In several instances, authors in the Vercelli Book espouse ascetic ideals of renunciation, abstinence, and moderation and draw on sources derived from the monastic tradition in defence of their ideas. In a book created from the contents of the library of a religious community for the use of community members, these ascetic elements suggest that these people were inspired by the monastic tradition to some extent. Yet other authors, especially in the Blickling Book, espouse a view placing pastoral care and social religion at the heart of their worldview. This diversity was not unique to the Blickling and Vercelli Books, it is also visible in the writings of men like Ælfric and Wulfstan. The vision of reform promoted by Ælfric drew heavily on ideas formulated at Winchester to promote a cloistered base of spiritual purity within the Church which would serve as a point from which religious renewal could spread to the rest of society. Wulfstan, though, emphasised the active engagement of bishops and priests with society and the expansion of their traditional roles in the legal system, roles that Ælfric condemned. Both impulses mirror the divergent perspectives found throughout Blickling and Vercelli. Therefore, this diversity is not unique to Blickling and Vercelli. Rather, diversity of religious thought was common in the late tenth century Church, even among reformers.

Alongside the theme of diversity, my analysis has also highlighted the theme of continuity. This is visible, for example, in attitudes to the duties of the priesthood; in a tendency to see lay religious practices such as prayer, vigils, fasting, and almsgiving as rooted in liturgy; and in many underlying theological assumptions like a Gregorian understanding of salvation which are common both in Blickling and Vercelli and in the work of later authors. Undeniably there are some areas of major disagreement: the Ælfrician attitude to *clænnysse* and his more obvious Augustinianism, are the clearest examples. Sometimes differences were caused by an

[739] Gatch, M., *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 5-6.

author misunderstanding his/her sources or by significant theological heterodoxy, as in the example of Vercelli XV. However, these cases are rare and do not represent the views of the texts in either Blickling or Vercelli as a whole. What these differences should not distract from is the essence of continuity and evolution that links Blickling and Vercelli to the work of other late tenth-century writers. In other words, Blickling and Vercelli reflect a religious culture common to all Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics which absorbed new ideas while also maintaining an element of consistency.

These conclusions change the way that the late tenth-century Church should be understood. While there was some development in theology, the impact of monastic reforms should not be overstated and it certainly did not constitute a 'theological watershed'.[740] While ideas such as *clænnysse* suggest a marked shift in the theology of this period, the shift was neither as profound nor as visible as Gatch suggests. On the one hand, ideas of monastic or pseudo-monastic purity had precursors visible in the Blickling and Vercelli Books; on the other, writers like Wulfstan show some sympathy to the ideas of older texts which were rejected by Ælfric. The view that reform was a watershed moment in the history of Anglo-Saxon theology is to an extent a product of reforming rhetoric, and it obscures the enduring forces of diversity and continuity that emerge when Blickling and Vercelli are allowed to speak for themselves. As a result, rather than a binary view, the religious culture of the period becomes more nuanced. This is best exemplified in the relationship between Ælfric and Wulfstan when seen through this lens. While the two writers agreed on several points, they also disagreed on several issues. In these cases, consistently, Wulfstan expressed views that were closer to those of the Blickling Book. He was a vocal proponent of the involvement of the clergy with the secular justice system, much to the annoyance of Ælfric, and he aligned with Blickling and Vercelli in avoiding predestination in contrast to the vocal Augustinianism of Ælfric. Bearing the points of diversity and continuity in mind, these tendencies do not seem to be simply a reflection of Wulfstan's eccentricity, as some have suggested.[741] Instead, Wulfstan seems to have been a conservative figure who, although he accepted some ideas espoused by the Winchester reformers, aligned with the more pastoral and socially conscious elements of religious thought found in Blickling and Vercelli. This may correlate with the ambiguous relationship Wulfstan had to monasticism. By including Blickling and Vercelli in discussion of the late tenth century, a spectrum of religious thought emerges which helps to distinguish

[740] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[741] Kleist, A, *Striving With Grace: Views of Free Will in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2008), pp. 147-164.

the Winchester-style reform of Ælfric from the more episcopal reform of Wulfstan. Ælfric valued his monastic training and envisioned a situation where a properly educated and sufficiently holy clergy would spread Christian virtue to the laity via preaching. Wulfstan, in contrast, was less concerned with monastic practices and chiefly concerned with the role of the Church in maintaining public morality and social cohesion. To this end he expanded the traditionally close relationship between the episcopacy and the machinery of state to effect largescale reform through legislation. Similarly, distinct perspectives are found in the Blickling and Vercelli Books. The 'social conscience' of the Blickling Book resembles Wulfstan's policy of expanding the traditional social role of the Church, while the more sacerdotal views found in the Vercelli Book resemble the more cloistered vision of Ælfric. This dual diversity and continuity is visible across the period and undermines the sense of it as a watershed. Instead of marking a complete change in direction, the late tenth century saw some ecclesiastics attempt to change English religious life while others were content to continue mostly as they had always done. Crucially neither this plurality nor the ideas voiced by these different groups changed substantially, even if the terms in which they were discussed did change somewhat.

The value of this more nuanced and fluid interpretation of religious self-identity in late tenth-century England is demonstrated by the afterlives of the Blickling and Vercelli homilies. As Chapter One discussed, the Blickling and Vercelli homilies enjoyed a long afterlife as part of the vernacular homiletic corpus, and they continued to be copied into the twelfth century. This undermines the view that writers based at communities influenced by reformist ideas necessarily found something inherently objectionable in them. There is no evidence that they were read and copied at Winchester, the most influential reformed community, but they were used at Worcester and at Canterbury. In both Worcester and Canterbury, homilies from the Blickling and Vercelli books were mixed with those of writers like Ælfric and Wulfstan. This included both copying anonymous material alongside the work of these authors, as in the example of the Canterbury Ælfric tradition, and also the use of anonymous texts to create new composite homilies, as with the pseudo-Wulfstan homilies identified by Napier.[742] Ælfric warned against these practices in the preface to his first homiletic series so that his homilies would remain free of what he saw as error, but this demand was antithetical to how Old English

[742] Sisam, K., 'MSS. Bodley 340 and 342: Ælfric's Catholic Homilies', in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 154-155; Teresi, L., 'Ælfric of Not? The making of a Temporale Collection in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed., A. J. Kleist (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 285-310; Scragg, 'Napier's "Wulfstan" Homily XXX: Its Sources, its Relationship to the Vercelli Book and its Style', *ASE* 6 (1977), Scragg, D., 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives before Ælfric', *ASE* 8 (1979), 225-235.

homilies were viewed and used.[743] Since homilists had long created their texts from formulae learned via example, it was inevitable that the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan would become part of the tradition and thus be used to create new composite texts.[744] That authors did this shows that, while Ælfric saw anonymous material as dangerously lacking in authority, in this as in other things he was a lone voice. Even a man like Sigeric at Canterbury, who corresponded with Ælfric personally and was responsible for the production of so many copies of his homilies, did not object to the inclusion of anonymous material in the earliest versions of the Canterbury Ælfric tradition. Despite the strong influence of Ælfric, older traditions also exerted formidable sway.[745] The afterlives of the Blickling and Vercelli homilies demonstrate that a rigid binary view of ecclesiastical identity in this period is untenable. A view emphasising diversity of opinion and continuity like that proposed here is far more in keeping with the attitudes of all but a few exceptional individuals.

The late tenth century in England was not a theological watershed. Certainly, it was a time that saw the influx of some new ideas, primarily from Carolingian reformed monastic traditions, but which was broadly characterised by diversity and continuity in thought and practice. The prominence of a few exceptional voices has overshadowed those of other sources and set the terms by which these other sources have been examined. This distorts the image of this period by removing much of the nuance to which these sources attest. Blickling and Vercelli, when treated as the examples by which to interpret other sources, highlight new issues and concerns quite different from those emphasised by writers like Ælfric and Wulfstan. This analysis has demonstrated how the concerns of the non-reformed alter the appearance of this much debated period. Monolithic groupings dissolve into different schools of thought on all sides. Monastic revitalisation morphs into a reformulation of long-held attitudes. The triumph of orthodoxy over heterodoxy becomes restatement of generally accepted beliefs. In short, Blickling and Vercelli are key to a fundamental reassessment of the ecclesiastical and intellectual history of this period.

Words: 80793

[743] Teresi, 'Ælfric or Not?', pp. 302-309.
[744] Godden, M., 'Old English composite homilies from Winchester', in *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975), 57; Scragg, D., *Dating and Style in Old English Composite Homilies* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 1; Thompson, N., '*Hit Segð on Halgum Bocum*: The Logic of Composite Old English Homilies', *Philological Quarterly* 81.4 (2002), 383-384.
[745] *Ibid.*, pp. 309-3010; Scragg, D., 'Studies in the language of copyists of the Vercelli Homilies', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, ed. S. Zacher and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2009), pp. 46-47.

Appendix: Tables and Maps

Scholarly Numbering	*Folios*	*Text Title/Incipit*
I	1r-6v	
II	6v-14r	Dominica Prima in Quinquagesima
III	14r-21v	Dominica Prima in Quadra[gesima]
IV	22r-31v	Dominica Tertia in Quadragesima
V	32r-40r	Dominica .V. in Quadragesima
VI	40r-49v	Dominica .VI. in Quadragesima
VII	50r-58v	Dominica Pascha
VIII	59r-63v	
IX	63v-65r	
X	65r-70r	
XI	70v-80v	On Þa Halgan Þunres Dei
XII	80v-84v	Pentecoste - Spiritus Domini
XIII	84v-98v	Sancta Maria Mater Domini
XIV	98v-104r	Sancte Iohannes Baptista Spel
XV	104r-119v	Spel Be Petrus 7 Paulus
XVI	120r-127r	To Sancte Michaheles Mæssan
XVII	127r-135v	To Sancte Martines Mæssan
XVIII	136r-139v	

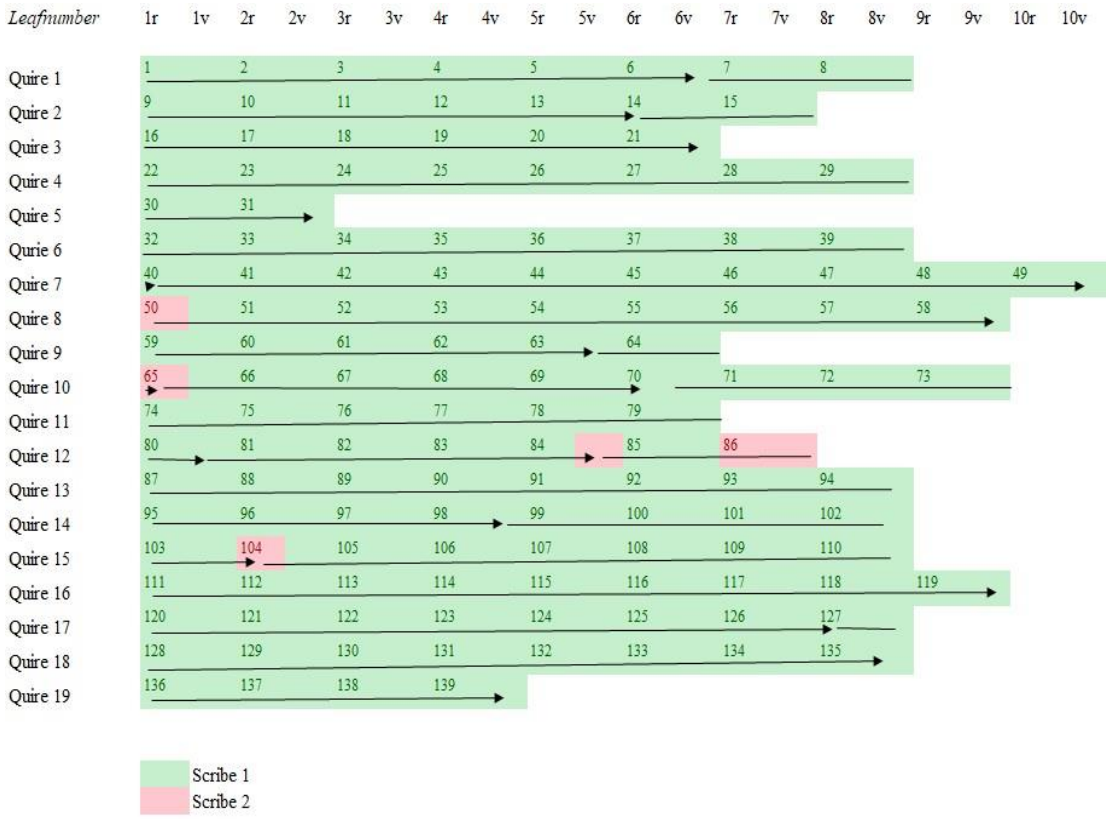

Table 1) Contents and Quiration of the Blickling Book

Scholarly Numbering	*Folios*	*Text Title/Incipit*
I	1r-9r	
II	9v-12r	
III	12v-16r	
IV	16v-24v	
V	25r-29r	TO MIDDAN WINTRA. OSTENDE NOBIS DOMINE
	29v-52v	Andreas
	52v-54r	The Fates of the Apostles
VI	54v-56r	INCIPIT NARRARE MIRACULA QUE FACTA FUERANT ANTE ADUENTUM SALUATORIS
VII	56v-58v	II
VIII	59r-60v	III
IX	61r-65r	IIII
X	65r-71r	V
XI	71v-73v	Spel to forman gangdæge
XII	73v-75v	Spel to oðrum gangdæge
XIII	75v-76v	Spel to þriddan gangdæge
XIV	76v-80v	Larspel to swylcere tide swa man wile
XV	80v-85v	ALIA OMELIA DE DIE IUDICII
XVI	85v-90v	OMELIA EPYFFANIA DOMINI
XVII	90v-94v	DE PURIFICATIONE SANCTE MARIAE
XVIII	94v-101r	DE SANCTO MARTINO CONFESSORE
	101v-103v	Soul and Body 1
	104r-104v	Homiletic Fragment 1
	104v-106r	The Dream of the Rood
XIX	106v-109v	
XX	109v-112r	
XXI	112r-116v	
XXII	116v-120v	
	121r-133v	Elene
XXIII	133v-135v	

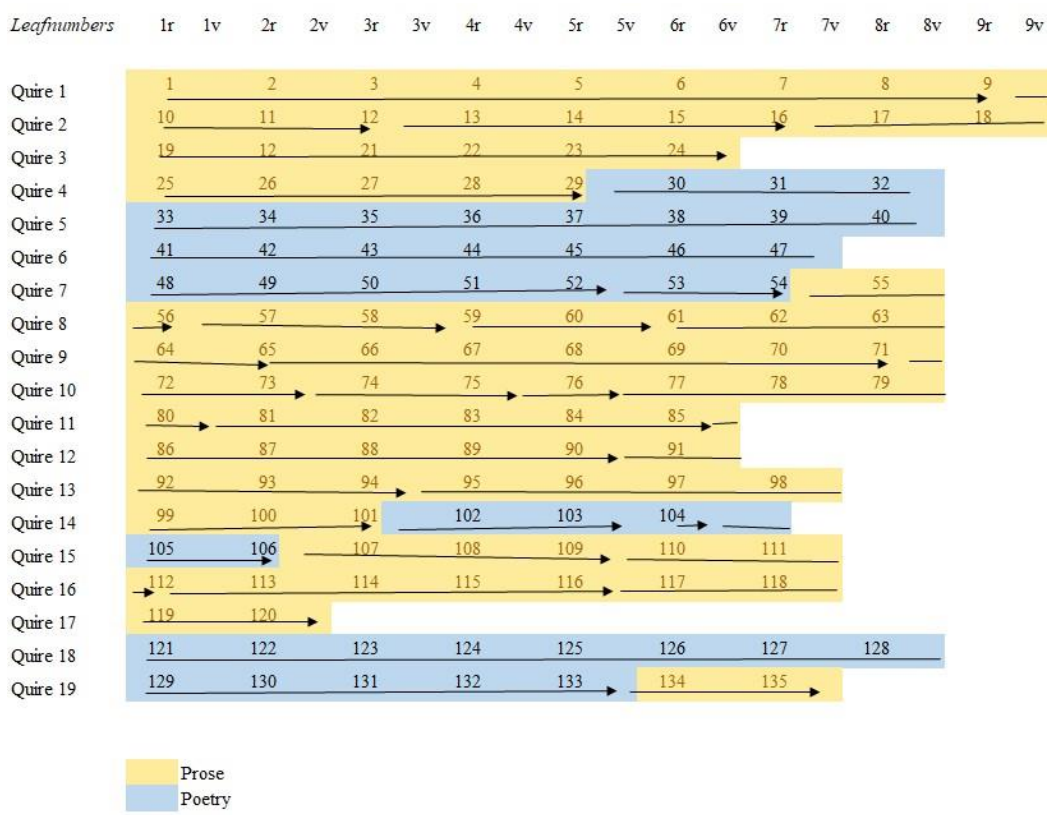

Table 2) Contents and Quiration of the Vercelli Book

	Shelfmark	*Date and Provenance*	*Homilies*
1	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 41	s. xi^1 or xi med., SE England, (prov. Exeter)	Vercelli IV as marginal addition
2	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 162, pp. 1-138, 161-564	s. x ex. or xi in., SE England	Vercelli III, XIX, XX, I
3	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 198	s. xi^1 with additions s. xi^2 in W England, (prov. Worcester)	Vercelli V, VIII, III, I Blickling XIII, X (part.), XIX
4	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 201, pp. 1-178	s. $xi^{3/4}$, Exeter	Vercelli IV
5	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 303	s. xii med, Rochester?	Vercelli I, XIX, XX
6	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 419 + 421	s. xi^1, SE England, (prov. Exeter)	Vercelli II Blickling IX
7	London, British Library, Cotton Faustina A. ix	s. xii^1, SE England	Vercelli X (part.), XV (part.), IX (parallels) x2 Blickling VI (part.), VIII (part.), IX
8	London, Lambeth Palace Library, 489	s. $xi^{3/4}$, Exeter	Vercelli XIX
9	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 + 342	s. xi in., Canterbury or Rochester, (prov. Whole MS, Rochester from s. xi med. or earlier)	Vercelli V, VIII, IX, III, I
10	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343	s. xii^2, W England	Vercelli III (part.), V (part.)
11	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113 + 114	s. xi^2 (1064x1083), Worcester	Vercelli XXI, IX, IV, X (all in Napier XXX), Vercelli II (part.) (in Napier XL and XLII) Blikcling V (part.)
12	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115	s. $xi^{3/4}$ or xi^2, (prov. Worcester)	Vercelli IX (added as booklet)
13	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 + 86	s. xi med., SE England	Blickling IX (Part.), XVII
14	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121	s. $xi^{3/4}$ with additions s. xi^2 and xi ex., Worcester	Blickling VII (part.)

Table 3) Manuscripts Discussed in Chapter One

Figure 1) Origins of the Manuscripts

Figure 2) Provenance of the Manuscripts

Figure 3) Dispersal of Blickling Material

Figure 4) Dispersal of Vercelli Material

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