

Kings and the Loyalty of the Lay Elite in England, 871-1016

Isabelle Paola Beaudoin



Faculty of History

Magdalen College, University of Oxford

A thesis submitted for the degree of D.Phil in History

Hilary Term, 2022

Word count: 124, 985
(word extension approved by the History faculty)

Table of Contents

<i>Short Abstract</i>	5
<i>Long Abstract</i>	6
<i>Figures</i>	11
<i>Maps</i>	12
<i>Tables</i>	13
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	15
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	16
Introduction	19
Conceptual and historiographical frameworks	20
Scope, outline and note on methodology	33
1. Concepts: Imposing Loyalty	39
Introduction	39
The role of ideology	40
The roles of law and oath	57
a. Alfred to Æthelstan.....	61
b. Edmund's oath, lawfulness and loyalty	68
c. Oaths to the king extraneous to legal texts	78
2. Reward: Incentivising Loyalty	91
Introduction	91
a. Methodology	97
b. Notes on the interpretation of the tables	100
Analysis of royal diplomas, 871-1016	103
a. Alfred's ealdormen and thegns	103
b. Edward the Elder	109
c. Æthelstan	118
d. Edmund.....	133
e. Eadred	148
f. Eadwig	164
g. Edgar.....	191
h. Edward the Martyr	218
i. Æthelred.....	222
Conclusions	246
3. Action: Cultivating Loyalty	265
Introduction	265
Discussion of royal policy, 871-1016	267
a. Alfred: Two Old English translations and the creation of a community of interest.....	267
b. Alfred and Edward: <i>isti pro dilectis pugnaturi</i>	282
c. Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred: learning to rule an 'English kingdom'	297
d. Eadwig and Edgar: managing factionalism	330
e. Æthelred: Reframing royal prerogative	351

Conclusions.....	367
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	372
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	378
<i>Appendix.....</i>	412

Short Abstract

At the heart of the late Anglo-Saxon political order lay a single relationship: the bond between the king and the powerful men of the realm. This thesis is concerned with the ways in which that relationship was established, then developed in written sources; centrally it will explore how kings forged such bonds with members of the lay elite. Chapter One argues that there is little evidence for the existence of a contemporary mentality in which kings attempted to use conceptual mechanisms to impose loyalty onto their men, either in legal or religious terms. Chapter Two proposes a new model for the analysis of royal diplomas for this period, wherein the strategic incentivisation of lay loyalty through the granting of bookland is revealed via the joint consideration of factors such as beneficiary status, rank, participation in the *witan* on the one hand, and estate size and location on the other. Chapter Three offers new interpretations of a range of extant royal policies from most reigns of the period in relation to the matter of loyalty, and demonstrates in this way that the surviving evidence for kings' management of their relationships with their lay elites is overwhelmingly characterised by the same overarching principles of constancy, community and active leadership. The thesis concludes that the loyalty of the lay elite in this period could not be taken for granted by kings as a simple corollary of their consecration, but was instead actively cultivated and negotiated. Kings not only offered incentive programmes but created communities of shared interest, devising novel ways in which to define magnates' identities through their loyalty to their king, and integrating those from frontier regions into the political and social fabric of West Saxon kingship.

Long Abstract

At the heart of the late Anglo-Saxon political order lay a single relationship: the bond between the king and the powerful men of the realm. Although its form was refracted through many individual channels, it permeated the upper echelons of society and government as a fundamental principle. For kingship to function in an age lacking means of widespread coercion, the willing participation of the elite was crucial. This thesis concerns itself with a vital aspect of this willing participation: that of the lay elite's active dedication to and furthering of the king's interests. This study proceeds from the position that such behaviour, hereafter referred to as loyalty, would not have been synonymous with what is referred to by historians as 'consensus'. The type of behaviour described by historians such as Levi Roach and Janet Nelson when they discuss 'consent' is usually abstract, but equally seems located specifically in the temporal and physical environs of royal decisions, pronouncements, etc, with its stage being primarily the royal assembly. This would not have been understood as actively supporting and being personally dedicated to the king. The kind of commitment visible from, say, the 'few men' who stuck by Alfred in the Somerset marshes in 878 when none of them could have known he would return to a position in which he could reward them, or who dutifully followed Æthelstan to Northumbria in a northward extension of West-Saxon power unheard of for generations. The thesis argues that the loyalty of the leading men was proactively cultivated and negotiated by most kings, not only by offering them material rewards but by creating communities of shared interest and an atmosphere of trust and predictability at court.

The principle of loyalty is often used by scholars to explain various historical developments in this period, or referred to as a result of these. Examples include Richard Abels, who in his recent article 'Evolving English strategies during the Viking wars' attributed

Alfred's victory at Edington to 'the king's ability to retain the loyalty of his nobility'; in his *Kingship and Consent* Levi Roach attributed the sustained interest in lordship found in Alfredian legislation to the high value placed on loyalty as a result of the Scandinavian threat. Patrick Wormald in his *Making of English Law* argued for the synonymous nature of crime and disloyalty in this period, a position subsequently adopted by many historians, such as George Molyneaux in his *Formation of the English Kingdom*. Æthelred's reign, when discussed by historians such as Frank Stenton, Levi Roach and Barbara Yorke, is often cast in terms of the disloyalty of his nobility. Given its significance it is striking that no study of kings' approaches to loyalty as a concept exists for this period. This thesis is thus at its core an effort to provide a standardised analysis of what evidence survives from the period 871 to 1016 for the strategies that kings employed to the end of achieving the loyalty of their men, and what principles can be seen as characterising these interactions.

The project's methodology is defined by diachronic and thematic comparison, and the consideration of efforts by kings to develop their relationship with their magnates as synonymous with efforts to develop their loyalty. In this way, the analysis gets around the almost total lack of statements defining loyalty in this period, or of associations between a king's action and an intention for that act to affect a man's loyalty, through an integrated analysis of what sources tell us about kings' interactions with these men, the royal policies which might have affected them directly, and how these actions might have been perceived by them, whilst reading this information against the particular historical context and circumstances of the reign. Because of this lack in explicit associations, the question which can be applied to the evidence in practice becomes: where can the objective of the optimisation of the lay elite's commitment to the king be seen within extant evidence, and by implication through what mechanisms and via what principles and strategies was this attempted by kings? The

assumption is that this is the line of questioning which will bring us as close as possible to answering the original question.

Chapter One demonstrates that there is no surviving evidence for the formal administration of a general oath of loyalty by kings onto their followers before that of Edmund in 946. Indeed that a willingness to dip into the ideological and practical power of the law in order to attempt to essentially demand loyalty, evidence of which can only be seen in Edmund's and Æthelred's reigns, might go hand in hand with the heavy influence of churchmen over said legislation (Oda over Edmund's Colyton code, Wulfstan's over Æthelred's codes from V Æthelred on) or, perhaps with real or imagined disaffection amongst the nobility. There was moreover less emphasis in contemporary English sources on domestic oaths of loyalty to the king in comparison with that found in Carolingian sources. Viewed in light of the surviving statements from the period concerning what the king's status actually entitled him to when it came to active (rather than passive) loyalty, this suggests that kings wanted to distance themselves from the idea that they were entitled to the active loyalty of their men on the basis of their status.

This prompts the question of how kings acted to achieve this aim. Chapter Two looks for potential evidence of how kings dispensed rewards in the form of land and office for active service to themselves. When this matter is discussed by historians, the fact that kings granted bookland to laymen throughout the period is taken as representing an equation in contemporary minds between the act of granting land to laymen and the objective of effecting their loyalty – again, across the period. But if one looks more closely at the patterns of land-granting, the straightforwardness of this comes under question. Kings did not grant land to all laymen in the same way. They did so strategically, and thus, if one wants to reference a 'land for loyalty' equation, then it is how kings used the land, the specific ways in which reward was dispensed, that should be referenced. Chapter Two presents a new method of looking at Anglo-Saxon

royal diplomas, showing that the manner in which kings dispensed land to laymen – both in terms of the location and size of the estate – was often commensurate with the kind of service they fulfilled for him, and what capacity and status they held in relation to him and to their fellows. This was true throughout the period. Practically, this means that committed service in positions of particular value to the king (other than that of ealdorman) was probably incentivised via the receipt of larger estates more generally proximate to the royal *iter*, and in the case of the position of royal thegn, this was done throughout one's career. Conceptually, it means that the same prospect of reward was not available to everyone, that this may have been devised in order to make service to the king in certain capacities more attractive. The slow progression of men up the ranks of thegns, and confidence that one would retain his position, were also probably intentionally developed by kings as incentives for loyalty. Promotion to the office of ealdorman could never be guaranteed, but frequently such promises were not offered to the individuals who had previously been leading the lists of thegns, suggesting these appointments were based upon factors other than long service and merit.

Despite the importance of incentive in the relationship between the king and his lay elite, there are enough examples of contexts in which evidence does not survive for the (conventional) granting of land but where commitment to the king continued, or in which evidence survives of revolt or dissent even when particular effort was made to grant land, for us to surmise that kings would have attempted to cement loyalty to themselves in other ways. Chapter Three sought to identify these in extant evidence of kings' ruling strategies and of their management of their elite, and made a case for a range of actions to be considered royal policies intended to effect loyalty in their followers. These were: active leadership of the *fyrd* in war; the manipulation of assembly attendance and its recording in witness lists; strategies of granting land to agents in more distant areas of the kingdom which lacked the king's regular presence; increased attention to itinerancy at the beginning of reigns troubled by factionalism;

and the delayed introduction of one's own support group into the *witan* upon accession in order not to upset the loyalties of established partners and networks.

This thesis concludes by reflecting on late Anglo-Saxon kings' remarkable ability to both manipulate and inspire their leading men. With the notable exception of Æthelred, these kings earned the loyalty of their men through their actions and presence, through behaving in particular capacities and dispensing incentives in particular ways, rather than through reliance upon coercion or ideas of entitlement stemming from either pedigree or divine right. Men in turn were loyal largely because they were constantly reminded that it was in their own interest to do so.

Figures

Figure 1: Decision tree for the categorisation of Anglo-Saxon thegns.....	102
Figure 2: All apparently genuine alliterative charters issued during Eadred’s reign against a timeline of contemporary kings in York.....	318
Figure 3: Snapshots of the witness lists for Edgar’s charters showing discrete groups of thegns.	337
Figure 4: The phased introduction of thegns to Æthelstan’s court from 926 to 932	341
Figure 5: The phased introduction of thegns to Edward the Martyr and Æthelred’s courts.	342
Figure 6: Snapshots of the beginnings of the reigns of Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig as seen through their witness lists	343

Maps

Map 1: Location of Æthelstan's grants to thegns and ealdormen.....	126
Map 2: Location of Edmund's grants to thegns and ealdormen	139
Map 3: Location of Eadred's grants to thegns and ealdormen.....	154
Map 4: Location of Eadwig's grants to thegns and ealdormen.....	173
Map 5: Location of Edgar's grants to thegns and ealdormen	205
Map 6: Location of Æthelred's grants to thegns and ealdormen	233
Map 7: Location of royal grants to thegns and ealdormen in the reigns of kings Edmund to Æthelred.....	248
Map 8: The distribution of royal villis relative to the distribution of estates c.924x1016 granted to royal and non-royal thegns	251
Map 9: Monastic landholdings in the royal heartlands	260
Map 10: Lay landholdings in the royal heartlands.....	260

Tables

Table 1: Alfred's ealdormen and thegns who received land grants	106
Table 2: Edward's ealdormen	110
Table 3: Edward's royal thegns.....	111
Table 4: Edward's non-royal thegns	112
Table 5: Edward's uncertain cases	114
Table 6: Æthelstan's ealdormen.....	119
Table 7: Æthelstan's earls	120
Table 8: Æthelstan's royal thegns	122
Table 9: Æthelstan's non-royal thegns.....	125
Table 10: Æthelstan's uncertain cases	126
Table 11: Edmund's ealdormen	134
Table 12: Edmund's royal thegns.....	138
Table 13: Edmund's non-royal thegns	138
Table 14: Edmund's uncertain cases	139
Table 15: Eadred's ealdormen.....	149
Table 16: Eadred's earls	149
Table 17: Eadred's royal thegns.....	151
Table 18: Eadred's non-royal thegns	153
Table 19: Eadred's uncertain cases	154
Table 20: Eadwig's ealdormen.....	165
Table 21: Eadwig's earls	165
Table 22: Eadwig's royal thegns.....	168
Table 23: Eadwig's non-royal thegns.....	171
Table 24: Eadwig's uncertain cases	172
Table 25: Edgar's ealdormen	192
Table 26: Edgar's earls.....	193
Table 27: Edgar's royal thegns.....	197
Table 28: Edgar's non-royal thegns	201
Table 29: Edgar's uncertain cases	204
Table 30: Edward the Martyr's ealdormen	218
Table 31: Edward the Martyr's thegns.....	220

Table 32: Æthelred's ealdormen	223
Table 33: Æthelred's royal thegns	228
Table 34: Æthelred's non-royal thegns	231
Table 35: Æthelred's uncertain cases.....	233
Table 36: Selection of royal tenth-century thegns and the timespans of their careers.....	235

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank first and foremost my supervisor, Professor Sarah Foot, for having guided me both academically and personally over the last four years. She has always had a tremendous number of other commitments, yet she always somehow finds time for her students, gives helpful and detailed feedback, and is a wealth of knowledge. She also took on quite a pastoral role in my case. The last four years haven't been easy, and I have benefitted greatly from Sarah's wisdom in all aspects of my life. Great thanks is also due to my parents, Roger and Nicole, for supporting me from afar and for being there for me at the drop of a hat throughout several crises, not only in this degree but indeed at all times previously. Crucially however, without the full funding offered me by the Clarendon Scholarship, and the additional scholarships offered to me by Magdalen College and the Fleming Family Scholarship, I would not have been able to study at Oxford. I am deeply grateful to my college and its agents for their support throughout the degree, and of course to MCBC (though without the boat club's influence this thesis would undoubtedly have been finished earlier).

Thank you to my friend Jon Dell Isola who is writing his own thesis at CUA. He provided me with a sounding board for Carolingian matters, and taught me over many hours during lockdown to use the finnick QGIS mapping software. Thanks also to my best friends Lisa and Chris for always being there and for all their moral support. Finally, I wouldn't have made it without the wonderful cohort of medievalist DPhils who started with me in 2017: Alice Raw, Lucia Akard, Scott Moynihan, Helen Flatley and Ian McDole. Thank you for all the medieval feasts, wine and commiseration! May we be reunited again when this is all over.

A wise wizard said 'All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us', and I believe I spent my time in Oxford wisely – but now it is time to move on.

List of Abbreviations

ÆHom. Suppl	<i>Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection</i> , ed. J.C. Pope (London, 1967-8)
ASC	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> – for various editions used see the bibliography
Atlas	Keynes, S., <i>An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c. 670-1066</i> (Cambridge, 2002)
CHI, II	Ælfric of Eynsham, <i>Catholic Homilies: The First Series</i> , ed. P. Clemoes, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford, 1997) <i>Catholic Homilies: The Second Series</i> , ed. M. Godden, EETS s.s. 5 (Oxford, 1979)
DOE	<i>The Dictionary of Old English</i> – University of Toronto Centre for Medieval Studies – accessed online at https://doe.artsci.utoronto.ca/
ECEE	<i>The Early Charters of Eastern England</i> , ed. C.R. Hart (Leicester, 1966)
ECNE	<i>The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands</i> , ed. C.R. Hart (Leicester, 1975)
ECW	<i>The Early Charters of Wessex</i> , ed. H.P.R. Finberg (Leicester, 1964)
EHD	Whitelock, D. (ed.), <i>English Historical Documents c. 500-1042</i> , 2 nd edn (London, 1979)
GR	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta regum Anglorum = The History of the English Kings</i> , ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998-9)
HR	Symeon of Durham, <i>Historia regum</i> , ed. T. Arnold, <i>Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia</i> , 2 vols. (London, 1885)
KL	Keynes, S., and Lapidge, M., <i>Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources</i> (Harmondsworth, 1983)
LV	Keynes, S., <i>The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester</i> , EEMF 26 (Copenhagen, 1996)
MEL	Wormald, P.C., <i>The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Legislation and its Limits</i> (Oxford, 2001)
MEL prep.	Wormald, P.C., <i>Papers Preparatory to the Making of English Law</i> (London, 2014)
MGH Capit.	<i>Capitularia Regum Francorum</i> , ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, MGH Legum sectio II, 2 vols. (Hanover, 1883-97)
MGH Dipl.	Kehr, P., MGH Diplomata Regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum, vols 2 and 3 (Berlin, 1940)
ODNB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> – accessed online at https://www.oxforddnb.com/

- OE Boethius* *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Version of Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. M. Godden and S. Irvine, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009)
- PASE *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* – accessed online at <https://pase.ac.uk/>
- PL *Patrologia Latina* – accessed online at <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>
- Soliloquies* *Soliloquies*, ed. T.A. Carnicelli, *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies* (Cambridge, MA, 1969)
- S [000] Document in the Sawyer catalogue – accessed online at <https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/about/index.html>
- VA* Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, ed. W. H. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred, together with the Annals of St Neots, erroneously ascribed to Asser*, new imp. (Oxford, 1959)
- VÆ* Wulfstan of Winchester, *Vita S Æthelwoldi: The Life of St. Æthelwold*, ed. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991)
- VD* B., *Vita S Dunstani*, ed. M. Winterbottom and M. Lapidge, *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, OMT (Oxford, 2012)
- VO* Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita S Oswaldi*, ed. M. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St Oswald and St Egwine*, OMT (Oxford, 2009)

Introduction

‘He [Eadwig] held the kingdom continuously for four years, and deserved to be loved’.¹

Sometime in the mid-980s, the West-Saxon ealdorman, Æthelweard, wrote these words in his Latin *Chronicon*.² Æthelweard based the majority of his text upon a now-lost version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,³ but he made a number of additions and comments to that text, which may represent his own ideas about the events and people he was describing. Whilst the quoted sentence might seem at first glance quite unexceptional, it is in fact deeply significant. Those by whom Eadwig ‘deserved to be loved’ were, by implication, his subjects, and it is one of the very few times a text from pre-Conquest England roots a reference to anything identifiable as an attitude of dedication from follower to king in causal terms. Æthelweard’s use of the gerundive here (*amandus*) is interesting because it connotes a sense of obligation or necessity to love, which in turn roots the act of loving causally within an aspect of King Eadwig’s kingship, or the man himself. Æthelweard might have meant to imply that it was the fact of Eadwig’s holding the kingship which made him deserving of love; he might thus have manifested a potential contemporary directive to be loyal to the king simply because he was the king.⁴ But why did he describe only Eadwig in these terms? None of the other kings in Æthelweard’s *Chronicon* were said to have ‘deserved to be loved (*amandus*)’; in the same annal Edgar, for example, was described simply as ‘an admirable king’.⁵ This suggests that it was Eadwig’s actions as king that made him deserving of his followers’ love. This ties the cause of followers’ love for a king to his own actions, and by connecting this with the concept

¹ Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, a. 959: ‘*Tenuit namque quadriennio per regnum amandus*’. Short titles have been used in the footnotes throughout the thesis in order to maximise content within the word count. The bibliography should therefore be consulted for full publication details of all references.

² On the *Chronicon*’s dating see *Chronicon*, p. xiii, n.2.

³ For a discussion of Æthelweard’s sources see *Chronicon*, pp. xvii-xxxvii; Gretsch, ‘Historiography’, at pp. 214-38.

⁴ This will be discussed at length in Chapter One.

⁵ ‘*Rex admirabilis*’: Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, a. 959.

of desert, Æthelweard further implies that this love was something of which Eadwig was *made worthy* through his actions. This simple sentence in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* and the ideas contained within lie at the heart of this thesis and in many ways encapsulate its central argument. It shows that contemporaries thought of followers' dedication to their king in terms of his own contributions to their mutual relationship, and it naturally prompts the question from the reader: what did Eadwig do to 'deserve to be loved' by his followers? Would that Æthelweard had told us. This thesis seeks to address that question by asking: what was the role of English kings in this period in the creation of the loyalty of their lay elite?

* * *

Conceptual and historiographical frameworks

We need first to explain what is meant by the term 'loyalty' in this thesis, and why the thesis' central question is articulated in this way. At the heart of the late Anglo-Saxon political order lay a single relationship. Although its form was refracted through many individual channels, one fundamental principle permeated the upper echelons of society: the establishment, development and articulation of the bond between the king and the powerful men of the realm. These were the magnates upon whom monarchs depended for the administration, defence, and rule of the kingdom, as well as for their own recognition as kings. For kingship to function in an age lacking means of widespread coercion, the willing participation of the elite was crucial. This thesis concerns itself with a vital aspect of this willing participation: that of the lay elite's active dedication to and furthering of the king's interests, their constancy of service. This is what will be described hereafter as 'loyalty'.

One might question whether this notion is simply synonymous with what has been referred to by historians as ‘consent’. In the 1980s the idea began to emerge that the rulership of the Middle Ages was fundamentally consensual, not in the sense that there existed no coercion on behalf of kings, but in the sense that kings, in order for their authority to be recognised and therefore real, necessarily depended upon aristocratic support.⁶ Consensus amongst the king and his magnates was what enabled royal rule and collective action,⁷ and thus the aim of royal rule would have been less independent governance and more the achievement of this consensus.⁸ Indeed, a book partly about the cultivation and manifestation of the elite’s consent over almost the same timespan and in the same kingdom as that discussed by this thesis has recently been written, and it is important to set out what still remains to be said and how the parameters of the present study differ. Levi Roach’s *Kingship and Consent in Anglo-Saxon England, 871-978* has been an invaluable resource. Implicit throughout the book is the interpretation of assemblies as arenas for communication, performance and interaction between the king and the elite, and thus as a fundamental tenet of their relationship and of the political fabric of England in this period. An important overarching reason for this was their representation, symbolically and in the ways in which business was conducted, of the king’s keeping of counsel with the landed aristocracy and through this, the establishment of consensus amongst them concerning his rule.⁹

Whilst assemblies were evidently important for the creation of consent, which in turn was necessary for a king to govern, this study proceeds from the position that such consensus

⁶ Hanning, *Consensus*; Nelson, ‘Legislation’; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*; Schneidmüller, ‘Konsensuale’; Wickham, *Framing*, pp. 56-150. German scholarship cited via Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 13. I have not engaged directly with German literature because I do not possess the language skills to do so and there was not the time to develop them in a four-year DPhil. I realise this might be a limitation of the thesis due to the extensive German historiography on medieval kingship and courts, which might in turn contain valuable insights onto how kings negotiated their bonds with the aristocracy. This is an area into which I would seek to expand in order to improve the thesis had I more time. Each time I have come across German scholarship which needs citing, this is done via the English study in which it was paraphrased or itself cited.

⁷ Airlie, ‘The aristocracy’, *idem*, ‘The captains’. Le Jan, *Famille*, esp. pp. 126-35. Nelson, ‘Peers’.

⁸ Deutinger, *Königsherschaft*, pp. 225-72, paraphrased in Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 214.

⁹ These points summarised most clearly with respect to the other aspects of the book in Chapter 10.

would not always have been synonymous with the active, personal dedication to the king on behalf of a lay magnate which was crucial for a ruler's success. The type of behaviour described by historians such as Roach and Janet Nelson when they discuss 'consent' is usually abstract, but equally seems located specifically in the temporal and physical environs of royal decisions, pronouncements, etc, with its stage being primarily the royal assembly.¹⁰ The attitude to which they seem to refer is aristocratic consent to the action(s) of ruling, to the exercise of the king's royal prerogatives. But is this the same as actively supporting and being personally dedicated to the king? The kind of commitment visible from, say, the 'few men' who stuck by Alfred in the Somerset marshes in 878 when none of them could have known he would return to a position in which he could reward them?¹¹ Or that from men such as Æthelstan 'Half-King' who rose to positions of such influence and power that they could conceivably have challenged the king,¹² who like ealdorman Uhtred of the Five Boroughs or Mercian thegns remained his agents even when at sometimes significant physical remove from him?¹³ Men who dutifully followed Æthelstan to Northumbria in a northward extension of West-Saxon power unheard of for generations?¹⁴ Thegns who died at the gates of Derby for lady (or queen?) Æthelflæd,¹⁵ a successful and shrewd leader but a woman nonetheless,¹⁶ and who were remembered in the

¹⁰ This being implied by the kinds of sources in which this dynamic is referenced, and by the object of scholars' attention. See Nelson, 'Legislation', esp. at pp. 102-11; *idem*, 'On the limits', at p. 59; *idem*, 'How Carolingians'. Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, esp. pp. 212-15, 236-7.

¹¹ *ASC* a. 878. For a similar point about Alfred's inability to afford to reward his followers at this point see Nelson, 'Wealth and wisdom', at p. 41. For a stimulating discussion on how the *lytle werode* formula was thus used to communicate a specific set of ideas – of bravery, of continued support of a lord in the face of adversity, and of a particularly enduring form of loyalty, see Konshuh, 'Fighting'. For an analysis of the literary implications of this formula see Morrisson, '*Lytle werode*'.

¹² On him see Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King''.

¹³ These agents, and how the king maintained relationships with them, are discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

¹⁴ *ASC* a. 927.

¹⁵ *ASC* a. 917. Stafford refers to Æthelflæd in her article 'Political women' as 'the last Mercian queen', at p. 45, see also p. 47 on Æthelflæd's title. Æthelflæd was never referred to as queen in English sources, but she was styled as such (or by its equivalent) in Celtic sources: on which see Keynes, 'Edward', at p. 43 and Insley, 'Strange end', at p. 9.

¹⁶ It was not in West-Saxon nor Mercian tradition to allow women to wield power openly: Stafford, 'The king's wife'. See also Yorke's comments on Asser in 'Edward as ætheling', at p. 31; and Stafford, 'Succession and inheritance', at p. 259. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, seemed to recognise the significance of the support of the Mercians for Æthelflæd when he wrote 'with this anomalous title [lady] she ruled Mercia for eight years, and kept the loyalty of a formidable military household', p. 369.

Chronicle as ‘dear to her’? The answer proceeds from the implications and intimations of contemporary terminology and the contexts in which it is used. What terms are used when these types of actions occur? They are not often given descriptors, but if we think first of the most extreme manifestation of this attitude, service in conflict, the adjectives *hold* and *fidelis* are assigned. In the mid-tenth century poem *Carte dirige gressus*, Constantín is called ‘loyal in his service [*fidelis seruitio*]’ to Æthelstan because he ‘supported the king of the English’ and ‘hastened to Britain’ when Æthelstan annexed Northumbria by force in 927.¹⁷ The Old-English Bede, translated sometime c. 890x930,¹⁸ renders the thegn Lilla who sacrificed himself for King Edwin (and who Bede initially decried as ‘the king’s [Edwin’s] friendliest thegn [*minister regi amicissimus*]’) as ‘the king’s thegn who was most loyal [*holdesta*] to him’.¹⁹ In *Maldon*, Byrhtnoth went to the centre of his retinue, ‘where he knew his bodyguard to be most loyal [*holdost*]’.²⁰ In an earlier example (801), Alcuin wrote to Charlemagne recommending, amongst the other Englishmen traveling to Rome through Francia, Torhtmund, described as ‘faithful servant [*fidelem famulum*]’ and ‘proved in loyalty [*in fide probatum*]’²¹ for his strenuousness in arms and bold avenging of the murder of his King Æthelred of Northumbria in 796.

There is also reference in sources from the period to expressions of ‘love’ [*lufu; lufian*] and ‘loyalty’ [*hold, treow*] towards a lord which suggests the elevation of certain types of support and bond. One will recall the epigraph introducing this chapter about the ‘love [*amor*]’ Eadwig deserved.²² In his will, King Alfred claimed that when Æthelwulf’s will had been read out in front of the *Langadene* assembly, he ‘urged them all [the men present] for love of me [...] that none of them would hesitate, either for love or fear of me, to expound the common

¹⁷ Lapidge, ‘Some poems’, at p. 90.

¹⁸ See Rowley, *The Old English Bede*, pp. 15-25 for an overview.

¹⁹ Bede, *HE*, ed. Plummer, II.9; *Old English Bede*, ed. Miller, II.9, p. 123.

²⁰ *Maldon*, ed. Scragg, l. 24, p. 18.

²¹ *MGH* Alcuini Epist., ed. Dümmler, *Karol. Aevi*, II, No. 231.

²² See above, n. 1.

law...'.²³ The implication being that the leading men might either be forced into voicing support for the king against his nephews out of fear of his grudge, or might do so out of a desire to see the king's ambitions achieved. In the latter's case, 'love' of the king would amount to supporting his interests over and above those of others and potentially over that of the law. Often this 'love' is paired with notions of 'loyalty', such as in Kings Æthelred and Cnut's laws, e.g. VIII Æthelred 44, 'loyally support [*holdlice healdan*] one royal lord, let each of our friends love [*lufige*] the next with true loyalty [*rihtan getriwðan*];²⁴ I Cnut 1, 'love [*lufian*] King Cnut with due loyalty [*rihtan getrywpan*].'²⁵ This pairing can also be seen in the *Swerian* text, 'I will be loyal and true [*hold 7 getriwe*] to N, and love all that he loves [*7 eal lufian ðæt he lufað*]',²⁶ and in several interpolations in the Old-English Boethius in which the 'love and loyalty [*lufum and treowum*]' of friends is celebrated.²⁷ The 'loyalty [*hyldum*]' of the men of the Danelaw is referenced in IV Edgar as something they have 'manifested [*cyddon*]' to him and for which they were being rewarded by being allowed to observe their own laws.²⁸ In a charter granting land to Abingdon sometime c. 990x1006, King Æthelred described as 'loyal men [*fidelium*]' those who counselled him to increase God's inheritance on earth by granting land to monastic institutions and who thus had his 'eternal safety' at heart.²⁹ This charter was part of a series issued by Æthelred which sought to right the wrongs of his earlier appropriations of church lands, with the men who had counselled him in such previous endeavours being disgraced.³⁰ The implication behind this was of course that one could apparently counsel the king, the king could reach 'consensus' amongst himself and his magnates, but that this would not necessarily

²³ S 1507, trans. *KL*, p. 175.

²⁴ Liebermann, p. 266; trans. Robertson, p. 129. Cf. V Ætr 1, 35; VI Æthelred 1, 35, 37; VII Ætr 1; IX Æthelred

²⁵ Liebermann, p. 278; trans. Robertson, p. 154; Cf I Cn 20, 20.1.

²⁶ Liebermann, p. 396.

²⁷ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 24, p. 291, trans. II, p. 35. *OE Boethius*, I, c. 29, p. 303, trans. II pp. 43-44. This is discussed at pp. 261-3 below, along with the reason this should be interpreted as also applying to the love between a man and his lord.

²⁸ IV Edg 12 (Liebermann, I, p. 212; trans. Robertson, p. 37).

²⁹ S 937. Cf S 876 in which the king states that those who encouraged him such as Bishop Wulfgar and ealdorman Ælfric 'ought to have counselled for [his] benefit'. See also Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 192-3.

³⁰ Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 176-86. See also Cubitt, 'Politics'.

always be considered ‘loyalty’ if it were decided that the counsel had not been given in the king’s best interests. Mentions of ‘love’ and ‘loyalty’ from men to lord are moreover rarely attached to actions explicitly, but these attitudes clearly constituted an intimate qualification of this bond, and were noted as a particularly desirable form of support.

The ways in which terms such as *fidelis*, *lufu*, *treow* and *hold* are used seem thus to denote a particularly active and targeted type of support, trained on the king himself, his person and his interests. That this could be going beyond the type of support meant when referencing aristocratic ‘consent’ is suggested further by their apparent terminological separation in the sources. In charters for example, it is the *consensus* of the magnates that is required to form the bookland being granted or for the issuing of wide-ranging law-codes,³¹ never their *fides*, with this quality very often being that used to describe the lay beneficiary of the charter, and with the implication that this was a way in which they behaved within the specific bounds of their personal relationship with the king.³² Another indication that the quality of loyalty would not have necessarily been considered synonymous with the type of assent to the exercise of royal powers implied by aristocratic consensus at assemblies (or in general) is the remark by Wulfstan in his *Sermo Lupi* that ‘for many years now [...] there has been little loyalty [*getreowða*] among men, though they spoke fair enough’, and in its closing sentences his exhortation to ‘keep carefully oath and pledge, and have some loyalty [*getriwða*] between us without deceit’.³³ These statements imply a dichotomy between the utterance of support, and the subsequent action of loyalty. Loyalty in a sense is the preservation, through action, of an

³¹ E.g. the formula *cum consensu optimatum [heroicorum] meorum*, found in S 437, 460, 465, 512, 587-8, 646, 765, etc. In the case of the laws, see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 107-8, and for specific mentions of the *witan* counselling the king at legislative meetings or their consent to ordinances see Af prol. 49.9, II Edw 1, I As prol.

³² E.g., S 379, ‘*fideli ministro Wulfgaro*’; S 395, ‘*meo fideli ministro Eadrice*’; S 411, ‘*meo fideli ministro nomine Ælfheah*’; S 461, ‘*fideli meo ministro [...] Ælfsige*’; S 519, ‘*meo fideli ministro Wulfrico*’, etc.

³³ Bethurum, *Homilies*, no. XX, pp. 261, 266, trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, pp. 996-1002.

intent to support spoken earlier. This could be taken to mean that the consent of great men voiced at assemblies was not the same thing as their loyalty.

The support for the king himself in the ‘consent’ discussed by historians, and referenced in the evidence at assemblies, could be passive; that in the actions and contexts cited above could not. It is to the actions and mentalities encompassed in the latter aspect that I have assigned the term ‘loyalty’. That is not to say that loyalty and consent did not overlap. This thesis does at one level explore how consensus was achieved, because a loyal magnate would have been a part of the consensus described above. But it is less abstract. The thesis is not about kingship and consent but about kings and loyalty, an idea which simultaneously goes beyond consent whilst being conceptually more narrowly bounded. The distinction does not seem to me either an anachronistic or romantic projection, but even if the line were in reality not even as sharp as this, there is still need for a study of how this dedication was looked for by kings beyond what was happening at assemblies, and a synthesis of evidence – ideological, diplomatic, and behaviour-specific – available on this topic. How might kings have attempted to generate loyalty? How did they modulate their relationship with their magnates with this end in mind?

Part of the impetus for this thesis thus proceeds from the observation that loyalty was the dark-matter to successful kingship, but part of it also comes from the ways in which the topic of loyalty to the king has been dealt with by historians. The historiography of loyalty to Anglo-Saxon kings is, in a word, superficial. There has been no previous study in English or French historiographical traditions dedicated to establishing how these kings approached, thought about and acted to cultivate the loyalty of their leading secular men, but the topic of this loyalty is referenced regularly by historians, in various ways and often from whichever angle their respective arguments require it as an explanatory mechanism. A roughly chronological survey of examples in reference works follows. Beginning with studies by Sir

Frank Stenton and Dorothy Whitelock, whose leading roles in the professionalisation of Anglo-Saxon studies in the early twentieth century form the background to the discipline today, loyalty was an entity that was taken for granted amongst a king's followers. This was not only in the sense that for the political system to have functioned, it would have needed to be there, but also in the sense of why it was given and how it was achieved. Stenton in his *Anglo-Saxon England* for example repeatedly referred to an 'instinct' of loyalty to the king,³⁴ whilst simultaneously implying at times that a king's behaviour towards his retainers, and his execution of his role as king, were factors in the extent of followers' loyalty.³⁵

Simon Keynes' subsequent trailblazing work on royal diplomas, with its primary focus on aspects of the production and authenticity of these documents, did not centrally deal with the matter of loyalty.³⁶ Keynes' work has been invaluable to my study, for without it one could not hope to understand mechanisms dictating kings' alienation of land to lay followers (the content of Chapter Two). It is nonetheless interesting to note that in an article in 1986 comparing the kingship of Alfred and Æthelred, Keynes also referred to 'natural loyalty' as something upon which kings could count to a certain extent.³⁷ Patrick Wormald had more to say directly on the matter of loyalty, advancing the now widely-accepted notion that all crime in this period constituted disloyalty to the king, an idea which has important ramifications for contemporary conceptualisations of its antithesis, loyalty. Central to Wormald's thesis was the proposition that there existed from Alfred's reign onwards an oath of general loyalty to the king.³⁸ This will be addressed at length in Chapter One, but even so, the question of *how* kings could bring powerful lay magnates to swear such oaths to him must surely remain.

³⁴ E.g. in Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 374, 394, 551. Whitelock in her *Beginnings of English Society* dedicated a whole section to loyalty within her chapter on the bonds of society, but the question of how it was achieved was not addressed. She does remark that the 'principle payment made to a follower in Anglo-Saxon England was in land' (p. 36), but this is the only mechanism hinted at in relation to loyalty as a royal objective.

³⁵ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 205.

³⁶ The key contribution is Keynes, *Diplomas*.

³⁷ 'A tale of two kings', at pp. 201, 206.

³⁸ *MEL* prep., pp. 106, 120. For iterations of this position in Wormald's publications see *MEL*, pp. 137, 148, 283; see also *idem* 'Engla lond', at pp. 366-7. For an earlier iteration see *idem*, 'Lex scripta', at p. 12.

Staying for the moment with overviews of the period and general mechanisms of Anglo-Saxon government and society in the 1980s and 90s, similar questions persist. Henry Loyn's *Governance of Anglo-Saxon England* dedicated a significant discussion to the king and his household, but not to the matter of how these bonds were maintained or dedication was achieved.³⁹ Indeed in his statement that 'loyalty to the West-Saxon dynasty was not a quality that always came automatically and naturally in Northumbria' when discussing the fraught relations between this area and the South, Loyn implied that loyalty could come more automatically and naturally to the West-Saxon dynasty amongst magnates of other regions.⁴⁰ In her textbook on later Anglo-Saxon history Pauline Stafford acknowledged the centrality of loyalty ('loyalty, protection and mutual benefit characterised the idealised relationship of lord and man, which encompassed that between king and noble'⁴¹) but barely mentioned it apart from in her discussion of Æthelred. Exonerating Æthelred from historians' accusations of not being able to hold onto the loyalty of his men underpins much of Stafford's portrayal of the king, but how can such arguments be made if not seen in the wider context of kings' approaches to this matter? This is a problem Stafford herself highlights as significant in Æthelred's case.⁴² Barbara Yorke in her *Kings and Kingdoms* wrote about loyalty in relation to kings' grants of land, with the latter's significance to the former lying in its 'purchasing' power.⁴³ However, observing that kings granted land to laymen does not in fact amount to a conclusion about the importance of this mechanism relative to others, and referring to the practice in such general terms implies it was always applied in the same way, with 'land' (and therefore any land) being the object rather than the principles dictating how it was dispensed. Yorke also touched upon the processes culminating in loyalty via her interpretation of theocratic kingship as resulting in

³⁹ At pp. 94-100.

⁴⁰ Loyn, *Governance*, p. 89.

⁴¹ Stafford, *Unification*, p. 154

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 59. For her section on Æthelred see pp. 59-65.

⁴³ At p. 167.

a conception that the king ‘was set apart from his subjects as Christ’s representative on earth and owed unquestioning loyalty and obedience by his people’.⁴⁴ Ann Williams nine years later would write that ‘the concept of loyalty, the loyalty of lord and man and of both to the king, was one of the binding forces of Old English society’,⁴⁵ with loyalty being something kings could lose⁴⁶ – but again, the matter of how it might have been gained, and what surviving royal actions and policies might have had a role in this, is not addressed.

We find loyalty being referred to in the same general capacities in studies of the period with a slightly narrower focus. In one of her articles on King Alfred, Janet Nelson suggested that ‘when æthelings prowled, a king needed above all to keep the loyalty of his own thegns’,⁴⁷ prompting the question of how kings might be visible engaging with this objective. She mentioned an earlier study in which Henry Loyn and Ralph-Henry Davis had interpreted Alfred’s use of his educational programme as a means of promoting aristocratic loyalty,⁴⁸ and one wishes more of the (ample) evidence for Alfred’s actions and policies had been assessed for their potential significance to this issue. In David Pratt’s exploration of Alfred’s political thought, loyalty is mentioned regularly in passing and as a given, but when it comes to how this was achieved, Wormald’s thesis on the general oath of loyalty is normally cited, and sometimes the king’s ‘gifts’ in general terms.⁴⁹ In the subsection on the structure of pre-Conquest lordship in Stephen Baxter’s study of the earls of Mercia in late Anglo-Saxon England, oaths were defined as the mechanism which created loyalty to the king.⁵⁰ In Levi Roach’s biography of King Æthelred, the presence or absence of loyalty plays a part in explaining the course of events,⁵¹ but if it is to be an explanatory mechanism, this should, by

⁴⁴ At p. 176; cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 98-151. This association will be addressed in Chapter One.

⁴⁵ *Kingship and Government*, p. 122

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ ‘Reconstructing’, at p. 64.

⁴⁸ Nelson in ‘A king’, at p. 58, referencing Loyn, ‘The term’ and Davis, ‘Alfred the great’.

⁴⁹ *Political Thought*, pp. 29, 233-4; 38-43.

⁵⁰ *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 204-7.

⁵¹ *Æthelred*, pp. 106, 231, 296.

extension, mean that the significance of certain royal actions in relation to the concept of achieving or retaining loyalty has been established, either in Roach's study or as a general discussion in the field of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. Yet this has not happened. A stimulating collection of articles addressing loyalty in the Middle Ages more widely and from the other direction, that of the form and development of this fundamental element of social relationships, was published in 2015.⁵² We are in need of something similar for approaches to the cultivation of loyalty by kings, how this goal influenced and shaped royal policy, where efforts to affect it are visible in surviving evidence, and where a comparative method is applied as much as possible.

The studies that have come closest to asking the questions posed by this thesis are Richard Abels' chapter on the growth of royal lordship in *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England*, George Molyneaux's section on how the Cerdicings secured 'obedience' in his *Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century*, and Stuart Airlie's short article first published over twenty years ago, '*Semper fideles: Loyauté envers les Carolingiens comme constituant de l'identité aristocratique*'. Abels argues that from Edward the Elder on, kings used the idea of royal lordship to bind all their subjects to them.⁵³ Abels' idea is interesting, but the question must remain whether artificial dichotomies are being created between concepts of 'king' and 'lord' to mark the beginning of a development. One also wonders whether the reach of any development in the nature of the 'bond' between general subject and king is exaggerated based upon some very literal interpretations of language used in sources from Edward, Æthelstan and Edmund's reigns. In any case, the elite would always have seen the king as their royal lord, and it is that loyalty about which we have questions in

⁵² Sonntag and Zermatten (eds.), *Loyalty in the Middle Ages*. See in particular the introductory remarks by Sonntag and Zermatten for their conceptual discussion of the study of loyalty as a value, and attendant citations.

⁵³ *Lordship*, Chapter Four, esp at pp. 86-9.

this thesis. Abels focuses more upon the bond between a king's subjects at large, with his idea of that between the king and the elite being dominated by the granting of bookland as reward.⁵⁴

Molyneaux began his discussion with the topic of oaths, but in a departure from previous treatments of this issue by historians remarked that 'observing that the Cerdicings received oaths does not go far in explaining the basis of their domination: rather it raises the questions of how they induced people to swear oaths, and how they dealt with those for whom the prospect of divine retribution was insufficient deterrent to disloyalty'.⁵⁵ He went on to synthesise in general terms what is known about how reward and incentive was dispensed in the shape of land, office and patronage, and to argue that the Cerdicings' coercive potential played an important role in subduing *potentates*. Again, however, I intend to approach this issue from a slightly different angle. I am more interested in what kings did to effect the active devotion of their elite, and how they modulated this relationship, rather than what they did merely to remain in power and to secure obedience and consent. I aim to shed new light upon the principles and strategies dictating *how* land and promotion were used to promote the idea of loyalty, and ultimately to distance us from the notion that coercion of their major magnates was an important tactic for most kings in this period.

Finally, Airlie's article addressed explicitly the importance of establishing what mechanisms Carolingian kings employed in order to make themselves the 'natural lords' of the aristocracy. Although the fundamental premise of Airlie's article – that of how loyalty to the Carolingians was constructed – is highly relevant to this thesis' focus, there is only so much that can be addressed in an article of fourteen pages. Airlie's preliminary conclusions on this issue in a Carolingian context leaves the question open in the English case. Furthermore, the assumption at the heart of Airlie's study, namely that in the success of Carolingian royal

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁵⁵ *Formation*, pp. 63-85 at p. 65.

authority can be seen the effectiveness of the myth of the ‘natural lord’, and thus by extension that the ideological myth of the ‘natural lord’ translated directly into ‘natural loyalty’ to said lord, demands further interrogation. This became part of the impetus for Chapter One. Airlie noted moreover how ‘everyone knows that there was nothing ‘natural’ about this’, that ‘everything is constructed, including Carolingian royal authority.’⁵⁶ Yet if ‘everyone’ knows this, the actual tactics used by kings to cast themselves as these ‘natural lords’ are seldom discussed explicitly by historians in terms of what this meant in practice: devising methods and strategies whose object was in fact the cultivation of the elite’s loyalty.

Thus, when loyalty is invoked by historians it is generally accompanied and characterised by assumptions: whether that be about the ‘natural’ or ‘instinctive’ quality of loyalty resulting from the fact of the king’s status as God’s elect, the presence of a general oath of loyalty, or the universal ways in which land was used as a reward. Despite this however, it is clear that questions persist in the minds of historians about how kings achieved this loyalty. There is as yet no study addressing these questions systematically over multiple reigns and situating kings’ use of mechanisms such as oaths and reward within other surviving evidence of their management of their relationship with their magnates.

Even so, if we widen the conceptual angle of enquiry slightly, we find that the issue of loyalty is often dealt with obliquely in discussions of kingship and authority in the Middle Ages that have emerged since the 1980s.⁵⁷ These are guided by cooperative models of kingship, which was negotiated through relationships with the aristocracy rather than through ‘formal’ top-down governance. Asking how a king achieved ‘authority’ in this sense is essentially the other side of the coin to asking how he achieved loyalty. Indeed, kings would arguably have thought of their ‘royal authority’ in terms of people and relationships, not abstract concepts:

⁵⁶ Airlie, ‘*Semper fideles*’, p. 130, my translation.

⁵⁷ E.g. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*; Nelson’s collection, *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power*; Stafford’s *Gender, Family and the Legitimation of Power*; Innes, *State and Society*; MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*; Rosenwein, ‘The family politics’; Le Jan, *Famille et Pouvoir*.

who would support them in a crisis? Who would heed their summons and commands and represent their interests in localities? Who would make their kingship a reality rather than an idea? It is thus within this broad historiographical interest in the negotiation of power through relationships that this thesis locates itself, whilst aiming to offer a set of practical answers to the question of how late Anglo-Saxon kings conceivably established their authority over their leading lay magnates.

Scope, outline and note on methodology

The thesis covers the period from 871 to 1016, examining the reigns of the nine kings who ruled in these years: Alfred, Edward the Elder, Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig, Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred. The choice of these start and finish dates has been dictated by both historical and pragmatic considerations. It was first necessary to choose a time period compact enough to be realistic within the length of a DPhil thesis, but which simultaneously had enough scope to offer new contributions to the field. Alfred's reign presents itself as a natural starting point because of the comparative wealth of extant evidence it yields, and because it is from this point on that the process of the unification of the English kingdom can be traced.⁵⁸ This process is of potential interest to the thesis' questions because of its implications for how kings ruled and interacted with an increasingly heterogenous aristocracy and for the potential to note developments in royal approaches to their loyalty that matched the maturation of English, rather than West-Saxon, kingship. Beyond this, there is still very little scholarship dealing with the ruling strategies of Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig and Edgar,⁵⁹ and it

⁵⁸ On this see most recently Molyneaux, *Formation*. For a summary of the process' roots in Alfred's reign and the transitions it marked see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 7.

⁵⁹ There has been no sustained study into Edmund and Eadred's ruling strategies. Eadwig is almost always discussed in terms of his huge charter output in 956, with no new interpretations of what this might signify since Ryan Lavelle's article 'Royal control', published in 2011. The volume of essays on Edgar published in 2008

therefore seems important for the scope of the project to encompass them. It makes sense to include Æthelred in the study and to end with his death. Not only did this mark the potential intrusion into English kingship of Danish practices and approaches to the governance of kingdom and the elite in the form of Cnut, but it also provides an important opportunity to assess and compare the value of certain royal actions in relation to their lay elite in the context of conflict.

The thesis is interested in kings' strategies to achieve the loyalty of their lay elite. This was a fluid group and is treated as such in the present study, and should be understood to mean those individuals who were not ecclesiastics, who held office under the king (such as ealdormen, reeves or household men) or who held the rank of thegn.⁶⁰ Within this, how the king established and maintained the loyalty of the lay members of the *witan* is of greatest interest because these are the laymen upon whom he depended the most. When used, this term (*witan*) designates those who can be seen to take leading roles in state functions, whether singular or over time.⁶¹ The choice has been made to interrogate only royal strategies aimed at the lay elite rather than to include ecclesiastics in this group because the scope of the DPhil thesis simply did not allow for consideration of the English aristocracy as a whole. Archbishops, bishops and (later) abbots obviously formed a part of the core of the kingdom's elite and of the king's advisors, and they too were capable of disloyalty, as the case of Archbishop Wulfstan I of York clearly demonstrates.⁶² But their positions, circumstances and roles were distinct from those of lay officials. Their service would have lain at the intersection of their duty to the king and to the Church. Moreover, in addition to why individual ecclesiastics were loyal to the king, one would also need to consider the directives and

contain the last attempts to shed new light upon aspects other than his patronage of the tenth-century monastic reform movement.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of these ranks and positions and what they entailed, see Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 29-38.

⁶¹ Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 20-1, 24-5.

⁶² *ASC*, D a. 940-3, 947, 952. On Wulfstan I see Whitelock, 'The dealings', at pp. 70-76 and Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp. 202-8, 228-30.

mentalities at work which were the result of the Church's position on loyalty to kings. It is conceivable that because of this, they might have had different values, principles and perhaps ambitions, and thus that the king would have needed to apply different paradigms to the achievement of their loyalty. It would not have been possible to consider the dimensions added by these considerations whilst also examining the reigns of kings systematically from Alfred to Æthelred, although this could be a direction in which I would next take the thesis.⁶³

One general point about the thesis' approach and methodology needs to be noted. The fact outlined above of loyalty's treatment in the historiography, namely that its roots or causes are discussed generally, inconsistently, and in a manner dominated by assumptions, is in a sense unsurprising. This is because it is reasonable to assume, as most historians seem to do, that many visible instances of kings' actions and policies towards, or interactions with, their nobility would have been done with an eye to optimising their relationship with them, which is to say maximising their loyalty. Alongside this is the frustrating reality that almost nowhere in extant sources for this period is a link made explicitly between a royal action, and an intent to affect (or effect) loyalty. As a result of this, we are placed in a position wherein the concept of loyalty can become the object of essentially any action or policy, and its absence or presence can similarly be used to explain anything.⁶⁴ But if it is to have such a presence in our considerations of what happened and why, then effort should still be made to synthesise the available evidence of how kings might have approached this issue. So, in the light of this, the question of how kings achieved the loyalty of their lay elite becomes that of: what was the significance of extant evidence of kings' behaviour in relation to this objective? This in turn means asking how kings were seen to manage their relationships with their lay elite, and what patterns and principles we might discern in those actions. What mechanisms, moreover, did

⁶³ Further to this, see Mary Blanchard's important conclusion that bishops came from different elite families than did ealdormen: 'A new perspective'.

⁶⁴ Zermatten and Sonntag, 'Loyalty', at p. xii.

kings use to modulate their relationships with their leading laymen in order to evoke the personal, active dedication mentioned in sources, and deducible based upon observations of the success and stability of tenth-century English kingship?

The specific methodology involved in answering these questions differs for each chapter and will therefore be explained in the introduction to each of the three chapters. Chapter One focuses on the extent to which ideological mechanisms were deployed by kings in this period in relation to the issue of loyalty to them via a three-pronged approach: how and whether notions of his status relative to God translated into obligation in his subjects, and if so, what kind of obligation; how legislation was used to effect loyalty; and the extent to which oaths of loyalty would have been relied upon by kings in this period. Chapter Two, which is considerably longer but divided into multiple sections, addresses the royal practice of granting bookland to laymen, and advances a new method of treating Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas to these beneficiaries. It shows that individuals' positions relative to the king in various capacities were determinants of where they received land, how often they did, and often how large the grants were. This chapter is paradigm-shifting in its methodology and in its implications for the tailored royal usage of land to specific types of service, and the inherent problematisation of the straightforward equation of land equals loyalty implied in most references to the practice. The nature of Chapters Two and Three meant that evidence from each reign needed to be analysed and discussed separately in subsections each devoted to a single reign. Chapter Three analyses the most prominent evidence of each king's management of their relationship with their leading lay magnates, engages in comparison of the application of these policies where possible, and establishes the presence of unifying principles in kings' approaches to the matter of loyalty for most of the period. Chapter Three is divided into five subsections: the first on Alfred's ruling strategies as reflected in his translations, and then into subsections covering the

reigns of Alfred and Edward; Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred; Eadwig and Edgar; and finishing with Æthelred.

1. Concepts: Imposing Loyalty

Introduction

In order to begin identifying kings' efforts to maintain the loyalty of their elite, it is important first to establish the theoretical frameworks which are likely to have had a bearing upon how kings not only thought about but acted upon this issue. What was actually said about this topic in extant sources, and what does this suggest about how kings approached the issue of loyalty in practice? What role did concepts of the subject's obligation – or, in other words, the king's entitlement – play in the ways in which kings went about securing the loyalty of their lay elite? To what extent did kings invoke existing normative ideas of why they should be given loyalty, and through what media might those theories have then been imposed upon the leading men?

The aim of this chapter is thus to set out the basis upon which loyalty was meant to be given to kings in theory, and then how this theory, as well as that of the king's entitlement to regulate behaviour through legislation, itself might have been used by kings as a means of imposing the duty to be loyal upon their men. The chapter will do this via the exploration of 'conceptual mechanisms' in relation to the issue of loyalty and authority. The three conceptual mechanisms brought to bear upon loyalty for which we have evidence in this period will be analysed: that of the king's God-granted authority over men; that of royal legislation about loyalty to the king; and that of the treatment of oaths and the frequency of their mention in wider contemporary sources. By establishing the intersection of ideas of royal authority, status, entitlement, and the loyalty of subjects, it is possible to come to a new understanding of what a king's status as God's elect was understood to mean in terms of his subjects' behaviour towards him. Kings' use of legislation and oaths also requires re-examination in the face of influential modern theories about crime and disloyalty. This allows us not only to better understand the nature of the actions and the mentalities that kings were prescribing, but it also

gives hitherto underappreciated elements of ‘loyalty legislation’, such as Edmund’s oath of loyalty, their due. These analyses lay a strong foundation for our understanding of the principles upon which kings’ attitudes towards the loyalty of their men were based, and guide us towards what lines of enquiry are most likely to provide an answer for what made a king ‘deserve to be loved’ by his men.⁶⁵

The role of ideology

We should first question the extent to which the dynamic between kings and their lay elite operated under the theory that the former were entitled to the loyalty of the latter. We have, for example, in the annal for 1014 the statement that the leading men wanted Æthelred to return to them because ‘no lord was dearer to them than their natural lord’.⁶⁶ A corollary of this idea can be seen re-occurring in twentieth-century historiography of the period too, with Frank Stenton referring repeatedly to the ‘instinctive loyalty’ of English kings’ subjects,⁶⁷ and Simon Keynes to their ‘natural loyalty’.⁶⁸ There is a sense of inevitability to this discourse. Over twenty years ago Stuart Airlie wrote a stimulating article on this topic, taking as his starting point Regino of Prüm’s casting of the Carolingian king as the ‘natural lord’.⁶⁹ Airlie pointed out that it was important to explore the extent to which this idea could be taken literally, and if it was accepted, the importance of establishing what (ideologically) about Carolingian kings made loyalty to them ‘natural’ amongst the elite, how this was constructed. This idea of course is closely related to the question behind the whole thesis, namely the role of kings in the creation of their lay elite’s loyalty. Yet it is most closely related to the foundational question of upon what

⁶⁵ Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, a. 959. For discussion of the significance of this annal see p. 19.

⁶⁶ *ASC* a. 1014.

⁶⁷ *ASE*, pp. 374, 551.

⁶⁸ ‘A tale of two kings’, at pp. 199, 202, 207.

⁶⁹ ‘*Semper fideles*’. Regino, *Chronicon*, a. 888.

ideological grounds kings personally understood, and then framed to their followers, the state of being loyal. What did this idea of ‘natural’ kingship mean for the rationalisation of why loyalty should be given to kings? This section will base itself on surviving political theory from the period, but will also make use of explicit statements made in the sources about kingship and authority. These types of evidence are useful for exploring how ideology may have been used by kings or others to rationalise loyalty, for it is likely to have constituted efforts to influence contemporary thought – royal and aristocratic – about kingship, the lay elite’s place in relation to it, and how this related to order and authority.

That Anglo-Saxon kingship was theocratic by Alfred’s reign and that this element continued to develop throughout the tenth century is well-known,⁷⁰ but the ramifications of such ideologies upon the particular matter of loyalty have seldom drawn comment from historians. The king’s position above others was understood to have been granted to him by God – so what did this connexion with God translate into in terms of the king’s authority over them and their actions? To what extent were they required to operate in his interests, being politically, and personally, loyal? It is worth examining here, in chronological order, the statements surviving from the period that most clearly link the king’s authority over men to the authority he held from God. In Alfred’s reign we find several of these. In the prologue to the *dombooc* it is stated that ‘Christ ordered everyone to love his lord as [he] himself [did].’⁷¹ As Liebermann pointed out, Christ never made such a command in those words, and he suggested

⁷⁰ For key reference works discussing the emergence of sacral and/or theocratic kingship in early medieval political thought, see Kern, *Kingship and Law*, at 27-36; Ullmann, *Principles of Government*, at 117-49; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, at 1-20; Loyn, *The Governance*, at 84-6. With reference specifically to this in the late Anglo-Saxon case, see the following selection: Pratt, *The Political Thought*, at 69-78; Pratt, ‘The Illnesses’; Abels, ‘Royal succession’, at 96; Keynes, ‘Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons’, at 49; Foot, *Æthelstan*, at 60, 76-7, 127; Nelson, ‘The first use of the second Anglo-Saxon *ordo*’; Wormald, ‘Æthelred the lawmaker’, at 75; Kritsch, ‘Fragments and reflexes’; Bethurum-Loomis, ‘*Regnum* and *sacerdotium*’, at 132-3; Clayton, ‘*de duodecim abusivis*’.

⁷¹ Af. *Prol.* 49.7 (Liebermann, I, 44). Matt 22:37, ‘Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’. Matt 22:39, ‘And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’.

that Alfred perhaps accidentally conflated Matt 22:37 and 22:39.⁷² Yet for someone like Alfred who would have known the bible so well, this seems an unsatisfactory explanation.⁷³ Rather, it seems more likely that Alfred confidently adapted Christ's words to a different end: that of paralleling the Anglo-Saxon monarch with God the father, and comparing the devotion of the former's subjects to Christ's devotion to God.⁷⁴ The effect was to declare that the king derived from Christ himself his authority to demand the same 'love' from his subjects to which God was entitled.

A similar sentiment was expressed in the Old English translation of the *Regula Pastoralis*, a text produced c.890x896 and intended for wide circulation.⁷⁵ In a section which in Gregory's text originally read 'when we offend those in power, we offend against the ordinance of Him who placed them in front for us', the Old English reads 'when we offend against lords we offend against the God who created lordship'.⁷⁶ Here the earthly lord acquires a right to freedom from offence by his subjects through his special relationship with God, who created his office and put him in that office, an idea strengthened further in the Old English by making it God himself who was offended by offences against lords rather than merely God's intent.

Asser makes explicit reference to the connexion between the king's authority in its practical capacity, i.e. in the sense of its exertion upon subjects, and his divine sanction. He

⁷² Liebermann, III, p. 49, n. 25.

⁷³ For Asser's comments on Alfred's reflections upon the Bible and his interactions with men learned in scripture see *VA* cc. 76 (pp. 59-60), 77 (pp. 62-3), 78, (p. 63), 88 (pp. 73-4), 89 (p. 75). See also Kempshall, 'No Bishop', pp. 106-2.

⁷⁴ For discussions of this passage see Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 232-233 and Treschow, 'The prologue', p. 106. More widely on the prologue see *MEL* pp. 277-8; also Richards, 'The laws of Alfred and Ine', pp. 299-302; and Jurasinski, 'Violence, Penance, and Secular Law'.

⁷⁵ The Alfredian translations will be discussed in greater detail in Part Three. See the footnotes there for scholarship on issues such as dating, authorship and interpolations into the original texts. On the circulation of the *Pastoral Care* see Sisam, *Studies*, pp. 140-147 and Clement, 'The production of the *Pastoral Care*'.

⁷⁶ *Pastoral Care*, 'fordam ðonne we agyltað wið ða hlafordas, ðonne agylte we wið ðone God þe hlaforðscipe gescop', c. 28, p. 200, ll. 2-3; *Regula Pastoralis*, 'Nam cum praepositis delinquimus, eius ordini qui eos nobis praetulit obuiamus', III.4, p. 282, ll. 97-102. On this statement see Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 204 and Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 250.

wrote that ‘Alfred took over the government of the whole kingdom [...] with the approval of divine will’,⁷⁷ but even more specifically, that Alfred ‘exploited and converted bishops, ealdormen, nobles, thegns and reeves, in all of whom after the lord and the king and authority of the entire kingdom is seen to be invested’.⁷⁸ The third instance involves Alfred’s reported scolding of his judges: ‘Through God’s authority and my own you have enjoyed the office and status of wise men, yet you have neglected the study and application of wisdom.’⁷⁹ Here, Asser had Alfred cite his link with God as giving him the right not only to appoint men into various subordinate positions, but also the authority to demand that they carry out these duties in a certain manner.

Similar messages derived from the conjoining of ideas about the divine source of the king’s authority and the expected behaviour of his subjects can be found in the tenth century. A charter of Æthelstan for Ealdred his minister in 926 opens with ‘I Æthelstan, king of the Anglo-Saxons, adorned and elevated with no small dignity, prompted by desire from on high, will grant to my faithful thegn Ealdred the land that is called Chalgrave and Tebworth [...]’.⁸⁰ Here, the king’s act of granting land to a thegn for service to himself stems directly from God’s will, who elevated him to the kingship, thus framing the fulfilment of service to the king as being something of which God approved, and which God encouraged. Whilst this document is being singled out to demonstrate the existence of such notions in Æthelstan’s reign, the Anglo-Saxon charter record is replete with such statements justifying the alienation of royal land.⁸¹ The idea of divinely-ordained English *imperium* over all of Britain, however, deployed from Æthelstan onwards and in which we might see the application of a Bedan motif,⁸² could have

⁷⁷ *VA* c. 40, p. 31, trans. *KL* p. 80.

⁷⁸ *VA* c. 91, p. 78, trans. *KL* p. 102.

⁷⁹ *VA* c. 106, p. 93, trans. *KL* p. 110.

⁸⁰ S 396; trans. *EHD*, no. 103, p. 581.

⁸¹ See further, for example, S 379, 476, 597, 677.

⁸² Wormald, ‘Bede, the *Bretwaldas*’ at pp. 99-109. See further *idem*, ‘*Engla Lond*’; Insley, ‘Assemblies and charters’, at pp. 55. For articulations in charters of the *imperium* of Æthelstan and his successors see Foot, ‘The making of *Angelcynn*’, at pp. 35-49; Dumville, *Wessex*, at pp. 149, 153-4 and Banton, ‘Monastic reform’, at pp. 72-3, 80-1.

further aggrandised kings' notions of what they were entitled to in terms of their men's behaviour. The author of the poem *Rex pius Æðelstan*, probably composed in the closing decade of Æthelstan's reign, wrote, 'Holy King Æðelstan [...] whom God set as king over the English [...] as leader of [His] earthly forces',⁸³ identifies unequivocally the king's relationship with God as the source of his status as one elevated above men, who in turn existed in a state of subordination to him. These associations have implications for how the king's divine connection translated into authority over men, and thus into norms of action for those men. This poem commemorated Æthelstan's donation of London BL, MS Cotton Tiberius A. ii to Christ Church and was meant to be read, perhaps by both ecclesiastics and laymen.⁸⁴

In Edmund's reign, Archbishop Oda's *Constitutiones* (c. 942x946) also allude to the conceptual continuum in which existed God, the king, and the practical implications of the latter's position as one to whom other powerful men were subject, and thus as one defined by the actions of subordinates towards the individual in this position. In his text borrowing heavily from *De duodecim abusivis*, Oda wrote, 'May the king have prudent, God-fearing councillors over the business of the realm, in order than the people, having been instructed by the good examples of the king and principle men, may advance in the praise and glory of God'.⁸⁵ Oda then outlined the king's duties as protector of the church, encompassing traditional precepts such as protecting widows and orphans, not oppressing unjustly, and prohibiting theft, with the king's connexion to God thus being the dominant capacity in which his kingship was manifested. The unspoken prerequisite for this idealised functioning of the kingdom's government was the existence and operation of the leading men in a state of willing deference, here related to their deference to God's will.

⁸³ Lapidge, 'Some poems', at pp. 94-6.

⁸⁴ Note the line 'whosoever you are who look into this book', with the poet later addressing both the 'flock and pastor' of Canterbury: (*Ibid.*, p. 96).

⁸⁵ *Councils and Synods*, I, pp. 67-74. For Oda's use of the *duodecim abusivis* see *idem*, p. 68; for this text's transmission in Anglo-Saxon England see Clayton, '*de duodecim abusivis*', esp. p.153. On Oda himself see Gretsche, *The Intellectual Foundations*, pp. 339-41, 370-2.

Such conceptual associations continued into Edgar's reign. In the text conventionally called 'King Edgar's establishment of the monasteries', probably written by Bishop Æthelwold as a preface to his translation of the Rule of St. Benedict, Edgar was said to have 'obtained by God's grace the whole dominion of England, and ruled everything so prosperously that those who had lived in former times [...] said in amazement, 'It is indeed a very great miracle of God that all things in his royal dominion are thus prosperously subjected to this youthful king''.⁸⁶ It is thus again in terms of his rule over matter and men that the king's power, as derived from God, was conceptualised. The text further emphasises Edgar's special relationship with God, which is contrasted with the rule of Eadwig who, it is implied, lacked the *anweald* possessed by Edgar thanks to his religious commitment.⁸⁷ Though the rule was of course primarily intended for a monastic audience, Æthelwold stated explicitly that he saw the Rule as being made available to *woroldmonnum*,⁸⁸ making a lay readership of these portrayals of royal power over men possible. This relationship was foregrounded in Edgar's charters, which highlighted his dynastic and God-granted rule over his 'flock', which will have included the leading men.⁸⁹

It is from the latter half of Æthelred's reign that the most evidence survives for the ways in which the king's God-granted status was translated into its practical terms, that is, in terms of the position's corollary of individuals existing in a state of subjection to it. This is thanks in great part to the prolific writing of Ælfric and Archbishop Wulfstan, both of whom had a lot to say about kingship.⁹⁰ We begin with Ælfric. In his homily for the Sunday following the Lord's

⁸⁶ Ed. and trans. in *Councils and Synods*, no. 33, pp. 143-54 at 146. For commentary on this text see Whitelock, 'The authorship'; M. Lapidge, 'Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher', pp. 102-3; M. Gretsch, 'The Benedictine Rule', at pp. 145-8; and now Pratt, 'The voice of the king'.

⁸⁷ *Councils and Synods*, pp. 145-51; Pratt, 'The voice', p. 147.

⁸⁸ *Councils and Synods*, pp. 151-2.

⁸⁹ For examples of such elements in Edgar's charter proems see S 709, 717, 720, 729, 745, 746. For discussions of the reuse of and expansion upon these models by Æthelred see Roach, 'A tale of two charters', at pp. 238-9 and *idem* 'Penitential discourse' at p. 267; Insley, 'Assemblies and Charters', at pp. 50, 55-7. On Edgar's charters more generally see Keynes, 'A conspectus' and for the ones relating to Winchester see Rumble, *Property and Piety*, esp. pp. 65-143.

⁹⁰ For general discussions of Ælfric see Hill, 'Ælfric' and Gneuss, *Ælfric*. Though there is not the scope here to discuss them all, many passages from Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and his *Catholic Homilies* can be argued to have been intended as commentary upon contemporary circumstances, ranging from military resistance, to the

Ascension, Ælfric borrowed heavily from the text *De duodecim abusivis*, a text he would eventually rework into Old English,⁹¹ in his discussion of how a king should act:

‘And thus it befits the king that he should call upon his councillors and, according to their counsel – he should by no means act through any secrecy, for the king is Christ’s own vicar over that Christian people whom Christ himself redeemed, consecrated over the flock – that he should protect them (with the support of the people) against an attacking army and pray for victory for them before the true lord who bestowed power upon him beneath himself, just as all kings did who were pleasing to God.’⁹²

Here, Ælfric was clearly converting the ‘God-factor’ of kingship (his superiority as derived by his connexion with God), into the worldly factor of the nature of the power (over others) to which this entitled him. In this case, the king must ask for the counsel of those over whom he has been placed, and he must not act duplicitously; the extent to which he was pleasing to God was a function of the ways in which he acted relative to his people. In another sermon, Ælfric seems to have made quite a categorical statement about what the king’s status relative to God entitled him to in terms of his subjects’ spheres of legitimate action: ‘No man may make himself king; but rather the people have the choice to choose as king he who pleases them. But after he is consecrated as king, then he has power over the people. And they cannot shake off his yoke [...]’.⁹³ In one of his Christmas homilies, Ælfric stated that ‘One anoints a king with

importance of council and good councillors, to the behaviour of kings. A selection of important scholarship dealing with these follows: Clayton, ‘Of mice and men’; *idem*, ‘Ælfric’s *Judith*’; *idem*, ‘Ælfric’s *Esther*’; *idem*, ‘Ælfric and Æthelred’; Godden, ‘Ælfric’s *Saints’ Lives*’, with a summary of instances in the text which have to do with ‘current troubles’ at p. 95; Godden, ‘Experiments in genre’; Upchurch, ‘A big dog barks’. The current discussion will however limit itself to the instances in which Ælfric commented explicitly upon kingship and the divine source of its legitimacy in conjunction with the practical act of ruling people. For a summary of Wulfstan’s career with recent scholarship see Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 9-16. On Wulfstan see further Wormald, ‘Wulfstan: eleventh-century state builder’ and Bethurum-Loomis, ‘*regnum* and *sacerdotium*’. On correspondence between the two, see Hill, ‘Monastic reform’ and Godden, ‘The relations between Wulfstan and Ælfric’.

⁹¹ On the attribution of Ælfric’s source material to *De XII abusivis saeculi*, see ÆHom. Suppl. IX, pp. 380–1, notes to ll. 46–54. On Ælfric’s uses of the text see Clayton, *Two Ælfric Texts*, pp. 52-6 and her introduction and footnotes more widely on issues such as text transmission, authorship, and thematic discussion. On the text’s transmission see also Breen, ‘De XII abusivis’.

⁹² ÆHom. Suppl. IX, ll. 46-54.

⁹³ *CH* I.14, p. 294, ll. 111-21. This passage has been used frequently in discussions of Ælfric’s belief in elective kingship: Kritsch, ‘Fragments and reflexes’, at pp. 168, 175-8; Godden, ‘Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon kingship’;

consecrated oil, then one consecrates him as king'.⁹⁴ As Kevin Kritsch noted, 'whilst Ælfric does not state explicitly that anointing with holy oil imbues king with theocratic authority, repetition here of verb *gehalgian* along with conjoining the adverb *þonne* strongly implies the two actions are related'.⁹⁵ In Ælfric's translation of the Book of Judges, a tract fundamentally about kingship, he ends with a passage reflecting upon Kings Alfred, Æthelstan and Edgar. About Edgar he wrote, 'Edgar, the noble and resolute king, mightiest of all the kings of the English people, spread the praise of God everywhere [...] God subdued his enemies for him always, kings and nobles, such that they came to him without any strife, desiring peace, and subjected themselves to him [...]'.⁹⁶ Here, individuals who exist in a state of submission or subjection to the king do so as a result of his connexion to God.

Wulfstan's political tracts and legislation offer further examples of the conceptualisation of the king's power over men. There is consistent parallelism between the king and Christ throughout Wulfstan's writings, for example, when it came to matters such as sanctuary, compensation, and to whom fines were due.⁹⁷ In his *Institutes of Polity*, Wulfstan emphasised that the king received his position (above others) from God, as he was 'a shepherd over a Christian flock', and that 'His name and reputation will ever increase both in his life and in the afterlife insofar as he embraces God's justice'.⁹⁸ It is, however, in Wulfstan's laws for Æthelred that we get the clearest association between the king's rule in terms of his position above others by the grace of God, and how this translated into an entitlement to his subjects'

Loyn, *The Governance*, pp. 84-6; Bethurum-Loomis, 'Regnum and sacerdotium', at pp. 132-3; Chaney, *The Cult*, p. 254.

⁹⁴ CH II.1, p. 7, ll. 162-3.

⁹⁵ Kritsch, 'Fragments and reflexes', at p. 170. Cf. Godden, 'Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon kingship', at p. 913.

⁹⁶ Crawford (ed.), *The Old English Heptateuch*, pp. 416-17. For further examples of Ælfric's direct comments on kingship see CH I.7 p. 236 ll. 133-6; CH II.19, p. 183 ll. 93-9; and LS II.26 p. 132, ll. 104-108, where it was Oswald's faith which meant that the people of the Picts, Britons, Irish and English subjected themselves to him.

⁹⁷ See *The Laws of Edward and Guthrum*, Prol 2, 2[6.7], 2[12], (Liebermann, I, pp. 128, 132, 134); *Concerning Sanctuary*, 2, 8 (Liebermann, I, p. 470); VIII Ætr 2, 15, 36 (Liebermann, I, pp. 263-265).

The joint authority of church and king is referenced also in *Concerning the Ranks of People and the Law* 8 (Liebermann, I, p. 458).

⁹⁸ Jost (ed.), *II Polity*, pp. 41, 50. Trans. Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 103, 105.

behaviour towards him. Starting with the code V Æthelred, the first of Æthelred's to be drafted by the archbishop, injunctions appear explicitly enjoining loyalty to the king in the context of his relationship with God and of the English people's Christian duty. The code opens with the prescription, 'We all shall love and honour one God and zealously hold one Christian faith; and we all have confirmed with word and pledge that we will hold one Christian faith under the rule of one king'.⁹⁹ Deserting an army in which the king himself was present merited forfeiture of life and property, whereas deserting an army in which he was not present merited a fine of 120s.¹⁰⁰ Plotting against the king's life resulted in forfeiture of one's life, as it had in the legislation of previous kings.¹⁰¹ The final clauses enjoin loving and honouring 'one God', paralleled with loyally supporting 'one royal lord'.¹⁰² These sentiments are echoed in Æthelred's later codes.¹⁰³ In I Cnut Wulfstan fleshed these ideas out even further,¹⁰⁴ with it being made clear that acting in the king's interests was synonymous with the subject acting in his own interests because of God's favour of the king, and his favour by extension of those who not only who accept to exist in subjection to him, but who actively promote his honour and carry out his will. The effect of Wulfstan's linkage of these ideas was to imply it was one's Christian duty to be loyal to the king – not only, as had been the case previously, that it was the king's right to hold the position of king due to his relationship with God.

Finally, all of these statements and conceptual associations, which reflect what the king's special relationship with God was understood to translate into in terms of how other men were required to act towards him, have in their background the Anglo-Saxon coronation

⁹⁹ V Ætr 1 (Liebermann, I, p. 237; Robertson p. 79)

¹⁰⁰ V Ætr 28-28.1 (Liebermann, I, p. 244; Robertson p. 87)

¹⁰¹ V Ætr 30 (Liebermann, I, p. 244; Robertson, p. 87); previous iterations at Af 4; II As 4; VI Ætr 37.

¹⁰² V Ætr 34, 35 (Liebermann, I, pp. 244, 246; Robertson, pp. 89-91).

¹⁰³ VI Ætr 1 (Liebermann, I, p. 246; Robertson, p. 91); VII Ætr 1 (Liebermann, I, p. 260; Robertson, p. 109), on which see *MEL*, pp. 330-1; VIII Ætr 1 (Liebermann, I, pp. 263, 268; Robertson, pp. 119, 129). Whilst there exists in Edmund's oath of loyalty another example of loyalty being actively prescribed by a king, this was not done in reference to his power being held from God. This oath and the other clauses in the legislation of Alfred, Edward and Æthelstan which constitute potential candidates for references to an oath of loyalty to the king shall be discussed at length in this chapter's next section.

¹⁰⁴ I Cn 1, 20, 20.1 (Liebermann, I, pp. 276, 298; Robertson, pp. 155, 171).

ordines.¹⁰⁵ These, and particularly the second *ordo*, make explicit the fact that the man who becomes king does so at God's pleasure, and that he is his representative on earth. God 'position[ed] him on high in the governance of the kingdom and anoint[ed] him with the oil of the grace of the Holy Spirit';¹⁰⁶ it was through God that this man had the right to be set over other men as king. A king must necessarily have subjects, or men existing in a state of submission to him, so the *ordo* was in effect also a statement that it was through God that this man had the right to have others exist in a state of subjection beneath him.

What this overview demonstrates is that examples from throughout the period can be found which show that the king was understood to derive from God his position as one who ruled others, and thus as one to whom others were subject. It was his right to exist at the peak of the worldly social hierarchy, and so to have others exist beneath him. But is this the same as saying that the king's divine connexion gave him the right to the political and personal loyalty of his leading men? As outlined in the introduction, this thesis is concerned with the generation of the type of loyalty amongst leading men that would have been the key to the functional operation and success of Anglo-Saxon political order. In order for this to happen, the king depended upon the leading men to accept to *act* in their capacities in his interests as his subjects, and in ways which would have expanded his authority and continuously reaffirmed it. I propose now that this 'active' loyalty would have been understood as distinct from the state of merely existing in a state of submission to the king, or 'passive' loyalty.¹⁰⁷ It would have been, for example, considered one thing to accept the ascendancy of a king above oneself nominally, and quite another to die for him.

¹⁰⁵ The authority on the Anglo-Saxon *ordos* remains Janet Nelson. See her articles 'Ritual and reality', esp. p. 43, 'The earliest surviving English *ordo*' and 'The second English *ordo*'.

¹⁰⁶ This comes from recension B of the second *ordo* on which see Nelson, 'Second English *ordo*', at p. 363 and now Clayton, 'Old English *promissio regis*', at p. 109.

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted here that Strayer in his *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*, p. 14, wrote that for a kingdom to be successful, 'the authority of the king should receive the basic loyalty of its subjects', perhaps implying that Strayer also thought of loyalty in dichotomous terms, wherein there was a difference between 'basic' loyalty and whatever lay beyond this.

That such a distinction between ‘passive’ and ‘active’ forms of loyalty is not artificial, but must have existed in the minds of contemporaries, can be not only be extrapolated from observation of the success of the end product of Anglo-Saxon government. It also proceeds from the reasonable assumption that there would have been a wide scope for actions qualifying as ‘loyalty’, dictated at any one time by a combination of factors such as: a king’s personal preferences, which themselves could surely change; the specific relationship and history between the king and a leading man; the context in which it existed; and the context in which actions from said leading man towards the king were performed. But, most empirically, this distinction can be shown to have existed through the corroboration of the extrapolation above by the terms themselves of what types of behaviours kings were owed by their subjects.

Casting an eye back at what the evidence mentioned above states the king’s position entitled him to in terms of his subjects’ actions towards him, for most of the period until Æthelred’s reign these amounted to *not* being treacherous, *not* plotting against the king. Essentially, they were required to exist in a state that did not threaten the kingdom’s social hierarchy and the order it represented. The classic iteration of this idea in Anglo-Saxon England is the report of the legatine councils of 786, where it was stressed that one could not resist kings, and neither could one assassinate kings.¹⁰⁸ In the ninth century, the few instances in Alfred’s *domboc* where subjects’ behaviour towards the king is regulated are all to do with not actively hurting or threatening the king, or thwarting his personal protection: ‘If anyone violates the king’s protection...’;¹⁰⁹ ‘If anyone plots against the life of the king...’;¹¹⁰ ‘If anyone fights or draws his weapon in the king’s hall...’;¹¹¹ ‘The fine for breaking into the fortified premises of the king shall be 120s’.¹¹² The Old English *Pastoral Care*’s comment on

¹⁰⁸ Alcuin, *Epist*, 3 (MGH), pp. 23-4.

¹⁰⁹ Af 3 (Liebermann, I, p. 50; Attenborough, p. 65)

¹¹⁰ Af 4 (Liebermann, I, p. 50; Attenborough, p. 65).

¹¹¹ Af 7 (Liebermann, I, p. 52; Attenborough, p. 69).

¹¹² Af 40 (Liebermann, I, p. 72; Attenborough, p. 83).

this was ‘when we offend against lords we offend against the God who created lordship’¹¹³ in the context of David’s decision not to kill Saul, and that even cutting off a corner of the king’s coat would be too much insult.¹¹⁴ Æthelstan directed that anyone who was accused of *hlaforðswice*, or plotting against his lord, forfeit their life if they could not deny it, with the term ‘lord’ here also extending to the king.¹¹⁵ When Ælfric discussed what power consecration gave a king, his subjects’ sphere of legitimate action was limited only to the fact that they could not ‘shake off his yoke’¹¹⁶, i.e., depose him.

Another instance of efforts to regulate subjects’ behaviour towards to the king is Edmund’s oath, which is a clear example of the prescription of active loyalty:

In the first place, all shall swear in the name of the lord before whom that holy thing is holy that they will be loyal to King Edmund even as it behoves a man to be faithful to his lord, without any dispute or dissension, openly or in secret, favouring what he favours and discountenancing what he discountenances. And from the day on which this oath shall be rendered, let no one conceal the breach of it in a brother or a relation of his, any more than in a stranger.¹¹⁷

This injunction goes well beyond the demand to keep the king’s body and position inviolate, and its formulation and subsequent promulgation was a pivotal moment in royal approaches to the generation of loyalty, as will be argued below. For the moment however it is important to note two things. First, that this clause (and code) does not mention themes such as not plotting against the king or harming him when it clearly could have, thus further suggesting the existence of a distinction between these forms of ‘passive’ loyalty and other forms of ‘active’

¹¹³ *Pastoral Care*, p. 200. On this statement see Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 204 and Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 250.

¹¹⁴ *Pastoral Care*, p. 198.

¹¹⁵ II As 4 (Liebermann, I, p. 152; Attenborough, p. 131).

¹¹⁶ *CHI*.14, p. 294, ll. 111-21.

¹¹⁷ III Edm 1: ‘*imprimis ut omnes iurent in nomine Domini, pro quo sanctum illud sanctum est, fidelitatem manifesto, in occulto, et in amando quod amabit, nolendo quod nolet; et a die qua iuramentum hoc dabitur, ut nemo concelet hoc in fratre uel proximo suo plus quam in extraneo*’ (Liebermann, I, p. 190; Robertson, p. 13). On the Colyton code see *MEL*, p. 312.

loyalty. Second, that the injunction is not framed in terms of the king's connexion with God, and thus the impression is that he was not entitled to it in the same way as he was entitled to his position as king.

Thus, formal regulation of behaviour towards the king does not seem to have happened often in Anglo-Saxon England, and when it did, it clearly shows that the king derived from his position – i.e., his connexion with God – the right to inviolability of his person or his status. He had the right to exist free from harm and threat, and with subjects beneath him. But it is in the writings of Wulfstan that the emphasis seems to change. In his *Sermo Lupi*, it is upon the injuries to Æthelred's and Edward's position and person respectively that the archbishop appears to focus when it came to the behaviour of leading men relative to the king: 'And it is the greatest of all treachery in the world that a man betray his lord's soul; and a full great treachery it is also in the world that a man should betray his lord to death, or drive him in his lifetime from the land; and both have happened in this country: Edward was betrayed and then killed, and afterwards burnt, and Æthelred was driven out of this country'.¹¹⁸ But the king's entitlement to the active loyalty of his subjects via his connexion with God is nowhere as clearly articulated as in Wulfstan's laws. Not only did his laws for Æthelred include the normal clauses forbidding plotting against the king, which reflect the conceptualisation of the king's position as giving him the right to demand others exist in subjection to him,¹¹⁹ but they also demand *loyalty* whilst framing this as a Christian duty, as shown above. Wulfstan's further injunctions on loyalty to the king in Cnut's first code demonstrate how far kings had come from simply imposing upon their subjects the duty not to plot against them, depose them or rebel against them. They were to love Cnut, promote his honour and carry out his will, all of

¹¹⁸ Dorothy Whitelock noted here in *EHD*, p. 999, n.2, 'i.e. by persuading him to do evil, or by failing to carry out religious benefactions for his soul after his death'. This sentence to me also seems to imply the act of intentionally misadvising the king in order to do him harm or to bring about his downfall.

¹¹⁹ V Ætr 30; VI Ætr 37 (Liebermann, I, pp. 244, 256).

which under the umbrella of loyalty [*rihtan getriwþan*] and motivated by the goal of pleasing God.¹²⁰

This second overview of evidence shows that for most of the period the only behaviour of subjects to which a king seems to have been entitled through his status as God's elect was negatively-defined: that is, their behaviour was required to be *not* treacherous, *not* harmful, *not* leading to a king's removal. Edmund's oath was the anomaly where the king seems to have been moving towards prescription of behaviour beyond 'not-treachery' and where the behaviour of subjects was positively-defined (i.e. what subjects will do relative to the king rather than what they will not do). But links to the concept of entitlement as a result of status are less clear in Edmund's oath than in Wulfstan's legislation for Æthelred and Cnut.

Several factors moreover suggest that there existed a distinction in the minds of contemporaries between passive and active loyalty to the king. Corollaries of this conclusion are that there was a limit to what a king's position was understood to entitle him, and that entitlement to active loyalty was a concept that developed over time or only occurred in certain contexts. Active loyalty, the type in which the king's interests were often advanced before the immediate interests of the subject, was the type a king would have needed for the successful operation of the kingdom. It was this type that he required in order to claim that he had authority over men in terms of their actions, not merely the empty 'authority' of a position, God-granted or not. It is salutary to recall here the words of Ælfhelm Polga in his will (a. 875x1016), addressing king Æthelred, that 'I was obedient [*gehyrsum*] to your father as ever I could be *and* [my emphasis] thoroughly loyal [*fullice hold*] in thought and deed'.¹²¹ The concepts of obedience and full loyalty were separated by Ælfhelm.

¹²⁰ I Cn 1, 20, 20.1 (Liebermann, I, pp. 276, 298; Robertson, pp. 155, 171).

¹²¹ S 1487; Whitelock, *Wills*, no. 13.

We might see further support for the theory of a dichotomy in the types of loyalty to which kings could lay claim via a Carolingian comparison. The Carolingians, unlike the English, had a strong tradition of political theory.¹²² Statements about how the king's position relative to God impacted the extent of his authority on earth can be found in works such as Smaragdus' *Via regia*,¹²³ Jonas of Orleans' *De Institutione Regia*,¹²⁴ and Sedulius Scottus' *De Rectoribus Christianis*.¹²⁵ But it is Hincmar's writings which are of particular interest here.¹²⁶ Hincmar was the first Carolingian thinker to engage on a critical level with the problem of controlling the exercise of royal power. Janet Nelson has argued convincingly for the juristic basis of Hincmar's attempts to restrain Christian kingship, which rooted the king's legitimacy in his capacity as just ruler and lawmaker, and obedience to his own laws.¹²⁷ Ultimately Hincmar's innovations with respect to the king's anointing made the latter answerable, like bishops, to his episcopal consecrators, thus affording the church a new degree of power over the royal office.¹²⁸

Perhaps more significant however is Hincmar's engagement with the issue of whether or not bad kings were due obedience, in theory and practice, whilst he attempted to stay on the right side of patristic and biblical precedent. On the one hand, Hincmar seems to have agreed with the basic precept assumed by his predecessors, both Carolingian and patristic: that evil

¹²² On the contrast see Wallace-Hadrill, *Early-Germanic Kingship*, pp. 141-2. Other key commentaries on Carolingian moral-political texts include Stone, 'Kings are different'; Meens, 'Politics, mirrors for princes'; Nelson, 'Kingship and empire', esp. pp. 211-30 and 242-51; Nelson, 'Dhuoda'; De Jong, 'Carolingian political discourse'; Ward, 'Lessons in leadership'; and Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, Chapter Five.

¹²³ PL c. 22, esp. col. 938-939. For commentary see Wallace-Hadrill, *Early-Germanic Kingship*, pp. 135-6; Bovendeert, 'Royal or monastic identity?', esp. p. 241.

¹²⁴ Ed. Dubreucq, esp. c. 8, p. 220. For commentary see Dubreucq's introduction to the edition, esp. pp. 56-60, 85-97.

¹²⁵ Ed. Dyson. See esp. c. 1, p. 53; c. 2, p. 57; c.19, p. 187; c. 20, p. 59.

¹²⁶ Devisse, *Hincmar, Archevêque de Reims* is still an important authority, though there has been much scholarship since this was published. See now Rachel Stone and Charles West's edited volume of essays, *Hincmar of Rheims: Life and Work* and its bibliography.

¹²⁷ Nelson, 'Kingship, law, liturgy', esp. pp. 242, 253, 255-6. For more on the role of law in Hincmar's thought see Wallace-Hadrill, 'The via regia', pp. 35-8; Devisse, *Hincmar et la loi*. See Hincmar, *de ordine palatii*, (MGH), *Fontes iuris Germanici* 3, cc. 2 (p. 36), 5 (pp. 40-4), 6 (p. 44), 8 (pp. 46-8) for his emphasis on the king's role as both creator and servant of law.

¹²⁸ Nelson, 'Kingship, law, liturgy', *passim*, but esp. p. 247.

kings were permitted by God in order to punish wicked people, and thus should not be resisted.¹²⁹ This implies a belief that, at least in theory, kings were owed obedience as a result of their existence as manifestations of divine will and justice. Yet in a letter to Charles the Bald, Hincmar seems to make the obedience of subjects contingent upon the king's respect for the law: 'and just as they (*fideles*) do not withstand God's ordained, he who knew not to do wrong, they withstand however the unjust works and mandates of the unjust man'.¹³⁰ Hincmar was setting up a dichotomy between *potestas* as an institution and the behaviour of individual kings.¹³¹ Later in the same letter he justifies the dichotomy thus: 'Honour the king and obey him as if to the most excellent king [Christ] (1 Peter II, 17, 13); clearly he who is kingly obeys the mandates of kings, and keeps his justice. Otherwise, Saint Peter says: it is necessary to obey God much more than men (Act. V. 29)'.¹³² Unjust kings who act 'against ecclesiastical rules and against the laws of ancient and Christian kings' are not owed obedience because they are not real kings.¹³³ The qualities which defined a *rex*, therefore, could technically be decided by bishops (potentially in conjunction with secular *fideles*) – an assertion which directly contradicted the age-old tenet that God decided who was *rex*, even if he were evil. Although, as emphasised by Nelson, Hincmar never explicitly advocated for royal deposition,¹³⁴ these conceptions of the limits on royal authority would nonetheless have placed corresponding limits on the extent to which kings could expect loyalty. Loyalty was framed not as a constant in the context of kings' relationship with God, but as a variable whose constancy was earned

¹²⁹ *De regis persona*, PL 125, c. 1, col. 834; Romans 13; *Regula Pastoralis* c. 1, p. 27. Augustine, *De dono perseverantiae*, PL 45, c. 6.12, col. 1000, trans. Maurant, *The Fathers of the Church*, pp. 279-81. For Hincmar's own manuscript of Augustine see Carey, 'The scriptorium', esp. p. 51.

¹³⁰ Ep. 15, PL 126, col. 98C: '*Sicque fideles non resistunt ordinationi dei, qui novit, non mala facere, resistunt autem iniquis iniquorum operibus et mandatis.*' For a parallel discussion of the political ideals of Abbo of Fleury and Fulbert and Yves of Chartres concerning loyalty to the king see Sassier, 'Fidélité'.

¹³¹ Nelson, 'Kingship, law, liturgy', p. 242 n. 4.

¹³² Ep. 15, PL 126, col. 98B, '*Regem honorificate et obedite regi quasi praecellenti (I Pet. II 17, 13): videlicet qui regis regum obedit mandatis, et eius custodit judicia. Alioquin ut sanctus petrus dicit: obedire oportet deo magis quam hominibus (Act. V. 29).*'

¹³³ Hincmar used this phrase to warn Louis the German in 881, Ep. 20, PL 126 col 119f.

¹³⁴ Nelson, 'Kingship, law, liturgy', pp. 273-6.

by their actions in their relationship with their *populus* and in their duties as kings. At the very least, these limits seem to have found practical echoes in the extent of episcopal loyalty to the king, demonstrated by Hincmar's refusal to take the general oath demanded of secular nobility.¹³⁵ At the most, they might also have been the driving force behind the treaties of Strasburg (842), Verdun (843) and Coulaines (November 843) where laymen and clerics alike were active participants in the renegotiation of royal power, the terms of which Hincmar was to remind Lothar in 868.¹³⁶ Significantly, at Coulaines they promised to uphold the *honor regis* in exchange for certain guarantees for royal maintenance of the *honor ecclesiae* and *honor fidelium*.¹³⁷

Hincmar seems thus to have differentiated between ideas of obedience, or passive loyalty, and active loyalty. This explains how he could advocate simultaneously for unconditional and conditional royal authority: if the issue of a bad king arose, his *potestas* ought still to be accepted nominally both because it represented the social order imposed onto humanity by God, and because of a lack of earthly mechanisms to actually depose kings. But they could also be said to have been deprived of their authority and dignity in the eyes of God, and thus of the right to expect a level of commitment from their subjects which would allow them to advance and succeed as an individual power-holder.

Though there is no direct evidence that Hincmar's works were read by an Anglo-Saxon audience, links between England and the continent were manifold and it is not impossible that someone such as Grimbold or John, invited to Alfred's court in the late ninth century, might have brought such ideas over.¹³⁸ But the integrity of this comparison does not hinge upon

¹³⁵ For Hincmar's letter of 876 to Charles protesting the oath see PL 125 col. 1125f; Nelson, 'Kingship, law, liturgy', p. 262.

¹³⁶ For the role of secular nobility at Strasburg and Verdun see Nithard, *Historiarum libri* (ed. Lauer), IV, III. 5, IV. 4, pp. 100, 130. See also McKitterick, 'The oaths of Strasbourg'; and Nelson, 'Le partage de Verdun'. For Hincmar's appeal to earlier royal promises in the *Pro Ecclesiae libertatum defensione quaterniones* PL 125 col. 1066, discussion in Nelson, 'Kingship, law, liturgy', pp. 271-2.

¹³⁷ MGH *Capit.* II, p. 25. Odegaard, 'Carolingian oaths of fidelity', p. 282.

¹³⁸ On these continental monks, their background, and their activities once in England, see Lapidge, 'Some Latin poems', at pp. 72-83, cf. Gallagher, 'Latin acrostic poetry'; Lapidge, 'John the Old Saxon (*fl.* c. 885-904)', in

English exposure to Hincmar's writings. It suffices to point out that if the Carolingians were able to conceptualise such frameworks when faced with the same biblically- and patristically-inherited ideologies of royal power, and whilst living in essentially the same political system, then so could the English. I propose moreover that for most of the period from 871 to 1016, Anglo-Saxon kings not only understood that they did not have a right to their men's active loyalty simply on the basis of their God-granted position as king, but that they viewed the objective that would allow them to rule – i.e. the *witan*'s consensus and loyalty – as depending upon their actions relative to this group.¹³⁹ If kings were only entitled to passive loyalty for most of the period, then there must have been an idea that they had to generate active loyalty via some other mechanism.

The roles of law and oath

Other conceptual mechanisms for the imposition of loyalty that immediately present themselves are those of royal legislation and of oaths to the king. If we want to ask whether kings imposed or enforced the idea of loyalty upon their leading men (and if so, how), then we must first establish the extent to which the most explicit extant efforts to regulate subjects' behaviour were geared towards this.¹⁴⁰

ODNB, accessed 11 October, 2021; Grierson, 'Grimbald of St. Bertin's'; Bately, 'Grimbald of St. Bertin's'. For a variety of angles on the links between England and the continent see Story, *Carolingian Connections*; Leyser et.al. (ed.), *England and the Continent*; Leyser, 'The Ottonians and Wessex'; and Reuter, 'The making of England and Germany'.

¹³⁹ Janet Nelson came to a similar conclusion when she argued against the notion of a Carolingian conception of the inviolability of kingship: 'the age that had invented kingship by the grace of God also produced justification for stretching forth the hand against him', with constitutional resistance meaning 'the application in practice of the meritorious differentiation between office and incumbent', in 'Bad kingship', at pp. 19, 21. Cf. Guillot, 'La *fides*', which discusses the effect of Louis the Pious' decisions at Worms concerning Charles (the Bald's) inheritance on his relationship with Lothar and by extension upon the magnates' trust and faith in the king.

¹⁴⁰ The question of whether law-codes were purely ideological or were known and applied is fraught. Wormald, '*Lex scripta*' (for the former position), cf. Keynes, 'Royal government' (for the latter), are the two key works. For a summary of the debate and an attempt to bridge it, see Roach, 'Law codes and legal norms'. Whilst I find the position of Keynes and now Roach to be more convincing than that of Wormald, the issue is ultimately unresolvable. Its resolution is not however required for the matter at hand. The present discussion is concerned

The alleged existence of an oath of general loyalty in legislation before Edmund's Colyton Code offers a good starting point for the analysis of Anglo-Saxon law-codes in relation to the issue of loyalty to the king. This is both because of the attention this matter has received from historians, and because the existence of such an oath in legislation would be an important sign that loyalty was conceptualised as something which could be imposed or demanded on the basis of royal position. Edmund's Colyton Code, probably promulgated c.946, contains the first surviving instance in the Anglo-Saxon corpus of the text of an oath of loyalty to the king, and is also the first time the existence of such an oath is referred to so explicitly. Yet Edmund's oath has often been seen by historians, most notably Patrick Wormald, as simply an echo of an 'oath of general loyalty' supposedly alluded to in the first clause of Alfred's *domboc*, and subsequently referenced in Edward's and Æthelstan's legislation.¹⁴¹

In the preparatory papers to his *Making of English Law*, Patrick Wormald turned to the supposed 'oath of loyalty' present in Alfred's law-code in order to eventually explain why such a large amount of land was forfeit in England on a wider variety of pretexts than on the continent.¹⁴² He argued that Alfred's first clause ought to be interpreted as an oath of loyalty, based partly on the 'fair deduction' that the oath sworn and broken by Ealdorman Wulfhere and the *að* of the laws were one and the same, and partly on a comparison with other uses of the phrase *að* and *wedd* which involved acceptance by one party of another's lordship.¹⁴³ Looking forward to his conclusion, he claimed that this oath meant 'acknowledgment of sovereignty, undertaking to be loyal, and even promising to maintain social peace'.¹⁴⁴ Wormald saw further suggestions of such an oath in clauses of Edward and Æthelstan, confirmed in

with the extent to which loyalty might have been considered by kings to be something they *could* demand and impose. Moreover, even if the existence of this as an idea is all that could be known for certain, this existence in legislation – by definition a list of rules imposed upon a people – still would have implications for what was understood to be within a king's sphere of legitimate action to demand relative to his position.

¹⁴¹ *MEL* prep., pp. 106, 120. Further exposition of historians who have followed Wormald's theory follow below.

¹⁴² *MEL* prep., p. 106. For iterations of this position in Wormald's publications see *MEL*, pp. 137, 148, 283; see also *idem* 'Engla lond', at pp. 366-7. For an earlier iteration see *idem*, 'Lex scripta', at p. 12.

¹⁴³ *MEL* prep., pp. 119-20.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Edmund, continuing through Edgar and Æthelred and culminating in Cnut. Some scholars have expressed doubt at this interpretation.¹⁴⁵ Tom Lambert has suggested that Alfred was encouraging all men to respect the practice of oath-taking in general, whilst in a study on the word pairing of *að 7 wed* Matthias Ammon emphasised the first clauses' internal inconsistencies with the idea of a general oath.¹⁴⁶ But many more have found Wormald convincing. Most notable is David Pratt who despite certain reservations on its practice found Wormald's theories on Alfred's oath 'illuminating'.¹⁴⁷ In the recent *Oxford History of the Laws of England*, Wormald's views are quoted without challenge,¹⁴⁸ whilst Stephen Baxter claimed that 'in Edmund's reign at the latest and probably earlier, all free men were required to swear an oath of loyalty to the king'.¹⁴⁹ Wormald's conjectures have not only affected interpretations of Anglo-Saxon history, but have even made their way into discussions of post-Conquest allegiance.¹⁵⁰

Wormald also interpreted several other passages from the legislation of Edward to Cnut as confirming not only the existence of the oath of loyalty, but its connection to royal campaigns against crime. The links between these, he wrote, 'raises a strong presumption that *að 7 wed* registered not merely an oath to be loyal, but one specifically designed to restrain a whole range of serious crimes, and above all theft'.¹⁵¹ The oath of loyalty was the keystone of Wormald's new theory on the nature of crime, providing a tidy explanation for his original

¹⁴⁵ Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation*, pp. 80, 100; Hudson, 'The Making of English Law', at pp. 424-5.

¹⁴⁶ Lambert, *Law and Order*, p. 211; see also his 'Theft, homicide and crime', esp. pp. 11-16; Ammon, 'The functions', at p. 519.

¹⁴⁷ Pratt, *The Political Thought*, pp. 233-240, esp. 233; see also his use of the topic in 'The voice of the king' at pp. 190-194. Ammon falsely interpreted Pratt's argument as challenging Wormald's theory in 'The functions of oath and pledge', at p. 519, n.22.

¹⁴⁸ Baker, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, pp. 20, 163-4.

¹⁴⁹ Baxter, 'Lordship and justice', at p. 399. For further Wormaldian echoes, see Rabin, 'Witnessing kingship', at p. 229 and in the same volume, Trousdale, 'Being everywhere at once', at p. 289; Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 141-145; Rabin, *The Political Writings*, p. 35; Barrow, 'Demonstrative behaviour', at p. 136. For neutral positions, see Molyneaux, *The Formation*, pp. 63-65; Richards, 'The laws of Alfred and Ine', at p. 306; Stanley, 'On the laws of King Alfred', at p. 221.

¹⁵⁰ Maddicot, 'The oath of Marlborough, 1209', at p. 292.

¹⁵¹ *MEL* prep., 121.

problem: all crime was considered by kings to be disloyalty, which is why the forfeiture of land took place often and for a variety of crimes which did not *directly* affect the king's own interests. Indeed, as Wormald wrote, 'If one had sworn not only to be loyal but also to avoid, indeed expose, crime, then active or passive participation in any serious offence put one in breach of one's oath. It was, in effect, disloyalty.'¹⁵²

The aspects of Wormald's thesis which have a bearing upon our current questions lie along two axes. First, the definitional one. Wormald needed the line between 'loyalty' and 'disloyalty/betrayal' to be drawn at whether or not an individual followed the king's laws in addition to whether or not one was loyal specifically to the king. Anything from betrayal of the king himself to stealing a loaf of bread could constitute disloyalty to the king, whilst everything else – especially following the laws – by extension would have been 'loyalty'. What differentiated loyalty and disloyalty here were whether an individual acted in or against the king's interests. The 'king's interests' extended beyond his immediate context to encompass how individual subjects behaved relative to one another in the context of law and order and the common good. This poses a challenge to the theory argued in the previous section, where acting to further the king's interests would generally have been considered active loyalty, and that not doing so – depending upon the context – might still have left the individual in a state of passive loyalty. At the heart of the matter lie different views of the extent to which the parameters of loyalty *to the king*, i.e. how a group of men behaved relative to him, could have been conceptualised by contemporaries as including behaviours which had no direct bearing upon him.

The second axis is that of royal prerogative. In Wormald's theory, the presence in the law-codes of an oath of loyalty, through its close association with campaigns against crime, made flouting the king's laws synonymous with being personally disloyal to him. This meant

¹⁵² *MEL* prep., 123.

that the king was imposing upon his subjects his right to the behaviours that were encompassed in being not-disloyal *and* in not breaking the law, i.e., the king could claim a right to their active loyalty, both directly and indirectly relative to him. In order to establish whether such interpretations of royal conceptions of loyalty are justified, particularly in the context of the theory of passive and active loyalty outlined previously, we must look closely at the available evidence starting with Alfred and progressing systematically towards Edmund.

a. Alfred to Æthelstan

Alfred's *domboc* begins with the following clause: 'In the first place we enjoin you, as a matter of supreme importance, that every man shall abide carefully by his oath and his pledge'.¹⁵³ To anyone looking for potential ancestors of Edmund's general oath, this would seem an obvious candidate. There are however several reasons to doubt this. Primarily, the clause does not explicitly designate nor even imply the king as the recipient of the oath and pledge, and the law code's royal issue is not sufficient to assume the king as the clause's object. The subjects and objects of the *domboc*'s clauses are overwhelmingly specified; apart from the first clause, there is only one other from clauses 1 to 44 which does not specify to whom the action is being done.¹⁵⁴ Clauses 44 to the end relate to personal injury and specify the object as men in general, i.e. 'If anyone strikes off another's nose', etc. Furthermore when the object of a clause is the king, it is unambiguous: 'If anyone violates the king's protection...';¹⁵⁵ 'If anyone plots against the life of the king...';¹⁵⁶ etc. The generality of the first clause would then be a peculiarity. Based on the trends in the code, we are under an obligation to assume neither that if a specific

¹⁵³ Af, 1. Liebermann, I, p. 46; trans. Attenborough, p. 63. For full discussion of Alfred's code, see *MEL*, pp. 264-284.

¹⁵⁴ Af 16, 'If anyone steals a cow or a broodmare and drives off a foal or calf he shall pay for the latter a shilling and for the mothers according to their value'. Liebermann, I, p. 58; Attenborough, p. 78.

¹⁵⁵ Af 3. Liebermann, I, p. 50; Attenborough, p. 65.

¹⁵⁶ Af 4. Liebermann, I, p. 50; Attenborough, p. 65. Further examples include Af 7, 40.

object was intended by the clauses' author(s) it would have been left unspoken, nor indeed that this object would have been the king.

A close reading of the first clause with its subclauses presents further difficulties. If the oath and pledge were in fact one of loyalty to the king, it would seem odd that *Alfred 1.1* describes the conditions in which one could break this oath; even stranger that one of these conditions is if the sworn oath brought one to betray one's lord, for this implies that loyalty to one's lord is more important than loyalty to the king.¹⁵⁷ Whilst we have no explicit example from Alfred's time of loyalty to lord conflicting with loyalty to king, we do know that Edmund's oath placed loyalty to the king over that to kin.¹⁵⁸ It thus seems strange to claim that his oath would find its roots in Alfred's supposed oath, which could legally be violated if one's loyalty to the king came into conflict with loyalty to one's lord. Not only is there no evidence that the oath and pledge in *Alfred 1* was given specifically to the king, but there is no evidence that it involved loyalty. If one removes the king from the equation, we are distinctly less likely to assume that the promises involved were those of loyalty. Simply because the legislation was promulgated by the king does not mean that he was intended as the object of the pledge. The language used is very general: that 'every man abide by his oath and his pledge', and that 'if he pledges himself to something which it is lawful to carry out and proves false to his pledge...'.¹⁵⁹ As it stands, *Alfred 1* concerns oaths in general and the importance of honouring them; they were the pillars upon which rested the justice system that Alfred was trying to promulgate in the *domboc*. We cannot thus follow Wormald's argument that the roots of Edmund's oath can be found in the late ninth century. Nor by extension can we accept that Alfred was attempting to use legislation, with all it represented in terms of royal authority, to prescribe that his men be loyal to himself.

¹⁵⁷ Af 1.1 Liebermann, I, p. 46; Attenborough, p. 63.

¹⁵⁸ 'Let no one conceal the breach of it in a brother or a relation of his, any more than in a stranger', III Edmund 1. Lieberman, I, p. 19; Robertson, p. 13.

¹⁵⁹ Af 1, 1.2. Liebermann, I, p. 46; Attenborough, p. 63.

Further support for the idea of a general oath of loyalty to Alfred has been found by historians in Edward's second code. This also demands interrogation, for Edward's code does not in fact support the notion that Alfred's laws referred to an oath of loyalty. *II Edward 5* reads, 'If anyone neglects this and breaks his oath and his pledge, which the whole nation has given, he shall pay such compensation as the *domboc* declares.'¹⁶⁰ Although, like *Alfred 1*, this clause makes no explicit mention of an oath of loyalty to the king, the implied homogeneity and centralisation of the oath does seem to denote a pledge of some sort given by the Anglo-Saxon 'people'. Its reference to the *domboc* in turn suggests that Alfred demanded the same.¹⁶¹ There is little doubt that *II Edward 5* refers to Alfred's first clause, because there is no mention in Alfred's *domboc* of cattle-tracing, which was the content of *II Edward 4* and presumably what was being referred to as 'neglected' in *II Edward 5*. The only part of the *domboc* to which *II Edward 5* could be referring as its model is thus *Alfred 1*'s prescription against breaking the oath and pledge. *II Edward 5* however refers specifically to a certain compensation mentioned by the *domboc* for breaking this oath and pledge. The only time compensation is mentioned in the *domboc*'s first clause is in its second subclause (*Alfred 1.2*), which specifies that compensation was due when someone proved false after pledging 'to something which is lawful to carry out'.¹⁶²

Thus whilst *II Edward 5* does refer to *Alfred 1* as its model in the sense that it does mention an oath and pledge, *II Edward 5* is also specifically concerned with cattle-rustling,¹⁶³ and with its mention of the *domboc* cannot be referring to a specific compensation in that code to be paid for violating said general 'oath and pledge', since the *domboc* does not contain such a clause. *II Edward 5* ought thus to be interpreted as referring to an oath given by 'the people',

¹⁶⁰ II Edw 5. Liebermann, I, p. 144; Attenborough, p. 121.

¹⁶¹ This position is held in *MEL* prep., p. 121; Baker, *The Laws of England*, p. 164; Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', at p. 57.

¹⁶² Af 1.2. Liebermann, I, p. 46; Attenborough, p. 63.

¹⁶³ For the close association with theft of Edward's oath see Lambert, *Law and Order*, p. 212.

perhaps to the king, not to engage in theft, and that the ‘compensation’ it refers to is in the sense of ‘refer generally to the *domboc* for specific instances of breaking this oath and pledge because it will tell you what compensation needs to be paid in any particular context’. *Alfred I* thus did not refer to an oath of general loyalty, neither on the basis of what it states in and of itself, nor on the basis of *II Edward 5*’s contents and back-reference to it. Furthermore, *II Edward 5* does not suggest that abiding by one’s oath and pledge not to engage in theft was understood synonymously with behaviour bearing upon one’s dedication *to the king*, nor conversely that engaging in theft was associated with *hlaforðswice*. As a result, the legal evidence indicates that we cannot accept the premise that Alfred or Edward was including within their definition of loyalty to the king an obligation to refrain from theft, and neither can they be said to have been using law to prescribe this conceptualisation of loyalty.

A final piece of potentially corroborating evidence for Alfred’s ‘oath of loyalty’ remains outside of the legal corpus. A charter from 901 comes down to us containing valuable information: a brief mention of the disloyalty of Ealdorman Wulfhere of Wiltshire in Alfred’s reign. This charter records land changing hands which Wulfhere had forfeited to the king for deserting ‘both his lord King Alfred and his country against the oath he had sworn to the king and all his magnates.’¹⁶⁴ This is mentioned regularly alongside the clauses in *Alfred I* as further evidence of the existence and implementation of a general oath.¹⁶⁵ Ammon has rightly pointed out that this instance, along with Helmstan’s forfeiture of land to the king in the Fonthill Letter as a result of the breach of the oath he had sworn to the king, offers no evidence for a general rather than an individual oath, the latter of which Keynes preferred in his dissection of the letter.¹⁶⁶ There is therefore absolutely no evidence to support the theory that a general oath of

¹⁶⁴ ‘[...] *utrumque et suum dominum regem Ælfredum. et patriam ultra iusiurandum quam regi et suis omnibus optimatibus iurauerat sine licentia dereliquit*’, S 362.

¹⁶⁵ *MEL* prep., p. 119; Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 239; brought into question by Ammon, ‘The functions’ at p. 520; on Wulfhere’s activities, see Yorke, ‘Edward as Ætheling’, at pp. 35-36.

¹⁶⁶ Ammon, ‘The functions’, at p. 520. On Fonthill see Keynes, ‘The Fonthill Letter’; Brooks, ‘The Fonthill letter’.

loyalty which extended to refraining from crime is visible under Alfred or Edward. Wormald originally called *Alfred I* an oath introduced by Alfred ‘under Carolingian inspiration’, and whilst it is true that the Anglo-Saxons were in many respects down-river of the Carolingians, the general existence of this emulation cannot be deployed as a reflex when in some cases all other evidence points to divergence.¹⁶⁷

Although not an oath of loyalty, there certainly was an *að 7 wed*, or oath and pledge, in both *Alfred I* and *II Edward 5*, apparently given by the whole ‘nation’, and it is worth exploring what it meant.¹⁶⁸ This will not only be helpful in tracing the development of the oath of loyalty, but will also contribute to the discussion concerning the nature and boundaries of the concept of loyalty within legal norms. *II Edward* offers more clues than does the *domboc* as to what was being sworn in the *að 7 wed*. After the introduction’s exhortation to the royal councillors to better keep the public peace, *II Edward I* reads: ‘He [Edward] asked which of them would devote themselves to this reformation and which of them would cooperate with him in his efforts, favouring what he favoured and discountenancing what he discountenanced’.¹⁶⁹ Similarities in wording between this clause and Edmund’s oath were interpreted by Wormald as further confirmation of their common significance as oaths of loyalty;¹⁷⁰ yet it is worth pointing out that *II Edward I* does not mention an oath, with the ‘reformation’ referring to the law-code *II Edward* itself as a means of preserving public peace. This is another example of Wormald’s tendency to interpolate significance into the past. It is more plausible to argue that

¹⁶⁷ Wormald, ‘*Lex scripta*’, at p. 12.

¹⁶⁸ I am not concerned here with what exactly the term *beod*, or nation, meant in this clause. Edward’s formula could be compared with the peace of Alfred and Guthrum, where the oaths were sworn by the participants and taken to apply to all their subordinates (Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 236; Pratt, ‘Written law’, at p. 339). Kritsch also has a discussion of the times at which the word *folc* is used in the Old English corpus, when in fact only the *witan* may be implied (‘Fragments’, at p. 176). On the other hand, *VI Æthelstan 10* contains an example of how an oath might have been disseminated from the leading men, to the reeves, to the entire shire. Whether or not such apparatus as described under Æthelstan was in place under Edward with the effect that ‘the whole nation’ would actually have sworn, however inclusive the group of swearers was in reality the *witan* was bound to have been included at the least, and the subject of the oath at the most.

¹⁶⁹ II Edw 1 (Liebermann, I, p. 140; Attenborough, p. 119).

¹⁷⁰ *MEL* prep., pp. 120-121.

Edmund simply re-used a formula in Edward's code to a slightly different end, than to look at the language of Edmund's oath and to argue that because *II Edward 1* looked similar, it intended the same thing, even though no mention of an oath or of loyalty exist therein. In this precursor to Edmund's oath of loyalty (considered in conjunction with *II Edward 5*), Edward was asking his councillors to promise to follow his rules in the context of legal reforms.

A general oath to the king did therefore probably exist in Edward's legislation, but it was about following the rules rather than conceptualised within the framework of actions that had a bearing upon the issue of personal alignment with the king, i.e. loyalty. In anticipation of arguments about what the phraseology *að 7 wed* itself connoted, a few remarks must here be made. This phraseology occurs several times in the chronicle to denote binding agreements of lordship, such as in the Northumbrian submission to Æthelflæd, and the British kings to Æthelstan in 927.¹⁷¹ This body of evidence is too self-selecting to be used as proof that the phraseology of *að 7 wed* occurred *only* in such contexts, however.¹⁷² Furthermore, it is striking that Edmund's oath, though constituting the clearest and most explicit example of the prescription of loyalty to the king, does *not* include the Latin equivalent of the phraseology of *að 7 wed*. It seems unlikely that it had been omitted by the *Quadripartus* compiler; upon verification of the translation into Latin of the clauses in Alfred and Edward's codes and Æthelstan which employ *að 7 wed*, the compiler translates them as '*fidem et iuramentum*' and '*iuramentum et uadium*' respectively.¹⁷³ Each instance respects the Old English coupled phraseology, which does not occur in the Latin of *III Edmund 1*. It is thus unlikely that the *Quadripartus* compiler would suddenly have dropped the couplet were it to have existed in the original Old English law. If *að 7 wed* was as clearly redolent of submission and subordination as Wormald claimed, and if the *að 7 wed* mentioned in earlier laws were in fact

¹⁷¹ *ASC* a. 918 CD; a. '926' D; see also a. 947 D; a. 1014 CDE; a. 1016 CDE.

¹⁷² As did Wormald in his *MEL* prep., pp. 120-121.

¹⁷³ Af 1 (Liebermann, I, p. 47) and II Edward 5 (Liebermann, I, p. 143).

about loyalty to the king, why would Edmund's oath, which was also reproducing Edward's words, not employ such supposedly traditional phraseology?¹⁷⁴

That a general oath to the king before Edmund's reign would actually have been about following the rules rather than about a personal relationship with the king is further buttressed by the usage of *að 7 wed* in the codes from Æthelstan's reign.¹⁷⁵ In his Grately code can be found a very similar clause to *II Edward 5*, the enactment of which may in fact be seen by pledges which strictly speaking encompass certain law-abiding behaviour rather than allegiance. *II Æthelstan 20.3* reads, 'It shall be proclaimed in the assembly that men shall respect everything which the king wishes to be respected, and refrain from theft on pain of death and the loss of all they possess'.¹⁷⁶ This certainly seems a paraphrase of Edward, but it is only by jumping ahead to *VI Æthelstan* that its implications become clear: 'The councillors all in a body gave their solemn pledges to the archbishop at Thundersfield... that every reeve should exact a pledge from his own shire that they would all observe the decrees for the public security which Æthelstan and his councillors had enacted, first at Grately, and then Exeter, and then Faversham, and then Thundersfield'.¹⁷⁷ It is also with reference to the violation of such pledges that Æthelstan ordered the forcible removal of individuals who could evade justice because of their powerful kindreds.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Wormald in *MEL* prep., pp. 120-121. He acknowledged the phraseological link between Edmund and Edward in *MEL*, p. 311.

¹⁷⁵ For discussion of Æthelstan's codes, see *MEL*, pp. 290-308; Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 136-145; Roach, 'Law codes and legal norms' *passim*.

¹⁷⁶ *II As 20.3*. Liebermann, I, p. 160; Attenborough, p. 137.

¹⁷⁷ *VI As 10*. Liebermann, I, p. 181; Attenborough, p. 167. This clause comes from a section of *VI As* which according to Keynes does not belong to the original document, having been appended probably as a report from Thundersfield for the benefit of the London Peace Guild, perhaps by Ælfheah and Brihtnoth. See Keynes, 'Royal government', at pp. 239-240 and Roach, 'Law codes and legal norms', at p. 475. For an alternative reading of the tenth clause, see Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 289-9. *VI As 8.9* and *11* have similar messages and also involve pledges.

¹⁷⁸ *V As 3* (Liebermann, I, p. 168; Attenborough, p. 155). cf. *III As 6* (Liebermann, I, p. 170; Attenborough, p. 145); *IV As 3* (Liebermann, I, p. 171; Attenborough, p. 147). Charlemagne instated a similar policy for the resettlement of malcontents: see MGH *Capitulare Haristallense* (a. 779), c. 22, *Capitularia I* (ed. Boretius), no. 20, trans. King, *Charlemagne*, p. 205. MGH *Capitulare Saxonicum* (a. 797), c. 10, *Capitularia I* (ed. Boretius), no. 27, trans. King, *Charlemagne*, pp. 231-2.

The oaths and pledges given to the king in the laws of Edward and Æthelstan were therefore not oaths of loyalty, but oaths taken by their leading subordinates at assemblies to follow the king's laws. Particularly in the case of Æthelstan these laws were often without precedent, and he sensibly demanded a promise from those present that they would be enacted, in the interests of consistency and efficiency.¹⁷⁹ In Alfred's case, the injunction was to be a man of one's word – which, in a way, is also about following the rules of legal procedure. Moreover the legal evidence from Alfred to Æthelstan speaks of oaths to be lawful, not necessarily to be loyal. These kings cannot be said to have used legislation to impose loyalty to the king upon their men, either in theory or in practice.

b. Edmund's oath, lawfulness and loyalty

We finally arrive at Edmund's oath, which by now should be seen as constituting the first time an oath of loyalty was prescribed by Anglo-Saxon kings in legislation. Yet two questions still remain: on what basis was Edmund laying a claim to his men's loyalty, i.e. can it really be considered as having been imposed on the basis of his status? And how far can one claim that an oath of loyalty to the king would have extended to cover behaviour which did not bear upon a subject's direct relationship with him? Together, the answers to these questions are relevant to the issue of the type of loyalty to which kings could lay claim based upon ideological frameworks of their authority, introduced at the beginning of this chapter.

In answer to the first question, we ought to consider both the terms of Edmund's oath and the format in which it exists in *III Edmund*.¹⁸⁰ The language of Edmund's oath is vague,

¹⁷⁹ On the revolutionary nature of Æthelstan's laws in both content and volume see *MEL*, pp. 304-8; see also Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 141.

¹⁸⁰ This code is transmitted via the twelfth-century *Quadripartitus*. Our faith in the *Quadripartitus* author's translation is upheld in part by his general rigour. On the *Quadripartitus* see *MEL*, pp. 236-44, 308-312, 244-253, 286-290, and Wormald, '*Quadripartitus*'.

probably deliberately so, making it difficult to picture the specifics of what was expected. It does however offer us a frame of reference by drawing an explicit parallel with lordship. A brief look at what we know about this relationship is therefore salutary. The bond of lordship was confirmed by the act of commendation, which was done face to face and involved bowing to the lord and swearing the oath.¹⁸¹ Alfred's *domboc* exempted a man from vendetta if fighting on his lord's behalf, and gave the same penalty for betraying one's lord as betraying the king.¹⁸² Edgar allowed absence from the Hundred court if a man was on his lord's summons, and the Old English translation of the *Soliloquies* implies the man's absolute duty to heed his lord's 'letter and seal'.¹⁸³ But the primary witness to the bond of lordship is the oath of loyalty to lords in the Old English text *Swerian*, which is almost identical to Edmund's oath but carries a few further provisions about the lord's responsibility towards his man:

'By the Lord, before whom these relics are holy, I will be loyal and true to N, and love all that he loves, and hate all that he hates, in accordance with God's rights and secular obligations; and never, willingly and intentionally, in word or deed, do anything that is hateful to him; on condition that he keep me as I shall deserve, and carry out all that was our agreement, when I subjected myself to him and chose his favour.'¹⁸⁴

It is crucial to note here that *Swerian* made service to the lord *conditional upon* the lord fulfilling his end of the bargain, and treating the man 'as he deserved', undoubtedly meaning with proper respect and along the man's expectations. Moreover, the lord did not have a right to his man's loyalty simply because of his status. The Battle of Maldon offers a poignant testimony to the reciprocal aspects of this bond, in which men would go so far as to die for

¹⁸¹ DOE 'Bugan', 6-6. a. i. See also Wulfstan, *Vita Sancti Æthelwoldi*, c. 40, p. 62. For relevant legislation on commendation, see II As 2, V As 1. Cf. How Ælfric recounted that Theophilus commended himself to the devil by writ, *CH*, I, p. 448.

¹⁸² Af 42.5-6 (Liebermann, I, p. 76; Attenborough, p. 85), 4.1-2 (Liebermann, I, p. 50; Attenborough, pp. 65-67).

¹⁸³ I Edg 7.1 (Liebermann, I, p. 194; Robertson, p. 19). *Soliloquies*, p. 62.

¹⁸⁴ Liebermann, I, pp. 396-7; trans. Whitelock, *The Beginnings*, p. 33. *Swerian* as a collection probably post-dates 900 and is closely associated with the Edward and Edmund codes. See *MEL*, pp. 165, 232, 283-4.

their lord *because* of how well he had treated them, to the extent that such loyalty was a cause for celebration even in the face of utter defeat.¹⁸⁵ The loyalty involved in the bond of lordship was above all dominated by the principles of patronage and reciprocal service.¹⁸⁶ That Edmund's oath referred to this type of dynamic should therefore be understood to qualify the extent to which it can be considered an example of a king imposing loyalty upon his men because he was king – namely, divorced from how he behaved towards them in that capacity.

The second question must be asked because, whilst we have established that Anglo-Saxon legislation did not contain mentions of oaths of loyalty to the king before *III Edmund*, we have yet to completely separate the ideas of lawfulness and loyalty merged by Wormald's thesis of crime and disloyalty. Wormald himself might have argued moreover that although swearing to follow the law and swearing to be true to the king might have been nominally different, at the heart of the matter contemporaries would have understood them as synonymous.¹⁸⁷ If this were the case, then regardless of whether an oath of loyalty were being alluded to specifically in legislation from Alfred to Æthelstan, by imposing a pledge of lawfulness these kings might as well have been imposing a pledge of loyalty. In this scenario, kings would have widened the parameters of their direct interests, and thus of behaviour which signalled personal and political dedication to the king. Through legislation and based on their status, they would have imposed loyalty in quite an all-encompassing sense – in other words, far beyond simply passive loyalty, as argued earlier in this chapter.

The preamble to *III Edmund* provides a relevant detail. As seen in the previous section, the oaths mentioned in the codes of Edward and Æthelstan were about swearing to follow the

¹⁸⁵ O'Keefe, 'Heroic values and Christian ethics'. On the wider context for Maldon, see John, 'War and society', and Keynes, 'The historical context'.

¹⁸⁶ For a discussion of how political leadership of the local elite was exercised through social relationships see Williams, '*Princeps Merciorum Gentis*' at p. 143. In a Carolingian context, see Innes, *State and Society*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁷ Wormald's possible objection is based on his understanding of crime – actions harming the public peace – as representing disloyalty, a relationship which he accepted as normally encompassing actions done directly to the king. See Wormald, *MEL* prep., p. 123.

laws and the guidelines of legal procedure promulgated at assemblies, whilst that in Alfred was an exhortation to honour oaths in general. *III Edmund* begins however with clear conceptual separation of the activities of keeping the public peace, namely following the king's laws, and loyalty to the king: 'These are the provisions for the preservation of public peace and the swearing of allegiance which have been instituted at Colyton...'. Furthermore the oath itself makes no mention of crime prevention or of a duty to follow the law, focusing instead on aligning one's interests with those of the king himself; not to dissent openly or in secret, to love what he loved and to shun what he shunned. This is not to say that abiding by the king's laws and being considered faithful to him personally could not sometimes have overlapped; indeed the connexion between Edward's phraseology in *II Edward I*, whose oath was closely tied to theft-prevention, and Edmund's, makes a link between these behaviours possible.¹⁸⁸ What the distinction demonstrates is that swearing to follow the king's laws and swearing to follow the king himself were not considered one and the same.¹⁸⁹

A problem with Wormald's thesis of crime and disloyalty is that it depends to an extent upon wide knowledge of law as it was written, something against which Wormald himself argued.¹⁹⁰ *II Edward 5*, used by Wormald to argue that *Alfred I* ought to be considered an oath of general loyalty, refers to the laws in the *domboc*, i.e. written. It was partly on the basis of the physical proximity of the *written* clauses in *II Edward*, interpreted by Wormald as

¹⁸⁸ *II Edw 1*: '7 þæt lufian ðæt he lufode, 7 ðæt ascunian ðæt he ascunode' (Liebermann, I, p. 142); compare with *III Edmund 1*: 'et in amando quod amabit, nolendo quod nolet' (Liebermann, I, p. 190).

¹⁸⁹ Cf. The Carolingian context, which is often cited as the blueprint for the supposed English general oath of loyalty (including by Wormald), where one of Charlemagne's capitularies in Nijmegen in 806 addressed the problem of magnates selling benefices and buying them back as allods. This was forbidden because 'men who do this are not keeping well the *fides* which they promised us', i.e. they were breaking an oath to the king. The text goes on to state further, 'and let them not be found in what could be seen as a kind of infidelity because those who do this, well, it is not through their will that such deeds have reached our ears' (MGH, Capit I, no. 46, c. 7, 131, *Capit Missorum Niumagae*). It is clear in this case by the use of the phrase 'a kind of infidelity' that Charlemagne and his agents did not conceptualise an unbroken conceptual continuum between illegal acts (even those done in capacities nearer to that against the king himself than those cited by Wormald in his theory of crime and disloyalty) and concepts of disloyalty to the king. The phrase 'a kind of infidelity' suggests that contemporaries understood it was possible to see these acts as related to infidelity, but that there still existed a degree of conceptual separation there. For a discussion of this capitulary see Nelson, 'Trust', pp. 92-3.

¹⁹⁰ Wormald, '*Lex scripta*' and further elaborated in his *MEL*.

indicators of an oath of loyalty, to the clauses forbidding theft, that he could argue for the idea of loyalty to encompass issues of being lawful. For Wormald's argument to stand, the oral proclamations in *II Edward* would have needed to be spoken in the exact same order as they were written, and then for the audience to make the connexion implied by the proximity of the ideas – but even then, they would have needed access to the *domboc* document. And that is not even to touch on the practical difficulty that not all leading men were present at all assemblies. How could someone reasonably be accused of disloyalty to the king, i.e. actions committed within the parameters of a direct relationship which harmed or contravened the king's interests, if they were not aware that certain actions which would not have *directly* affected the king's position were suddenly considered to do so?

There are also suggestions in Anglo-Saxon sources from this period that following the king's law was not necessarily tantamount to demonstrating loyalty to his person, or indeed that breaking the law reflected a disloyalty to the king. Edgar's fourth code, for example, contains the following clause: 'It is my will that the Danes continue to observe the best constitution which they can determine upon. I have always granted you such a concession and will continue to do so as long as my life lasts because of the loyalty which you have constantly professed to me'.¹⁹¹ The Danes in question, those of Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia, were at this point within Edgar's kingdom, but seem to have been permitted to keep their own legal systems.¹⁹² This is echoed by Wulfstan's judgment about Edgar in the *Chronicle*: 'He loved evil foreign customs and brought too firmly heathen manners within this land, and attracted hither foreigners and enticed harmful people to this country'.¹⁹³ *IV Edgar* seems to

¹⁹¹ IV Edg 12 (Liebermann, I, p. 212; Robertson, p. 37).

¹⁹² Niels Lund used IV Edg to argue for clear evidence of northern separatism in 'King Edgar and the Danelaw'. In response, see Abrams, 'Edgar and the men of the Danelaw'. IV Edg 15 gives instruction for the promulgation of the code in the ealdordoms of Oslac (Northumbria), Ælfhere (Mercia) and Æthelwine (East Anglia). IV Edg 2a.2 implies that despite the area's legal autonomy, Edgar still had authority over it as English king: 'And that in every borough and in every county I possess my royal prerogatives as my father did' (Liebermann, I, p. 208; Robertson, p. 33).

¹⁹³ ASC a. 959 D. These verses were ascribed to Wulfstan by Jost, 'Wulfstan und die angelsächsische Chronik', at p. 111, on account of the phrase '*godes lage lufian*' being found nowhere else in Old English.

have been the first code to use Old Norse vocabulary, and could thus probably reflect the culturally distinct nature of its intended audience.¹⁹⁴ The ‘foreign’ ethnicity of the Danes and the fraught history of that region certainly had a role to play here; the English conquest of Northumbria by Æthelstan occurred in 927, but York had been intermittently under Norse-speaking kings as recently as 954. Eastern Mercia had been under Danish control in Alfred’s time, and though Edward and Æthelflæd returned it and East-Anglia to English rule the area retained a strong Danish presence.¹⁹⁵ Edgar probably realised it was more expedient to allow them administrative freedom than to attempt to rule the area inflexibly.¹⁹⁶ It is also possible that he would not have been capable of enforcing his own legal system there; Scandinavian influence over northern legal practice was long-established, attested by the time of the Alfred-Guthrum treaty and in Edward’s laws, and thus probably robust.¹⁹⁷ But this does not diminish the fact that Edgar at least portrayed himself as prepared to barter legal consistency across his realm for the loyalty of its various peoples, implying that the former was not always included in a definition of the latter.

That this may also have been the case in Æthelstan’s reign is suggested by his laws prescribing reeves’ duties to carry out legal procedure. His laws contain several references to the crime of *oferhyrnesse*, or disobedience, which is frequently a penalty fine of 120s handed out to reeves for failing to carry out their duties, or for general breaches of legal procedure.¹⁹⁸ A representative example reads, ‘And any reeve who neglects this [to oversee public meetings

¹⁹⁴ *MEL*, p. 319.

¹⁹⁵ The literature on Danish ethnicity is vast, but significant contributions include Abrams, ‘Edgar and the men of the Danelaw’; Hadley, ‘Lordship in the Danelaw, c.860-954’, esp. at p. 114; Hadley, ‘Viking and native’; Reynolds, ‘What do we mean by ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘Anglo-Saxons?’’, esp. at pp. 406-13.

¹⁹⁶ Simon Keynes came to a similar conclusion about Edgar’s attitude to diversity in general, writing that Edgar ‘regarded the act of acknowledging the diversity of established customs among different peoples as the best way of maintaining the appearance of overall unity’ in his ‘The Vikings in England’, at p. 72.

¹⁹⁷ II Edward 5.2 (Liebermann, I, p. 144; Attenborough, p. 121); Wormald, *MEL*, suggested that this clause preceded the submission of East-Anglia to the king in a. 916-7, 438-9; for the treaty of Alfred-Guthrum see Attenborough, pp. 98-101.

¹⁹⁸ Examples of this include: II As 20; II As 25.1-2; III As 7.3; IV As 7; V As 1.2-3; VI As 11. Lambert, *Law and Order*, pp. 213-5. On this topic see also Taylor, ‘*Lex scripta* and problem of enforcement’.

in which a man clears himself by oath of wrongdoing, accused by his lord] shall pay the fine for disobedience to the king'.¹⁹⁹ Although we have no explicit evidence that Æthelstan still considered these men to be loyal to him, the very fact that such offences were categorised as 'disobedience' makes it unlikely, in the abstract, that they would also have been labelled as disloyalty, *hlafordswice*.

That such dubious behaviour did not necessarily affect the king's perception of an official's general dedication to him is revealed by the incident in which two of Æthelred's reeves allowed the consecrated burial of thieves. In Æthelred's own laws, Christian burial was denied to men killed whilst committing *hamsocn*, *forsteal*, and perhaps also *mundbryce*; it was also denied to those men who were considered *ungetreow* or untrue.²⁰⁰ When ealdorman Leofsige reported the reeves' wrongdoing to the king, his response was not to punish them or to reverse the burial but instead to grant Æthelwig an estate previously held by the brothers. Æthelred reportedly did not reverse the reeves' decision because he 'did not want to sadden Æthelwig, who was dear and precious to him'.²⁰¹ This constitutes good evidence that promising to follow the king's law did not necessarily or seriously affect his view of one's fundamental loyalty to him, for Æthelred not only forgave his dear reeve, but rewarded him with land. Together this evidence suggests that at the very least, there was no hard and fast connexion between lawfulness and loyalty – and at the most, that kings did not expect a subject's potential misbehaviour to reflect their entire disposition towards him.

Three aspects of kings' attitudes towards the loyalty of their men have now been established. One, kings from Alfred to Æthelstan were not using legislative frameworks to impose the idea of loyalty upon their men. Two, that Edmund's oath was the first instance of

¹⁹⁹ V As 1.2 (Liebermann, I, p. 168; Attenborough, p. 154).

²⁰⁰ IV Æthelred 4; I Atr 4-4.2; III Atr 7-7.1. Lambert, *Law and Order*, p. 222. Other examples of offences meriting unconsecrated burial can be found at II As 26 and I Edm 1, 4, 6.

²⁰¹ '*Nolens contristari Athelwig, quia mihi erat carus et preciosus*', S 883. See also Kelly, *Abingdon*, II, no.125, pp. 483-9. For discussion of this charter in the context of crime in Æthelred's reign, see Keynes, 'Crime and punishment in the reign of Æthelred', at pp. 79-80.

this. And three, that since disloyalty to the king would probably not have been considered necessarily synonymous with crime, kings were not attempting to claim a right to lawful behaviour as a form of loyalty. This seems for a long time to have lain outside the king's sphere of legitimate action.

But why did the oath of loyalty suddenly appear under Edmund? The similarities between his and Charlemagne's oath have long been noted.²⁰² The general oath was introduced by Charlemagne in 789, and was expanded upon in 792/3 in order to ensure its effective extraction from every adult male over the age of twelve.²⁰³ It is in the *capitularium missorum generale* of 802 however that we see the following formula, unmistakable in its almost complete agreement with Edmund's: 'I am faithful... as a man ought rightfully to be towards his lord'.²⁰⁴ There are other similarities, though no other seemingly direct quotations: the text of Charlemagne's oath of 802 reads '...with a pure heart and without fraud and deceit on my part towards him [Charlemagne]', whilst that of 789 has a very similar line. These could be paraphrased by the following line in Edmund's oath: '[...] without any dispute or dissension, openly or in secret, favouring what he favours and discountenancing what he discountenances'.²⁰⁵ Another oath of similar wording to Charlemagne's survives from 854, in the reign of Charles the Bald.²⁰⁶ It seems an inescapable conclusion that the draftsmen of Edmund's oath had been in some measure exposed at least to Charlemagne's oath of 802, and potentially to the other relevant legislation.²⁰⁷

Yet the Carolingian connexion offers insights only onto the content of Edmund's oath, not its timing. Was there something particular to Edmund's context that made him look to

²⁰² Stubbs, *The Constitutional History*, I, p. 148; Wormald, 'Lex scripta', at p. 12; Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 234; Molyneux, *The Formation*, p. 64.

²⁰³ MGH *Capit.* I (Boretius), no. 23, c.18; no. 25, cc. 1-2; no. 33, cc. 2-9; no. 34, c. 19.

²⁰⁴ MGH *Capit.* I (Boretius), no. 34: 'sicut per dicitum debet esse homo domino suo' vs Edmund's oath, 'sicut homo debet esse fidelis domino suo' (Liebermann, I, p. 190).

²⁰⁵ MGH *Capit.* I (Boretius), nos. 34 and 23, c. 18.

²⁰⁶ MGH *Capit.* II (Krause), 278, c.13.

²⁰⁷ On Carolingian oaths see Odegaard, 'Carolingian oaths of fidelity'. See also the instructive summary of Charlemagne's use of oaths in capitularies in Nelson, 'Trust', pp. 88-90.

continental kings' approaches to loyalty, or that made him doubt the loyalty of his men? There may be a common answer to both questions in contemporary West-Frankish developments and England's connexion thereto. Edmund's father Edward and his older half-brother Æthelstan had developed a wide portfolio of Frankish and Ottonian alliances, and the Cerdicing dynasty was now closely entwined with that of the Carolingians, via the marriage of Eadgifu to Charles the Simple, and with the powerful Hugh the Great of Neustria, who had married Eadhild in 926.²⁰⁸ She was Edmund's older half-sister, and they may have kept in touch after her emigration; but, more importantly, Eadgifu fled back to Wessex with her infant son Louis IV around 922, which is probably when Edmund was born.²⁰⁹ Edward died two years later, and it is probable that Edmund was raised in Æthelstan's court along with Louis. They were royal princes of the same age and closely related, and it is tempting to imagine them listening to the poetry of Æthelstan's court, sitting enraptured by tales of their family's feats against the Danes, sparring together, eating together, and praying together.²¹⁰ At the very least the prince and the ætheling would have moved in the same circles.

These are good reasons to assume that Edmund would have been affected in some measure by the ensuing events in West-Francia. After a relatively successful bid to build alliances in Flanders, Normandy, Brittany and the Paris area, Louis was captured by Hugh in 945, who was not only nominally his man but who had sworn to Æthelstan in 936 that Louis would not be harmed.²¹¹ Edmund would probably have been aware of a precedent; Charles the Simple, his brother in law and Louis' father, had been captured by the powerful magnate Heribert of Vermandois in 923, and had eventually died imprisoned in 929.²¹² Flodoard, a

²⁰⁸ A full account of Æthelstan's marriage alliances may be found in Foot, 'Dynastic strategies', at pp. 246-248; see also Ortenberg, 'The king from overseas'.

²⁰⁹ This is based on the *ASC* entry for a. 940 claiming Edmund was eighteen in that year. On Eadgifu's return see *Chronicon*, p. 2.

²¹⁰ On the poetry which probably permeated Æthelstan's court, see Lapidge, 'Some Latin poems'.

²¹¹ Flodoard, *Annales*, a. 936, p. 29. Richer, *Historiae*, II, pp. 166-73.

²¹² Flodoard, *Annales*, a. 923, 929, pp. 8, 19.

tenth-century West-Frankish chronicler, tells us that Æthelstan sent a fleet to help Louis retain his powerbase in 939.²¹³ Richer gave further details involving Edmund in 946 after Louis' capture, featuring Edmund's 'grief' at his cousin's suffering, and a threat to Hugh that Edmund would besiege him unless he handed Louis over.²¹⁴

Like much of what Richer says, we ought to take this with a grain of salt.²¹⁵ What is important is that Edmund was perceived to have had an interest in Louis' safety, and that there were close ties between Æthelstan, Edmund, and Louis. Even if Richer's account is completely false, Flodoard is considered to be a more reliable source for historical events, and we might assume from his account of Æthelstan's threats that Edmund too would have been in favour of this. Between the years of 943/4 and 946, then, Edmund would have been aware of, and probably deeply alarmed at, the treatment of his nephew at the hands of his own sworn men. Moreover the situation in West-Francia was probably viewed as follows from Edmund's perspective: there remained to the king barely any lands from the royal fisc; magnates were king-makers and king-nappers; their sworn loyalty meant nothing, and their power was only growing.²¹⁶ It does not seem improbable that he could have acted pre-emptively, seeking to guarantee in some legal, even ideological dimension, the loyalty of his own ealdormen and of the entirety of his realm as far as was possible, and introduced a general oath of loyalty in his legislation. The oath was in any case a significant innovation, which would not have been out of character. Edmund was in fact responsible for several other legal innovations, most notably the extension of royal protection. He was for example probably the first king to introduce the

²¹³ Ortenberg, 'The king from overseas', at p. 229. Flodoard, *Annales*, a. 939, p. 31.

²¹⁴ Richer, *Historiae*, II, p. 275.

²¹⁵ Latouche, Richer's first editor, was exasperated by Richer's penchant for embellishment: see *Richer: Histoire de France*, I, 133, n. 2. On Richer and embellishment see now Lake, *Richer of St Remi*, pp. 28, 107, 143 and on Richer more widely see Glenn, *Politics and History*.

²¹⁶ For an overview of the contrast in political climates between tenth-century England and West-Francia, see Pratt, 'Written law', at p. 334. For commentary specifically on the latter territory, see West, *Reframing*, pp. 109-139; Dunbabin, 'West-Francia: The Kingdom', esp. at pp. 393-7; Nelson, 'Rulers and government', at pp. 105, 112-25; Wickham, *Problems*, pp. 15-35.

crimes of *hamsocn* and *mundbryce*,²¹⁷ and to threaten full forfeiture of life and property to anyone who attacked someone sheltering in a church.²¹⁸ He was also the first to allow the families of men who had killed to disown them entirely,²¹⁹ and placed emphasis, perhaps more than his predecessors, on the localisation and collection of fines, the improved funding of local legal bodies, and the organisation of local peace initiatives.²²⁰

c. Oaths to the king extraneous to legal texts

When oaths of loyalty are sworn to a superior, they are given within a hierarchical power-dynamic in which the superior is attempting to regulate and mandate a certain kind of behaviour towards themselves by the swearer. They are symptomatic of the placement of a relationship or behaviour, loyalty in this case, within the confines of an obligation dictated by the authority (God) in whose name the oath is sworn, and by the formality of the articulation itself.²²¹ In this sense, oaths of loyalty sworn to a king constitute a mechanism of imposition of certain ideals of loyalty onto his subject, and an abstract articulation of a general state, or mindset, by which the subject's specific, future behaviours towards the king will be defined. Whilst oaths of course contain practical elements inasmuch as they are meant to encapsulate actual behaviour, they are also heavily, even perhaps primarily, conceptual. They rely upon both parties buying into the obligation created by the utterance of the oath, and into the significance of the entity upon which the oath is sworn. The contexts in which oaths were sworn to the king, the ways in which oaths were later appealed to by the superior to control the swearer (i.e. the role oaths are

²¹⁷ II Ed 6 (Liebermann, I, p. 144; Attenborough, p. 121). On *hamsocn* and *mundbryce* see now Lambert, *Law and Order*, pp. 183-186. For further discussion of *hamsocn* see Colman, 'Hamsocn'.

²¹⁸ II Edm 2 (Liebermann, I, p. 188; Robertson, p. 9).

²¹⁹ II Edm 1-1.3 (Liebermann, I, p. 188; Robertson, p. 9). On the significance of this departure from tradition see Wormald, 'Giving God and king their due' at pp. 337-9; *MEL*, p. 311; cf. Lambert, *Law and Order*, pp. 191-192, n.121, and 228-9.

²²⁰ *MEL*, p. 378. See also Trousdale, 'Being everywhere at once', at pp. 283-93.

²²¹ On the theory behind oaths see Abels, *Lordship*, p. 85.

seen to play as guarantors of behaviour in reality), or the emphasis placed on oaths in the relationship – these are all indicators of how the involved parties think about ideas such as obligation in relation to time and the changing contexts of a relationship, the imposition of loyalty by a superior, and its permanence.

It is thus important to look finally at the extent to which Anglo-Saxon kings used the conceptual mechanism of oaths to secure the loyalty of their men. It has been established above that most kings before Æthelred seem to have been reluctant to give the impression they were entitled to their men's active loyalty. Even Edmund's oath, the only exception to this rule, was cast in terms of the conditional and reciprocal relationship between a lord and his man. But what can the treatment of such oaths in extra-legal sources reveal about the role they played in maintaining one's relationship with the lay elite? Put another way, how highly would his oath to the king have ranked if one had asked an ealdorman or thegn why he was loyal? What was the importance of the obligation this promise created, and how was it appealed to? To what extent was it seen to create an entitlement in the king's case?

We in fact have very little evidence for these types of interactions in late Anglo-Saxon England. In Alfred's reign we have the oath sworn to him by Wulfhere, ealdorman of Wiltshire, which was deemed broken by Edward in his assessment of Wulfhere's actions in 878: he 'deserted without permission both his lord King Alfred and his country against the oath he had sworn to the king and all his magnates'.²²² Æthelflæd, deemed *regina* in certain sources,²²³ had thegns who were 'dear to her' who fell at the gates of Derby, and received oaths from the men of York in 918.²²⁴ There exists no mention of oaths of loyalty to kings from their own leading

²²² '[...] *utrumque et suum dominum regem Ælfredum. et patriam ultra iusiurandum quam regi et suis omnibus optimatibus iurauerat sine licentia dereliquit*', S 362. On Wulfhere and his desertion see Nelson, 'A king across the sea', pp. 53-9.

²²³ Stafford refers to Æthelflæd in 'Political women in Mercia' as 'the last Mercian queen', at p. 45, see also p. 47 on Æthelflæd's title. Æthelflæd was never referred to as queen in English sources, but she was styled as such (or its equivalent) in Celtic sources, on which see on which see Keynes, 'Edward', at p. 43 and Insley, 'Strange end', at p. 9.

²²⁴ ASC a. 917, 918, DE.

men in the reigns of tenth-century kings from Edward to Edgar apart from Edmund's oath.²²⁵ Whilst we do not know the precise extent to which this oath was disseminated, it is likely that it would have been taken at least by the king's advisors present at the Colyton council, and that it was intended for men of a high enough status to have their own men: the code's final clause instructs 'all men to make trustworthy their men and all those who are in their land in peace'.²²⁶ Despite all the treachery which reportedly plagued Æthelred, there is only one mention of what might be considered an oath of loyalty to the king in all the sources for his reign. The Chronicle tells us that in 1001 a Danish naval force came to Devon, and that 'Pallig came to meet them there with the ships he could collect, because he had deserted King Æthelred in spite of all the pledges which he had given him'.²²⁷

In the entire corpus of evidence from 871 to 1016 we therefore have only four references to oaths of loyalty sworn to kings or 'queens' by their own subjects. This is striking, particularly in the context of three considerations. First, that oaths between specific individuals and the king are frequently alluded to by historians as defining aspects of the relationship between them, when there is in fact so little evidence of oaths to the king and the significance they would have held to contemporaries.²²⁸

Second, that this silence on oaths of loyalty to the king apparently does not stem from a general lack of interest in recording the swearing of oaths. An analysis of the Chronicle best illustrates this point. From 871 to 1016 it includes dozens of references to the oaths sworn by Danes (and to a lesser extent, Scots and other peoples) to English kings. From the reigns of

²²⁵ On this see above, pp. 61-8.

²²⁶ III Ed 7-7.2 (Liebermann, I, p. 191; Robertson, p. 15).

²²⁷ ASC a. 1001 CDE.

²²⁸ For my argument that oaths did not receive any attention in legislation pre-Edmund and relevant scholarship see above, pp. 61-8. Examples of historians assuming the probable existence of an oath of loyalty from ealdormen to the king outside of this supposed 'general oath' without further comment include Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 127; Keynes, 'Fonthill letter', at p. 84, n. 127; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 553; Abels, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 183, 184.

Alfred to Æthelred these types of oaths and submissions occur a total of thirty-three times,²²⁹ whilst oaths from English groups to the Danes take place thirteen times,²³⁰ a total of forty-six,²³¹ making the ratio of domestic oaths (i.e. oaths sworn by leading men to a king) to foreign oaths (i.e. oaths sworn between the English and foreign parties) roughly 1:9. This contrast partly results from the fact that scenarios in which oaths of loyalty were required occurred necessarily more frequently in contexts of conflict between parties vying for dominance (e.g. between English kings and Danes, Scots, or Welsh) than in constant relationships in which the power dynamics should already be established (i.e. between English kings and their own men). But whilst this partially accounts for the high number of oaths recorded by Chroniclers between English kings and foreign parties, it does not account for the disproportionately low number of recorded domestic oaths.

Third, that there is a drastic contrast in the extent to which contemporary Frankish sources record oaths to the king compared to English ones, with the effect that their relative importance as defining characteristics of loyalty to the king is emphasised much more in the Frankish case. The Annals of St Bertin, for example, mention oaths of loyalty to the king by Frankish magnates in eighteen entries.²³² Ermoldus in his work of praise for Louis the Pious framed disloyalty to the king in terms of the breaking of the oath sworn to him: ‘If anyone declines to maintain his lasting fidelity to the king through guile, money, or trickery, or if a wicked person seeks to bring some attack against the king or his children or his rule, contrary to the oath he swore [...]’.²³³ Richer of Saint Remi, writing at the end of the tenth century, can

²²⁹ ASC a. 876, 877, 878, 887, 893, 902; 912, 914 (x4 peoples/groups), 915, 917 (x6 peoples/groups); 918 (x2 instances); 920 (x7 instances); 927 (x4 instances); 941; 994.

²³⁰ ASC a. 874, 1013 (x9 instances), 1016 (x3 instances).

²³¹ NB I have included in these numbers submissions which occur without strict mention of oaths, given that in all probability submissions were synonymous with the exchange of oaths. Not included are instances where groups ‘made peace’ with one another, or when the English paid tribute to the Danes, since there is no clear implication that this involved a recognition by one party of the other’s overall authority rather than a simple exchange of goods.

²³² *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 831, 832, 834, 837, 838, 839 (x4 instances), 841, 842, 845, 853, 862, 863 (x3 instances), 864, 869, 870, 871, 872, 877.

²³³ Ermoldus, *In honorem Hludovicii Pii*, III, p. 137.

be shown to have been particularly interested in oaths and their significance, repeatedly making explicit those implicit references to oaths in Flodoard's annals, his source material for the majority of the Histories.²³⁴ In Books One and Two alone they occur eleven times,²³⁵ and loyalty is frequently justified in terms of its articulation in oaths: the most notable example occurs in a speech imagined by Richer to have been given by Charles the Simple's leading men to the king: 'it is a ruinous thing, your highness, for sworn men to abandon their master [...] Now because the present circumstances call for battle, let an oath of fealty be administered to us to that after we have sworn there will be no doubt in anyone's mind.'²³⁶

In the light of these comparisons the lack of oaths in Anglo-Saxon sources is stark. There are several contexts in which, particularly when compared to Carolingian sources, one would expect to find references to oaths of loyalty in the Chronicle but one does not. The majority of the oaths mentioned in the Annals of St. Bertin, for example, occur after the rebellions of members of the Carolingian royal family or Frankish magnates as a means of reiterating the ascendancy of the Emperor both symbolically and practically.²³⁷ In contrast, in the cases of rebellions against Anglo-Saxon kings or friction between them and their leading men in the Chronicle, their resolution is never signalled by oaths to the king, neither is their disloyalty normally framed in the context of broken oaths. In Æthelwold's rebellion against Edward, the ætheling himself was killed but no oaths of loyalty were recorded from 'the men who had given allegiance to him', or from the men who had helped him at Wimborne or those who had submitted to him in Essex.²³⁸ A near parallel would be the aftermath of Lothar's rebellion against Louis the Pious in 834, when not only Lothar but also his men were made to

²³⁴ Beaudoin, 'Conceptions of loyalty in Richer of St Remi's *Historiae*', unpublished MPhil thesis, Cambridge History Library (2016), Chapter Three.

²³⁵ Richer, *Historiae*, I: pp. 45, 105, 139, 131, 153. II: pp. 165, 171, 201, 207, 225, 241.

²³⁶ Richer, *Historiae*, I, p. 105; see also examples at pp. 93, 141.

²³⁷ Examples in the *Annales Bertiniani* include those in entries for a. 831, 832, 834, etc.

²³⁸ *ASC* a. 900, 902, 903. On this episode see Nelson, 'A king across the sea', at pp. 55-6.

swear an oath of loyalty to Louis.²³⁹ When the Northumbrians chose Eric as their king in 948, after Eadred had gone north in 946 and ‘reduced all Northumbria under his rule’ and taken their oaths of loyalty in 947, he ravaged Northumbria but lost many men at Castleford. His response was to threaten the Northumbrians with further slaughter, and he received compensation from them, but no recorded oaths.²⁴⁰ Again, when Wulfstan I of York was accused to Eadred in 952, probably for his relationship with the Norse kings in York, he was imprisoned and his bishopric confiscated until 954, but he is not recorded as having given Eadred any oaths.²⁴¹ In the poems of 975 relating the exile of ealdorman Oslac, he is in fact praised, and no mention of broken oaths are made.²⁴² Even Eadric Streona, when his allegiance was accepted by Edmund Ironside in 1016 after his hindrance of Æthelred’s offensive in 1009 and desertion of Edmund for Cnut in 1015, is not made to take oaths, neither is his treachery discussed by the Chronicler in terms of broken oaths.²⁴³

Only two cases in the Chronicle defy this trend by defining disloyalty in terms of its representation of the violation of oaths, and both can be explained as the result of the association of this behaviour with Danes. In 947 those described as ‘false to it all, both pledge and oath as well’ were the Northumbrians, and in 1001 the man who ‘deserted King Æthelred in spite of all the pledges which he had given him’ was Pallig, the brother-in-law of King Swein. Rather than taking these as evidence that the Chronicler expected oaths to act as major determinants of loyalty, we ought to recognise this as the simple continuation of a motif. Danes were often accused of faithlessness in the Chronicle and other sources. During Alfred’s reign the Chronicle records them as breaking their oaths in 865, 876, 877, 893 (twice), whilst Asser is more condemning: in 865, ‘The men of Kent undertook to give them money to ensure that

²³⁹ *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 834.

²⁴⁰ *ASC* a. 946-8 D.

²⁴¹ *ASC* a.952, 954 D. On Wulfstan I see Whitelock, ‘The dealings’, at pp. 70-76 and Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp. 202-8, 228-30.

²⁴² *ASC* a. 975.

²⁴³ *ASC* a. 1009, 1015, 1016 CDE.

the treaty was kept. Meanwhile, however, the Vikings, like crafty foxes, secretly burst out of their camp by night, broke the treaty [...]’²⁴⁴ and in 876 ‘one night, practising their usual treachery, after their own manner, and paying no heed to the hostages, the oath and the promise of faith they broke the treaty [...]’.²⁴⁵ Clearly Englishmen were still highly suspicious of Danes in the eleventh century, for the St Brice’s day massacre in 1002 allegedly took place when Æthelred grew concerned that ‘they [the Danish men in England] would treacherously deprive him and then all his counsellors of life and possess this kingdom afterwards’.²⁴⁶ Thus the mention of broken oaths in these cases is symptomatic of an ongoing effort to emphasise the otherness and barbarity of Danes, and not of actual conceptions of loyalty.

Another context in which oaths to the king might be expected is that of royal accession. Kings acceded in the Chronicle in 871, 900, 924, 941, 946, 955, 959, 975, 978 and twice in 1016, but on no occasion (except on Cnut’s accession) are oaths recorded as being given to them. English coronation ordines do not stipulate that oaths or submissions be given to kings during the ceremony, but this does not preclude the possibility that they accompanied some coronations. In a version of the first coronation *ordo*, probably in use until the tenth century, the *principes* joined with the *pontifices* in handing over the sceptre, thus taking on a central role and perhaps acclaiming the king with oaths after the ceremony.²⁴⁷ This ritual had by the tenth century evolved into the liturgy now called the second *ordo* and was monopolised by the clergy,²⁴⁸ but powerful laymen were certainly still present at coronations.

For comparison with the Frankish case, we do not have evidence of Carolingian coronation *ordines* until Hincmar adapted the English one to Frankish usage in the latter half

²⁴⁴ *VA*, c. 20, p. 18.

²⁴⁵ *VA*, c. 49, p. 37.

²⁴⁶ *ASC* a. 1002, CDE. On this episode see Keynes, ‘The massacre of St Brice’s Day’, and on how we ought to interpret it, *idem* ‘A tale of two kings’, at p. 211.

²⁴⁷ On the central role played by lay magnates in the first *Ordo* see Janet Nelson, ‘The earliest royal *ordo*’, at p. 356; and Pratt, ‘The making of the second English *Ordo*’, at pp. 159-60.

²⁴⁸ On this evolution see Nelson, ‘The second English *ordo*’ and ‘The first use of the second English *ordo*’.

of the ninth century, and even then oaths upon succession were not mandated.²⁴⁹ Yet still we see consistent evidence of oaths being given to newly crowned Carolingian kings in ninth-century Frankish annalistic sources. For example, when Louis the Pious was restored in 835 after his deposition he accepted the oaths of lay magnates.²⁵⁰ When he gave charge of the Belgic provinces to his son Charles the Bald in 837, he required the men of this region to swear to Charles. In 839 the Aquitanians revolted in favour of Pippin II after Louis had attempted to make Charles king of Aquitaine, and after the rebellion had been quelled, the men of Aquitaine were compelled to take oaths to Charles.²⁵¹ And in 877, immediately upon Louis the Stammerer's coronation 'the lay abbots and magnates of the realm and royal vassals commended themselves to him and promised fidelity to him with a solemn oath, according to custom'.²⁵²

Finally, we have two explicit references to the promotion of thegns to ealdormanries, both in Æthelred's reign: in 983 Ælfric succeeded to the ealdormanry of Hampshire, and in 1007 Eadric to that of Mercia. Several historians, prompted by the case of Wulfhere's oath to Alfred in the ninth century, have conceded the possibility that there may have been an oath sworn only by elites, specifically ealdormen.²⁵³ If this had been the case, one might expect the Chronicle to signal or emphasise the subordination of ealdormen to Æthelred by mentioning this ceremony, but again, no oaths were recorded.

Perhaps oaths of loyalty to the king in these contexts, and generally, were so routine that they escaped mention. Yet Danish oaths in Alfred's time were also routine and clearly so were oaths from Frankish magnates to Carolingian kings, but these were still recorded. A possible explanation is that Anglo-Saxon sources' lack of domestic oaths of loyalty to the king

²⁴⁹ Nelson, 'Kingship, law and liturgy'.

²⁵⁰ *Annales Bertiniani* a. 835.

²⁵¹ *Annales Bertiniani* a. 839.

²⁵² *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 877. For the laymen's oaths see Nelson's *Politics and Ritual*, c. 3, esp p. 154.

²⁵³ Hudson, *Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 163; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 127; Ammon, 'The functions', at p. 520; Pratt, *The Political Thought*, pp. 235, 175; Molyneux, *The Formation*, p. 173.

reflects a socio-political reality rather than a by-product of narrative style: oaths of loyalty were perhaps not understood as significant royal pretensions to authority in the first place because they did not form a core element of royal strategies relative to loyalty. In other words, the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy were bound by individual oaths of loyalty to the king, but maybe these were not seen as defining aspects of their relationship with the king or future behaviour relative to him in reality. The comparative lack of records for oaths to the king in the sources for late Anglo-Saxon England moreover presents itself as a corroboration of the general lack of prescriptive evidence relative to loyalty issued by kings themselves. The mechanism of guaranteeing future (active) loyalty to oneself as king, achieved via the imposition of a promise which implied the permanence of the behaviour irrespective of one's actions in the royal capacity was seemingly not a cornerstone of most Anglo-Saxon kings' approaches to the issue of loyalty.

Conclusions

In order to begin answering the overarching questions of what kings did to generate the loyalty of the lay elite and what principles lay behind their approaches to this issue, it was first necessary to establish the extent to which conceptual mechanisms might have been used to frame the dynamics of the relationship. What role might prevailing concepts of a subject's obligation to the king – or conversely, the king's entitlement to a subject's behaviour – have played in the ways in which kings went about securing the loyalty of their secular elite, and indeed in the types of loyalty kings could claim from these men? On what basis was the king to be given loyalty, in theory?

To answer this, three conceptual mechanisms were explored: that of the king's God-granted authority over men; that of royal legislation about loyalty to the king; and that of the

treatment of oaths and the frequency of their mention in wider contemporary sources. Based upon close examination of statements outlining or implying what a king's sacral status translated into in terms of his men's behaviour relative to him, it appears that kings would not generally have understood this to extend beyond their right to hold the position of king, free from regicide, deposition and treachery. This idea, promulgated by churchmen on both sides of the channel, would have meant that kings were entitled to represent a hierarchy and social order without which the church could not have a dominant role or be protected. Yet this, combined with the deduction that simply not killing one's king would not have amounted to the type of loyalty needed to run a kingdom, in turn implies the existence of a conception of 'passive' and 'active' forms of loyalty, with the king seen as having a 'right' only to the former. Based upon surviving evidence, kings did not attempt to use their connexion with God as a type of 'ideological validation' for what they were owed in terms of service by their subordinates, until Æthelred's Enham codes.²⁵⁴

How might we envision this to have worked in practice? Would refusing a king's order – in other words, refusing to engage in active loyalty – have been considered disloyal, for example? Probably; but the point is that it is unlikely kings (until Æthelred in the early 11th century) would have believed they had a *right* to the individual following the order, regardless of what it was and regardless of how they themselves behaved relative to the individual. What gave them a *right* to that behaviour would have been something other than simply their status as king, and by extension their status as God's elect. This is not an absolute rule. There would undoubtedly have been grey areas and there would have been changes in perception of what amounted to passive and active loyalty depending upon the individual king and the context.

²⁵⁴ I take the phrase from Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert episode', at p. 404. See also Thacker's discussion of Æthelstan's reliance on the development of cults of saints as 'ideological validation' of his imperial ambitions in '*Peculiaris Patronus Noster*', at p. 23.

But the point is that there is no evidence in England at this time that kings were claiming their status as the basis upon which loyalty ought to be given to them.

That such an attitude existed is corroborated by the general lack of attempts by kings to impose loyalty upon their men through the conceptual mechanism of the law. Contrary to influential modern theories on the matter, kings Alfred, Edward and Æthelstan used this media to lay claim to lawfulness, not to loyalty. The use of legislation to prescribe loyalty did not come until Edmund's reign, whose oath of general loyalty ought to be seen as a watershed moment in Anglo-Saxon legislation. Edmund's use of this conceptual mechanism cannot be shown to have stuck however, with no mention of loyalty to the king appearing again in law codes until *V Æthelred*. This is echoed by the treatment of oaths and the frequency of their mention in wider sources, which showed via the case study of the Chronicle that this conceptual mechanism seems to have held little interest to the authors of extant texts. Oaths were certainly sworn to kings, and were an important custom which served to legitimise his position relative to that of his men, and vice versa, at times such as when a man was promoted to the position of ealdorman, when a king acceded to the throne, and when a recalcitrant group such as the York magnates were reabsorbed into the fold of the English king's *witan*. But the lack of interest shown in English sources in oaths within the matrix of the king's relationship with his magnates, coupled with the general lack of oaths in legislation, suggests a hesitance on kings' behalf to focus upon the giving of loyalty under obligation of any sort. Focusing overmuch on the binding power of oaths might have had the effect of divorcing the giving of loyalty from how the king behaved relative to his magnates. Perhaps it was understood that if active loyalty were to exist past the time of swearing, namely if oaths could be taken as guarantors of future behaviour, there needed to be continued input by the king.

Moreover kings appear to have wanted to distance themselves from the idea that they were entitled to the active loyalty of their men on the basis of their status. The exceptions are

Edmund and Æthelred, but they cannot be said to represent the development over time of king's attitudes to loyalty and to their rights thereto, since there is a significant gap between Edmund's oath and Æthelred's Enham codes. More likely that these intrusions of the concept of loyalty into royal legislation were localised to the context and personality of a given king – and perhaps indeed to who was in charge of writing his legislation. Whilst a possible explanation has been given above for the timing and format of Edmund's oath in terms of his connexions to West-Francia, it is also worth noting that Archbishop Oda was active at the time of the Colyton Code's promulgation.²⁵⁵ Oda, much like Wulfstan, was interested in church reform, in the place of the church in society, and in the king's role as its facilitator and protector.²⁵⁶ Also like Wulfstan, he was heavily involved in the king's politics, acting for example in a diplomatic capacity when he helped to negotiate a treaty between Edmund and Olaf of York in 939.²⁵⁷ If Æthelred's 'loyalty legislation', so to speak, only manifested itself because of Wulfstan's involvement, then we might consider whether the only other time for which we have evidence of legislation being used to prescribe loyalty was also the product of an archbishop's close association with, or even drafting of, the code in question.

To thus answer the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter: kings do not seem to have been entitled to the active loyalty of their men in theory, and neither do they seem to have placed emphasis upon the use of conceptual mechanisms of entitlement or obligation as means to generate loyalty. The emphasis must therefore have lain elsewhere. In order to gain a better understanding of how the loyalty of the lay elite was achieved, and what the king's role was in this, we must turn our attention to evidence of kings' policies in relation to their leading men.

²⁵⁵ *Councils and Synods*, I, pp. 67-8 on the promulgation of Oda's *Constitutiones*.

²⁵⁶ On Oda see n. 85 above. On Wulfstan's politics and ideals see below, section D of Chapter Three.

²⁵⁷ *Historia Regum*, a. 939.

2. Reward: Incentivising Loyalty

Introduction

We now move on in chapters two and three to the examination of surviving examples of kings' actions towards their magnates, in order to establish the potential role and significance of these behaviours in relation to the overarching issue of the lay elite's loyalty to the king. What does evidence of kings' actions suggest about royal strategies and attitudes towards loyalty, both individually and over time? The most obvious type of action or behaviour to analyse is that of the king's direct incentivisation of loyalty, which brings us first and foremost to the study of royal land grants. The present chapter seeks primarily to ascertain the role of land, and the diplomas that granted it, in kings' management of their relationships with their secular nobles. The specifics of how kings used land relative to the issue of loyalty, what rationale guided the ways in which, and to whom, they disposed of it, how much of an emphasis was placed on this institution, and how this changed as a function of aspects such as evolution over time, historical circumstance, the beneficiary in question, or indeed any combination thereof – these are the questions at the heart of this chapter.

These are important questions for three main reasons. First, because of the clear connexion that existed in diplomas between the grant of land they recorded and the loyalty of the secular beneficiary. In the vast majority of surviving charters to lay recipients from Alfred to Æthelred the king presents the land 'cuidam meo fideli ministro' ('to one of my faithful thegns', with small variations), thus indicating that the act of granting was framed in the context of the beneficiary's loyal state.¹ Another formula used ubiquitously in charters of this period, often in addition to that of the aforementioned 'faithful thegn', makes causality explicit by

¹ For all appearances of this formula, see Alfred: S 356, 348, 350; Edward the Elder, S 364, 368, 379; Æthelstan, S 396, 416, 447; Edmund, S 459, 486, 504; Eadred, S 517 (forged: see Keynes, *LV*, p. 87), 547, 558; Eadwig, S 581, 619, 666; Edgar, S 668, 730, 761; Edward the Martyr, S 830, 832; Æthelred, S 834, 875, 924.

actually justifying the grant in terms of the recipient's loyal behaviour. Traditionally part of charters' dispositive section, it provides the more practical reason for the grant than the theoretical exposition in the proem. This phrase comes in many forms, but all are variations on three main formulations: 'ob illius amabile obsequium' (frequently doubled up with 'eiusque placabili fidelitate'),² 'pro obsequio eius devotissimo',³ and those including the adjective *humilis* and its superlative.⁴

Second, because of the close relationship between land and loyalty hinted at by sources other than royal diplomas. In the preface to the Old-English *Soliloquies*, the Anglo-Saxon author likened human inhabitation of the temporal and eternal realms at the grace of God to the inhabitation and use by a king's thegn of loanland and bookland. Just as said thegn 'employs himself' upon his loanland 'until the time when he shall deserve [*geearnige*] bookland and a perpetual inheritance through his lord's kindness', so humans must deserve their place in the eternal home by illuminating 'the eyes of [the] mind'. The thegn is portrayed as stating further, 'May He who created both and rules over both grant that I be fit for both: both to be useful [*nytwyrd*] here, and likewise to arrive there'.⁵ Whilst loyalty to the lord is not quoted specifically, the necessity of good service to reap the reward of bookland is implied by the use of the words 'deserve' and 'useful', and also by the metaphor with the need to do right by God in order to attain eternal life.

Much later, law codes and political tracts make explicit the connection between land and (at least) military service. Clauses in Æthelred's and Cnut's laws stipulate that if one deserted the *fyrð*, the penalty was forfeiture of life and land.⁶ The *rectitudines singularum personarum*, a text possibly written in the second half of the tenth century, states that according

² S 351, 441, 461, 503, 831, 855, 491, 502, 504, 508, 524, 844.

³ S 639, 698, 702, 706, 709, 710, 711, 716, 717, 719, 720, 722, 771, 789, 794, 805.

⁴ S 609, 853, 863, 868.

⁵ *Soliloquies*, p. 47. Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 333-334.

⁶ V Æthelred 28; VI Æthelred 35; II Cnut 77 (Liebermann, I, pp. 244, 256, 364).

to Thegn's Law, a thegn 'be entitled his bookright, and that he shall contribute three things in respect of his land: armed service, repairing of fortresses and work on bridges [...].'⁷

Land was thus a reward for loyal service,⁸ but a reward also encourages further service and support because of the possibility of its re-occurrence. We should therefore not only think of these grants as responses to loyalty already shown, but about the extent to which kings used its grant as leverage for future support. That thegns had come to assume the devolvement of bookland, and royal recognition of this act as a guarantee of future loyalty, can be demonstrated by Æthelwulf's decimation of 855.⁹ In preparation for his pilgrimage to Rome in 855, Æthelwulf 'booked the tenth part of his land throughout all his kingdom to the praise of God and his own eternal salvation'.¹⁰ Although the Chronicle annal implies only ecclesiastical beneficiaries of the decimation, at least one charter shows that kings' thegns also received land.¹¹ The booking of land to lay beneficiaries in this way before the pilgrimage is too great a coincidence to not be connected, and it is probable that with these grants Æthelwulf was attempting to secure the loyalty of the West Saxon nobility during his future absence.¹²

Grants of bookland evidently served a purpose in the relationship between kings and their leading men, and since the founding principle of this relationship was that of service and subordination to the king, land grants must have been tied to these concepts. This brings us to the third main justification for this chapter's focus. Many historians have used the link between land grants and loyalty to illustrate various points, but this always seems to come from assumption and generalisation rather than investigation of how land as a resource was actually

⁷ Trans. *EHD* II, p. 875. On the composition of the *Rectitudines* see Bethurum, 'Episcopal magnificence', and Harvey, 'Rectitudines'. On the three common burdens see Abels, 'Bookland and fyrd service', at pp. 3-4, 11 and Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 22-27.

⁸ On the evolution of royal granting of bookland, see Abels, *Lordship*, Chapter 2.

⁹ On this see Keynes, 'The West-Saxon charters' at pp. 1115-1119.

¹⁰ *ASC* a. 855. cf. *VA* c.1.

¹¹ S 315 links the gift directly to the decimation: '*pro decimatione agrorum quam deo donante ceteris ministris meis facere decreui*' (Campbell, *Rochester*, no. 23). Whilst S 316 does not mention the decimation explicitly, its probable date of issue in 855 suggests it was granted in the same spirit as S 315, and its dispositive section links the grant explicitly to the loyalty of the recipient (Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 39).

¹² Abels, *Lordship*, p. 61.

deployed by kings over time.¹³ Loyalty and how it was achieved via the granting of land holds a significant interest to historians and an important place in their characterisations of the period, it is time assumptions about their interplay are verified. The issue of land tenure from the king has also been dealt with extensively from an administrative perspective, but this research has not elucidated the relationship between land and loyalty, and what principles or considerations dictated how land was dispensed by the king to this aim.¹⁴ The other angle of historiography with a potential bearing upon the present enquiry would have been that on status and social mobility in the Anglo-Saxon period,¹⁵ but here also there exists little interest in exploring how status and office might, for example, have been reflected in the type, location or size of estate held by individuals from the king.

Moreover, the general scholarly assumption is that the royal grants of land to laymen recorded by diplomas functioned simultaneously as sources of reward, incentive, and obligation for loyalty from these individuals. Yet the lack of investigation into what factors decided the allocation of the lands involved in these grants, or even of acknowledgment that this allocation might have been driven by strategy, creates the impression of a system whereby land was of absolute centrality to the issue of loyalty but was apparently granted to laymen willy-nilly. According to these narratives, land always had the same general significance when granted, whether used in the relationship between a king and his ealdorman or a king and his *homo*.

The few attempts to bridge this historiographical gap belong to Ryan Lavelle.¹⁶ He approaches the issue from a wider angle than the one taken by this chapter, namely that of the

¹³ See for example Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 37; Abels, *Lordship*, p. 44; Williams, *The World before Domesday*, p. 18.

¹⁴ Roffe, 'From thegnage to barony'; Baxter, 'The representation'; Lavelle, 'All the king's men?'; Baxter and Blair, 'Land tenure and royal patronage'.

¹⁵ Examples of publications with this interest are Mack, 'Changing thegns'; Campbell, 'Some agents'; Williams, 'Bell-house and burh-geat'; Gillingham, 'Thegns and knights'; Holt, 'Politics and property'; Le Jean, 'Continuity and change'; Reuter, 'Nobles and others'; Roberts, 'The Old English vocabulary'; Harvey, '*Rectitudines*'.

¹⁶ Primarily in his monograph, *Royal Estates*, but see also some of his articles: 'The farm of one night'; 'All the king's men?'; 'Geographies of power'; and 'Royal control'.

governance of royal estates in Wessex, and it should be noted that the research presented in this chapter was done completely independently of Lavelle's work, for I only encountered the bulk of his publications in late stages of the research. The present chapter's section on Eadwig will disagree with some of Lavelle's conclusions concerning the factors which drove that king's highly unusual disposition of land,¹⁷ but hopefully also goes some way in answering Lavelle's call for a detailed analysis of the witness lists in Keynes' *Atlas* in relation to the lands their participants received.¹⁸ Lavelle made some significant discoveries about the correlation of a beneficiary's role and the geographical location, and often also size, of the estate he held from the king as noted in Domesday, with royal agents (*taini regis*) often able to be shown holding lands near farm of one night manors in Hampshire and Dorset, Lavelle's region of study, since before the Conquest. This led Lavelle to conclude that these individuals must have had some role in maintaining these estates. Lavelle's research vindicates the questions posed in the present chapter by demonstrating that certainly in the reign of Edward the Confessor, there existed a link between the size and location of a grant and the role of its beneficiary relative to the king, thus encouraging the pursuit of the general question of what factors governed what estates a king granted to whom, and leaving room for identification of these factors in reigns of earlier Anglo-Saxon kings.

Levi Roach has recently expressed scepticism at charters' ability to be read as 'straightforward evidence of distinctive royal policies or the efforts of kings to impose themselves on the locality', and rather that 'they record the reverse process, whereby local figures chose to approach the king and *witan*'.¹⁹ This does not however preclude us from reading royal policies into charter output, since in the scenario outlined by Roach, kings after all still needed to approve which petition was answered, and there would have been significant

¹⁷ Lavelle, 'Royal control'.

¹⁸ Lavelle, *Royal Estates*, p. 122.

¹⁹ Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 95. For examples of royal charters being used to infer such royal policies, see Insley, 'Kings and lords' and Lavelle, 'Royal control'. See also Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 33 on petitioning.

political considerations for the booking of land in addition to economic ones. Even if petitions lay behind each land grant to a layman, this does not change the fact that certain estates must have been more valuable than others for various reasons – the quality of land they encompassed, their location, their size, etc. If thegns could petition the king for estates, surely a number of thegns would have petitioned the king for the same estates. What then decided who received what, or which petitions were accepted or rejected? In the case of thegns who received estates at a remove from ones they already held, how would they have been aware of the precise location and nature of the estate for which to petition the king in the next shire over, or sometimes further? They could surely not all have had such knowledge, which means that if they were petitioning the king they would have needed to petition for an estate in a general area they preferred, and that the selection of the specific estate which was to be granted was left up to the king's prerogative. In this case, what were thegns' rationale for wanting estates in certain areas? What about a given thegn's (or ealdorman's) situation empowered him to petition for a given estate, or for an estate in a certain area? If and when petition occurred, those laymen petitioning would surely have done so for estates they thought they were likely to receive. What factors made a thegn's petition likely to succeed? Finally, if the grant were spontaneous and not based on a petition, the king would have himself needed to select an estate to grant. Moreover, charters played such a clearly important role in the articulation of royal power and policy, in both a practical and performative sense, that it seems highly unlikely that the transactions which were their *raison d'être* represent merely passive royal responses to petitions for land.²⁰

²⁰ On charters as statements of royal power and authority see for example Insley, 'Rhetoric and ritual' and *idem*, 'Charters, ritual'; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 90; and Foot, *Æthelstan*, esp. on Æthelstan's royal styles in charters, pp. 213-16. On the matter of Æthelstan's styles see also Wood, 'The making of King Æthelstan's empire', at pp. 253-9; Dumville, 'Æthelstan', at pp. 149-50 and 153-4; and Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 444-5. See also in an Æthelredian context Cubitt, 'The politics of remorse', which examines in particular S 876 for Abingdon. More generally on charters' performative value in a Carolingian context see Koziol, *The Politics of Memory*, esp. pp. 17-63.

Thus, knowing that land was somehow connected to loyalty in the eyes of kings, and that it was probably not distributed at random, this chapter seeks to establish *how* land was used by kings to that end in their relationships with thegns and ealdormen, which by extension gives us the specifics of how kings were attempting to incentivise their loyal service.

a. Methodology

The methodology used to answer these questions is based around first collating the data comprising the location and size of all estates granted to laymen by all kings from Alfred to Æthelred, and then examining this for correlation with a factor which can be determined as characterising these beneficiaries. The factor which has been chosen for analysis here is that of the status and/or favour of beneficiaries. In other words, to what extent did a layman's position relative to the king, and social status (for these were not necessarily synonymous), dictate the location and size of his estate? This factor has been chosen because of the relative ease with which the importance of one individual thegn or ealdorman can be established relative to another's thanks to the extensive number of surviving witness lists. A secondary aim of this chapter will be to use the patterns of attestation of individual ealdormen and thegns to draw conclusions about the potential presence of 'soft-factor reward incentives', i.e. incentives which were not land grants, such as promotion, which were held out by kings in order to make loyal service to them attractive.

The chapter thus consists of nine sections, one for each king from Alfred to Æthelred. Each section will consist of tables which categorise the lay participants in each king's charters into groups: ealdormen, 'royal' thegns, 'non-royal' thegns, and 'uncertain cases'. The category of ealdormen is self-explanatory, and will be used as a way of analysing where ealdormen received their lands in each reign. The categorisation of thegns is less straightforward. There

is no consensus amongst historians about how status should be read into the ranks of thegns who served the king apart from the general assumption that a thegn who attested higher on the lists of witnesses to a charter was generally more socio-politically prominent in reality than the thegn who attested beneath him.²¹ The intersection and relative status of, for example, the group of household thegns, the group of thegns who attested a king's charters most frequently (for these were not necessarily synonymous), thegns who are known to have been very wealthy, and thegns who can be shown to have had kinship relations with the king, seems to vary depending upon any given discussion, and upon the point a given historian is attempting to make about the socio-political implications of the composition of witness lists or the relative importance of a given thegn or group.²² With this in mind I present my own method of categorising thegns based upon the frequency and prominence of their attestations with the aim of comparing how kings granted land to thegns in these different categories. Those thegns in the tables entitled 'royal' thegns were those individuals who had a consistent presence in royal diploma witness lists, and could therefore be considered as the most prominent political and royal agents. 'Non-royal' thegns were those individuals who had little to no consistent presence in royal charters. 'Uncertain cases' were those thegns who did not clearly fall into either of the first two categories. The definition of 'consistent' can be blurry, but when one looks at the witness lists attached, it quickly becomes obvious who attested regularly and who did not. It is impossible to create a hard rule by which thegns ought to be considered regular attesters and therefore 'royal' thegns, or not, based for example strictly upon on their number of attestations.

²¹ See for example Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 37, for the application of this reasoning.

²² For a range of ways in which distinctions between thegns, and between thegns and other classes, are made and discussed, see Loyn, 'Gesiths and thegns'; Syrett, 'Drengs and thegns again', esp. at pp. 267-8; Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, p. 277, where the thegnly class was 'the lowest rank of the English nobility', also pp. 238-9, and pp. 250-7 where he endeavours to establish the prominence and commendations of the Leofwinesons' thegns; Williams, 'Land and power', at p. 180; Naismith, 'The land market', at pp. 38-40; Lavelle, 'All the king's men'; Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State*, pp. 216-18. For discussions and overviews of the heterogenous nature of thegnly class: Reynolds, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* p. 11 with notes; Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 29-30. For discussions with differing emphases on, for example, the place of members of the royal household within the hierarchy of the thegnly class see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 158-60 and Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 34-7.

Such an approach would not consider factors such as the fluctuation of the number of witnesses recorded for various charters even within a certain reign, and the fact that some thegns have a lower number of attestations because they start halfway through a reign or in its final years, but are nonetheless regular once they begin.

Trying to account for these factors in a statistical manner would be impossible and, in any case, bald statistics are much less powerful when the data sets from which they are drawn are not only probably incomplete, but when we do not even know how much is missing. It makes more sense to look at the patterns of attestation of individual thegns compared to one another in discrete reigns, and to compile lists of royal thegns, non-royal thegns and uncertain cases for each reign based upon the unique context of the reign, considerations of the trajectories of thegns' political careers, and the trends of attestations within that reign. A decision tree is provided before the first section to help the reader understand the process by which thegns were categorised. Each section's tables will be followed by a map laying out where the (surviving) estates of all thegns and ealdormen were located, colour-coded based upon the beneficiary's categorisation, and then each section will be closed by an analysis subsection where the significance of all this data is laid out, where specific kings' uses of land relative to the loyalty of different groups will be demonstrated, and where kings' management of the membership of the *witan* will be examined for soft-factor reward incentives such as promotion and the stability of royal favour. The consecutive sections should be read with their accompanying table of attestations handy, which are locatable in the appendix. Whilst the first few analysis sections might seem as though they lack a particular argument, or fail to provide clear answers to the overarching question of how kings incentivised loyalty, these aspects will build over consecutive sections. This will be done via the layering of observations on how the charters of each reign inform us on a few primary issues: patterns of attestation, and patterns of land granting relative to factors such as status, title, time, and context.

b. Notes on the interpretation of the tables

It is often impossible, particularly in the case of thegns with common names such as Ælfric, Ælfsige, Ælfred etc, to be certain about which thegn of this name was the beneficiary of a given grant. All such individuals are accompanied by footnotes explaining why they have been assigned certain estates. Identification of a thegn in the witness lists with a beneficiary of an estate is always to an extent uncertain (unless there is external evidence corroborating the individual as the owner of the same estate, such as a will or a restitution charter), and whilst the following categorisations are based upon information collated from Keynes' *Atlas of Attestations* and the commentaries attached to printed editions of charters, they should still be treated with caution.

The categorisation of thegns was achieved through combined consideration of the regularity of each thegn's attestation and his position in the witness lists. The decision-tree on the following page was employed in order to categorise thegns, but certain exceptions to this are discussed either in the footnotes to a particular entry or in the respective analyses of the thegns and ealdormen of each king. These categories are not absolute and there are overlaps: for example, a thegn could be considered 'royal' at some points and not others, depending on the regularity with which he was at court. The decision tree only exists as a rough guide and as a tool for the reader to understand the general thought-process lying behind the categorisation of thegns.

Some of the charters cited in the columns indicating the start and end of an individual's career at court will be spurious. This was not, however, deemed a problem of enough magnitude to merit a footnote each time it occurred, because the charters cited in this column are intended only to act as a reference point for discussions about the career trajectories of thegns, and the waxing and waning of the lay membership of the *witan*. The only times at

which it will be noted that a charter in this column is spurious is if this information could change the year in which the individual's career is understood to have ended. This happens very rarely.

Ealdormen are also presented in tables, but since there seems to have been overall such consistency in their attestation of charters compared to the groups of *ministri*, in addition to their designation as ealdormen offering a much clearer view of their status and their relationship to the king compared to that of thegns, there is no need to categorise them further. They are included primarily for the purposes of demonstrating who amongst them received land, where it was located, and to demonstrate the regularity of their attestations.

Figure 1

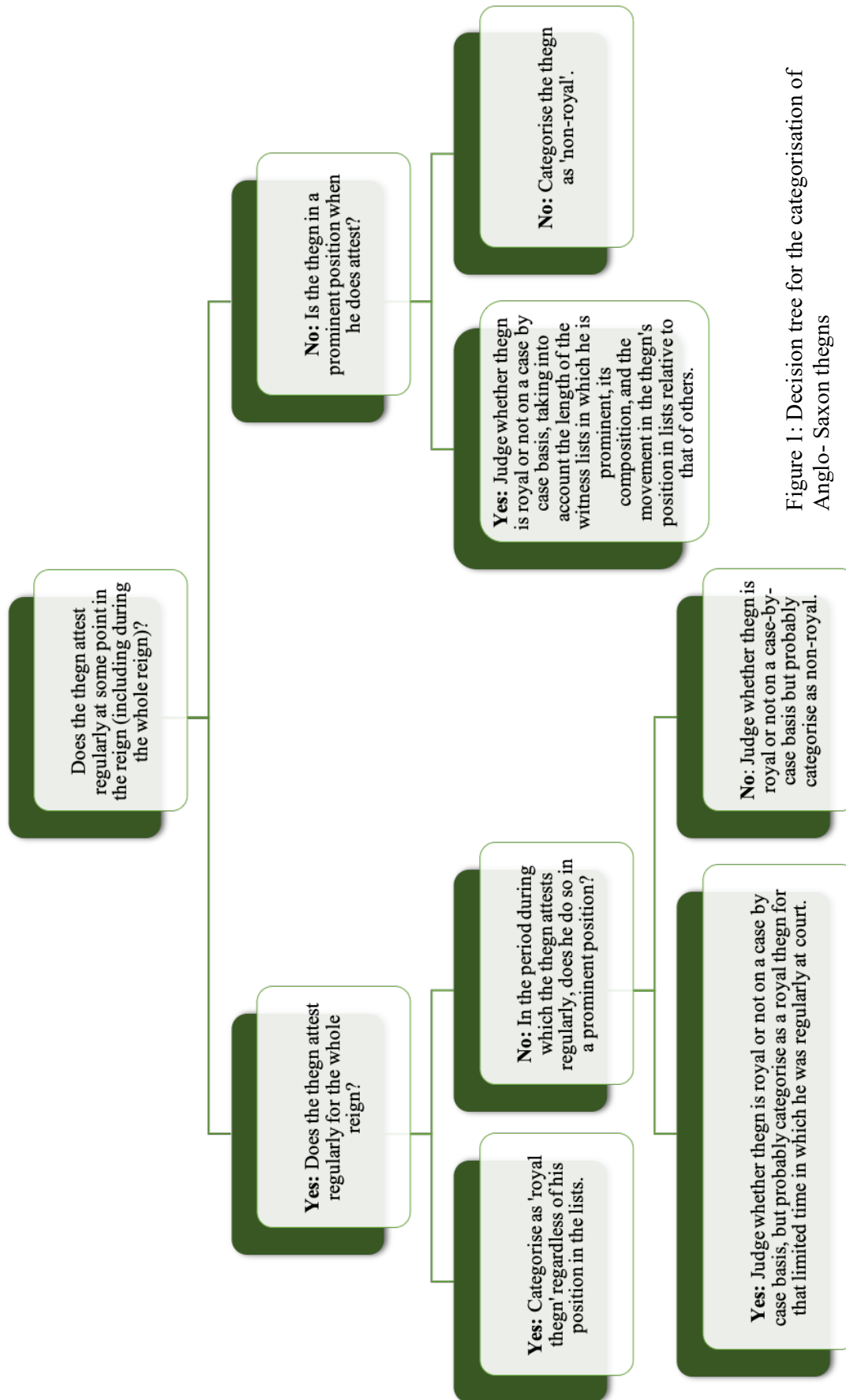


Figure 1: Decision tree for the categorisation of Anglo-Saxon thegns

Analysis of royal diplomas, 871-1016

a. Alfred's ealdormen and thegns

The tables for Alfred's section are not structured in the manner outlined in the introduction because there seems to have been very little continuity over his reign in thegns' attendance at the meetings in which these diplomas were issued – namely, assemblies. Whilst a slightly greater degree of continuity exists amongst the attestations of ealdormen under Alfred, the overriding impression given by the diplomas for this reign is that ealdormen and thegns did not attend assemblies with any real consistency. That there is more to these patterns than documentary filters is suggested by the fact that Alfred's bishops attest more frequently than laymen, implying they were more often present at assemblies.²³ It would thus be unwise to attempt the categorisation of thegns, or the categorisation of their roles, based upon their relative prominence as witnesses. The diplomas issued in Alfred's name are also in their majority such problematic documents, in addition to being so few in number, that little confidence is inspired in their representative value.²⁴ They have nonetheless been included here primarily for the sake of completeness and so that conclusions about developments over the period might draw on all available information.

Alfred's charters, and what they may reveal about the dynamics of the king's relationship with his officials, thus benefit from a more generalised approach. The reader should refer to the table of attestations for Alfred's diplomas in the appendix, where several things may be observed. First, to do with the attestations themselves. In most of Alfred's

²³ Compare Keynes' *Atlas*, Tables XIX and XXI.

²⁴ On the difficulty of evaluating the surviving charters of Alfred see Whitelock, 'Some charters' and Keynes 'The West-Saxon charters', at pp. 1134-41.

charters which include the attestations of laymen,²⁵ the witness list is almost completely different each time, with the ealdormen and thegns who attest in very prominent positions normally not doing so again. So where in later reigns the same prominent laymen would attest multiple charters, Alfred had an almost entirely different cohort of ealdormen and thegns attesting each charter, with the first names in the witness lists presumably representing new contingents of prominent thegns. Whilst there are a fair few ealdormen who attest two to three times, the general discontinuity in the attendance of individuals is obvious, with a significant number attesting only once. The only thegn who appears with a semblance of regularity is Deormod, the king's *cellararius*,²⁶ who when present was normally in the first two positions. No trend is visible amongst the individuals who occupied the places below Deormod, but most of the thegns who do make more than one appearance were the ones who were either prominent in their first appearance (e.g. Milred, Ealhmund, Deormod, Ecgwulf, Sigewulf, etc) or prominent in their second (e.g. Beorhthelm).

Thus, although in some cases prominence in the witness lists was accompanied by repeated attendance at assemblies, none of Alfred's ealdormen or thegns appear to have been present with regularity at dispositive meetings of the *witan*. By implication, witnessing the king's diplomas and being present at assemblies was not yet understood as an activity representative of, or encompassed within, the role of leading secular man. This extends to the role of household official, for whilst Deormod attests several times and was named as one of the king's household, Ælfric and Sigewulf who attest second and third in S 348 were the king's *thesaurarius* and *pincerna*, but Ælfric does not appear again and Sigewulf only once more (S 355). The patterns of attestation of these prominent thegns might be taken to reflect the arrangement devised by Alfred whereby his *ministri nobiles* resided with him at the royal court

²⁵ The charters which include the attestations of thegns and ealdormen are S 319, 343, 357, 352, 347, 321, 345, 348, 354, 356, 355, 350. Of these, S 319 and 347 include only the attestations of ealdormen, with no names of thegns recorded.

²⁶ S 348.

in turn, each group spending one month there and two months away.²⁷ The general discontinuity visible in the attestations of Alfred's ealdormen and thegns might also be explained by their deaths in battle. Thanks to the Chronicle, we know that ealdormen Æthelwold,²⁸ Wulfred, Ceolmund, Brihtwulf,²⁹ Æthelred³⁰ and Æthelhelm³¹ died during Alfred's reign, and thus the ceasing of their attestations is explained. Whilst it is possible that the deaths of a number of ealdormen were not recorded by the Chronicle, it is certain that this happened to thegns. Where the Chronicler seems to have taken care to name ealdormen when they were involved, twice in the entries for Alfred's reign reference is made to a number of unnamed thegns being killed.³² Yet it is salutary to note that even in the cases of the ealdormen whose deaths can be securely dated, their patterns of attestation were still very irregular. For example, Wulfred's final attestation was recorded in 892, but he may have died as late as 896; Æthelred 2's first and only attestation occurred in 892, but he only died in 899. Furthermore, Beorhtwulf 2 and Ordlaaf are the only two of Alfred's ealdormen who still appear in Edward's witness lists, but Beorhtwulf attested only once under Alfred in 891, and Ordlaaf twice.³³

Thus, the fact that an individual's attestations ceased did not necessarily signal death, but the fact that the Chronicle does record many thegns' and ealdormen's deaths in these years suggests that the discontinuity in Alfred's witness lists may be down to a high mortality rate amongst leading laymen in addition to customs which dictated they spend time away from court. Moreover, the extent to which attending assemblies and attesting in a particular capacity was understood as attached to the role of lay member of the *witan* will gain in importance over the following sections. It will become key to the idea that it mattered to an individual thegn

²⁷ *VA*, c.100, pp. 86-7.

²⁸ *ASC* a. 888.

²⁹ *ASC* a. 893x896.

³⁰ *ASC* a. 899, but see a. 900.

³¹ *ASC* a. 897.

³² *ASC* a. 893, 895. Interestingly, the only two thegns mentioned by name as dying in the Chronicle in Alfred's years are Ordheah (a. 893) and Eadwulf (a. 896), and neither figure in witness lists of the surviving charters.

³³ *S* 347, 354 and 350.

where their name appeared on diploma witness lists compared to that of another thegn. Understanding patterns of attestation from the very beginning of the period under Alfred will allow us to explore the development over time of the notion that one's position relative to other thegns in witness lists, and therefore probably of one's status relative to other thegns, could be held out by kings as incentive because of the potential this had for broadcasting social capital.

The second thing that may be observed in Alfred's charters is that considering the meagre total number of charters that remain, proportionally significant evidence survives of Alfred granting to laymen. It is useful to lay out the details for each grant.

Table 1: Alfred's ealdormen and thegns who received land grants

Name	Position	Estate
Æthelhelm 2 ³⁴	Ealdorman; attests once	S 348 (10 hides, North Newton, Wilts)
Beorhtwulf 2 ³⁵	Ealdorman; attests once	S 347 (c.14 hides in Dorset and Somerset in exchange for land in Dorset)
Sigehelm	Ealdorman; does not attest	S 350 (1 hide, Farleigh, Kent)
Æthelstan	Thegn; attests once	S 345 (15 hides, Somerset, in return for 30 mancuses and 2 hides in Stoce, Somerset)
Deormod (<i>cellararius</i> , S 348) ³⁶	Thegn; attests five times	S 355 (5 hides, Appleford, Berks, in exchange for land at Harandun and 50 mancuses of gold)
Dudig	Thegn; does not attest	S 356 ³⁷ (4 hides, Chelworth, Wilts, lease for 4 lives)

³⁴ Mentioned in *ASC* a. 893 as participating in the battle of Buttington.

³⁵ This is likely to be Beorhtwulf (Brihtwulf) ealdorman of the East-Saxons who died in 896 fighting the Vikings (*ASC* a. 896).

³⁶ The most prominent thegn under Alfred, who also appeared as witness to the Fonthill letter (S 1445). He seems to have become ealdorman at some point, since the *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster in Winchester has his name in a list of ealdormen (Keynes, *Liber Vitae*, p. 86).

³⁷ This is the only extant Alfredian diploma which records a lease rather than an outright donation. This may be an example of the hypothesis presented by Fleming concerning West-Saxon kings' appropriation of monastic lands (see also Dumville's rebuttal, *Wessex and England*, pp. 29-54). Kelly, *Malmesbury*, no. 20, notes that a lease of four lives was unusually long, with efforts made at the 816 Synod of Chelsea to restrict ecclesiastical leases to a single life. We may perhaps see in this grant the intersection of ninth- and early tenth-century West-Saxon kings' reluctance to part with land belonging to the royal fisc, and their simultaneous awareness of the potential held by the policy of land-granting for building loyalty. In any case, S 356 represents an interesting example of a West-Saxon king intruding upon the affairs of a minster in order to dispose of its lands to one of his own followers.

Name	Position	Estate
Liaba	Thegn; does not attest	S 344 ³⁸ (Land in Ileden, Kent, in return for 25 mancuses of gold)

It may be significant that the only individuals to receive land apparently without either having to pay for it or hold it on lease were the beneficiaries holding the office of ealdorman.³⁹ Beorhtwulf *dux* exchanged lands for his grant in S 347, but there is no mention of him making a payment to the king for the land on top of the exchange, as did the thegns Æthelstan, Deormod and Liaba. Æthelhelm *dux* and Sigehelm *dux* seem to have received their grants with no special conditions. Five grants constitutes too little evidence from which to draw conclusions, but it is worth considering whether forms of reward or incentive available were different depending upon what sort of service or role one was engaged in for Alfred.

The third and final item to discuss is the apparent emphasis upon the title of *miles* in the witness lists to S 321 and 348. S 348 is broadly accepted as a genuine document,⁴⁰ and whilst S 321 has had Alfred's name altered in favour of Æthelwulf's, it is otherwise largely credible.⁴¹ In S 321, the first seven attesting thegns were titled *miles* with the last four attesting thegns titled *minister regis*. This suggests that a deliberate distinction was being made in the charter which reflected actual distinctions between the designation of *miles* and *minister regis*. Similarly in S 348, the first three thegns are accorded titles reflecting roles within the royal household, with the last nine titled *miles*. Beorhtwulf, Ealhmund, Æthelhelm, Beorhtmund and Beorhthelm are all individuals titled *miles* in these charters whose names reappear in others without this title, which means that either the draftsman was simply adding more information

³⁸ This transaction was primarily between Æthelred archbishop of Canterbury and Liaba. The role of Alfred is not clear. It is also not clear whether Liaba was a layman or perhaps a Canterbury clerk, based on the fact that the estate granted in S 344 was a portion of the ancient Canterbury estate of Adisham. The name Liaba also occurs as that of a Canterbury moneyer under king Æthelwulf: see Brooks and Kelly, *Christ Church Canterbury*, no. 93.

³⁹ See Nelson, 'Wealth and wisdom', at pp. 38-9, who raises the possibility that the sale of bookland was an important source of income in these years.

⁴⁰ Whitelock, 'Some charters', at pp. 78-83; *KL*, pp. 179, 326-30; Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 30.

⁴¹ Whitelock, 'Some charters', at pp. 77, 92 n.6.

out of personal preference in S 321 and 348, or that there was something about the circumstances in which these charters were drawn up which merited emphasis upon the role of *miles*. In any case, the fact that they are stratified in these ways suggests that charter witness lists may have been conceived on occasion by Alfred as *milieux* in which to broadcast and recognise personal service to the king in various capacities.

The analysis of Alfred's surviving diplomas thus offers foundational insights on three aspects. The ways in which attestation as an activity was conceptualised in relation to the position of lay members of the *witan* at the very beginning of the period in question; on the issue of the intersection of factors such as the status or title of a beneficiary and the land they were granted; and on potential distinctions in reality between individuals given different titles in witness lists.

b. Edward the Elder

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfwald (Sub-ealdorman in Mercia)	5	902 (S 367)		
Æthelfrith ¹ (Sub-ealdorman in Mercia)	2	902 (S 367)	904? (S 361)	S 367 (Monks Risborough, Bucks, 30), 367a (Islington, Middx, 10), 371 (Wrington, Somerset, 20) (All of these were renewals of pre-existing landbooks destroyed by fire)
Beorhtwulf (Dorset)	8	902 (S 367)	909 (S 378)	
Heahferth (Hampshire?)	13	901 (S 362)	901 (S 362)	
Ordgar 1 (Somerset?)	15	900 (S 359)		
Ordgar 2 (Unknown)	1	901 (S 362)	901 (S 362)	
Ordlaf ² (Wiltshire?)	16	900 (S 359)	909 (S 378)	S 368 (Stanton St Bernard, Wilts, 20; renewal of charter of King Æthelwulf granting this estate to a

¹ A Mercian ealdorman in office by 883 (S 218) and the father of Æthelstan Half-King. It has been argued that he was of West-Saxon origin, since the inheritance of his son Æthelstan lay in Devon, and 367a suggests Æthelfrith had held lands in Somerset (Hart, *The Danelaw*, pp. 570-2; on S 367a and the other landbooks re-issued for Æthelfrith and others see Keynes, 'A charter of Edward', at pp. 309-14). As this chapter will demonstrate however, powerful thegns and ealdormen could have interests in places far removed from their 'home' sphere of influence, and one is more inclined on this basis to agree with Banton's thesis that Æthelfrith, and thus Æthelstan Half-King, were in fact of Mercian extraction (*Ealdormen*, esp. p. 98).

² The same individual who was a principal character in the Fonthill letter. For a summary of his heritage and career see Keynes, 'The Fonthill Letter', at pp. 56-7.

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
				Cenwold, <i>minister</i>)
Osferth ³ (<i>prop. reg</i> S 378) (Unknown)	7	909 (S 375)		
Osulf (Unknown)	6	901 (S 364)	909 (S 378)	
Sigulf (Unknown)	1	901 (S 362)	901 (S 362)	
Wulfsgie (Unknown)	3	901 (S 364)	909 (S 378)	

Table 2: Edward's ealdormen

Royal thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfred 1 ⁴	12	900 (S 359)	?	
Ælfred 2	9	900 (S 359)	?	
Ælfred 3 ⁵	6	901 (S 362)	?	
Ælfric 1 ⁶	10	901 (S 362)	909 (S 378)	
Ælfstan 1 ⁷	9	901 (S 362)	?	
Ælfstan 2 ⁸	6	909 (S 375)	?	
Ælfwold 1 ⁹	7	909 (S 375)	?	
Æthelferth ¹⁰	11	901 (S 362)	?	

³ This individual was related to Edward, and may have been an illegitimate son of Alfred. See Yorke, 'Edward as ætheling', at p. 34 and Nelson, 'Reconstructing a royal family', at pp. 59-60.

⁴ This Ælfred may have gone on to attest under Æthelstan and ended his career sometime during that king's reign. See relevant note for 'Ælfred 1' in Æthelstan's table of royal thegns (Table 8).

⁵ Most of this individual's attestations are concentrated in the 909 charters, suggesting that at this time he was a royal thegn but may not have been earlier.

⁶ Based on the patterns of attestations of the name Ælfric in Æthelstan's reign, one individual seems to have been a fixture at court, to have moved up steadily to the most prominent positions and to have ended his career c. 943 under Edmund (see the entries for thegns named Ælfric in Tables 8 and 12). A career ending in 943 would have been unlikely to have started in 901, and thus the Ælfric 1 under Edward probably ceases to be seen in charter records in 909.

⁷ This Ælfstan may have gone on to attest a few of Æthelstan's charters, ceasing c. 934. See 'Ælfstan 1' or 'Ælfstan 2' in Æthelstan's non-royal thegns table (Table 9). Most of this individual's attestations are concentrated in the 909 charters, suggesting that at this time he was a royal thegn but may not have been earlier.

⁸ This Ælfstan may have gone on to attest a few of Æthelstan's charters, and ceasing c. 934. See 'Ælfstan 1' or 'Ælfstan 2' in Æthelstan's non-royal thegns table (Table 9).

⁹ This may be the same individual as the Ælfwald who attests Æthelstan's charters semi-regularly from 929 to 935, and who probably received land in Sussex (S 425) in 934.

¹⁰ This Æthelferth may have gone on to attest a few of Æthelstan's charters. See Æthelferth 1, 2 or 3 in Æthelstan's non-royal thegns table.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelnoth ¹¹	7	909 (S 375)	?	
Æthulf 1	7	909 (S 375)	909 (S 378)	
Æthulf 2	7	909 (S 375)	909 (S 378)	
Alla	6	900 (S 360)	903 (S 369)	
Beorhtsige	6	900 (S 360)	c. 903 (S 380)	
Beornstan	8	900 (S 359)	c. 903 (S 380)	
Buga ¹²	12	901 (S 362)		
Deormod ¹³	18	900 (S 359)	909 (S 378)	
Occa	6	900 (S 360)	901 (S 362)	
Odda ¹⁴	11	901 (S 362)		
Osferth	7 (including his six attestations as <i>dux</i>)	900 (S 359)		
Wihtbrord	18	900 (S 359)	909 (S 378)	S 364 (Fovant, Wilts, 10)
Wulfhard	6	909 (S 375)	909 (S 378)	
Wulfhelm 1 ¹⁵	15	900 (S 359)	?	
Wulfhere 1	12	901 (S 362)	909 (S 378)	
Wulfhun 1	12	901 (S 362)	909 (S 378)	
Wulflaf ¹⁶	9	901 (S 362)	909 (S 378)	

Table 3: Edward's royal thegns

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah 2	3	
Ælfred 4	1	
Ælfric 2	1	
Ælfsige	1	
Ælfweard	1	
Ælfwold 2	1	
Æthelhun	1	
Æthelric 1	1	

¹¹ This may be the Æthelnoth who attested Æthelstan's charters sporadically from 931 to 934.

¹² This individual would go on to become one of Æthelstan's most prominent thegns. See Table 8.

¹³ Alfred's *cellerarius* (S 348) and one of the most powerful royal officials at court in this period. See Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 573, n.14.

¹⁴ This individual would go on to become one of Æthelstan's most prominent thegns. See Table 8.

¹⁵ This Wulfhelm may have gone on to be one of Æthelstan's most prominent thegns. See Table 8, and see the relevant note for 'Wulfhelm 1' therein.

¹⁶ There is no thegn named Wulflaf in Æthelstan's charters, but there is a 'Wullaf' who begins attesting in 931 and is regular, if not prominent, from then on. Wullaf may be the same man as Wulflaf, but this seems unlikely given that Wullaf's career can be traced with relative certainty until he ceased attesting in 943, which would mean, if he was the same person as Wulflaf, a career of unlikely length (forty-two years).

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelwulf ⁷	-	S 362 (Wylve, Wilts, 10, forfeited by Wulfhere)
Beorhtferth	1	
Beorhtric	2	
Beorhtsige 2	1	
Beorhtwulf	1	
Dudig	1	
Eada	1	
Leofheah	1	
Leofstan	1	
Sibba	1	
Tata ¹⁸ (<i>fassallus</i> , S 369)	-	S 369 (Compton Beauchamp, Berks, 3, earlier landbook damaged)
Wigfrith	-	S 361 (Water Eaton, Oxon, 5, earlier landbook lost)
Winsige	1	
Winsige 2	1	
Withulf	1	
Wulfhelm 2	3	
Wulfhere 2	1	
Wulfhun 2	1	
Wulfsige 2	1	

Table 4: Edward's non-royal thegns

Uncertain cases

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfheah 1	2		Attests two charters in 901 in 4 th and 5 th position

¹⁷ This individual may have been an ancestor of Æthelstan Half-King, based on the fact that the Half-King's brother Æthelwold, ealdorman of eastern Wessex, had in his possession the estate at Wylve, Wiltshire, which had been granted to an Æthelwulf by Edward (S 362). Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 573, n. 14, suggested that Æthelwulf may have been ealdorman Æthelfrith's brother, though there is no evidence for this. The endorsement in Old English attached to S 362 records that the land was settled by Æthelwulf on one Deorswith, presumably as part of a marriage agreement, with Deormod (perhaps her brother) also figuring in the endorsement. Hart (*Ibid.*) further suggested this would potentially make Deormod (see table for Edward's royal thegns) also related (by marriage) to the Half-King's family.

¹⁸ A 'Tata' attested S 1205 which dealt with an exchange of estates near Swindon, and a priest of the name 'Tata' attested several Winchester charters of the period. Whilst Keynes has suggested that the Tata who was the beneficiary of S 369 may have been a priest ('The West-Saxon charters', at p. 1146), Kelly has outlined several difficulties with this interpretation, all of which revolve around the identification of Tata as '*fassallus meus*'. The term *fassallus* in all its usages at this time seems to have meant some sort of military retainer. See discussion of the term in VA, pp. 254-5 and Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, pp. 22-4, 84-114, and my own discussion of the term in the analysis section accompanying Edmund's charters below.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfhere	3		Attests sporadically, but twice in the top three ¹⁹
Æthelstan	4		Attests sporadically from 901 to 903 but relatively prominently
Æthelwold	1		Attests S 367 in 5th ²⁰
Beorhthelm	6		Attests sporadically from 901 to 904 but always in top 4
Cufa	2		In S 368, attests fifth ²¹
Eadnoth	2		Both of his attestations are in top spot, in Mercian charters ²²
Eadric	1		Attests S 367 in 4th ²³
Eahlmund	3		Attests three 904 charters, all issued on the same occasion (an assembly in Devon) and all for land to do with Winchester and Bishop Denewulf. ²⁴
Eardulf	2		In S 380, attests fourth ²⁵
Luhha	1		In S 380, attests third ²⁶
Sigeric	3		In S 368 and 361 he attests prominently. ²⁷
Uffa	6		Attests two charters in 901 and four in 909
Wulfred 1	5		Attests sporadically from 901 to 904 but relatively prominently

¹⁹ In two of the three charters in which Ælfhere attests he is in the top three positions. These two charters are S 367 and 361, probably authentic, which have completely irregular witness lists and were for transactions in Mercia (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire). Both are the only charters to include the ealdormen Æthelferth and Ælfwald, and both have individuals leading the group of thegns who also do not appear in other charters: Eadnoth, Eadric, Æthelwold and Ælfhere. It is thus reasonable to conclude that these thegns were leading Mercian thegns who did not appear at meetings of the *witan* which conducted purely West-Saxon business.

²⁰ See relevant note for Ælfhere in this table.

²¹ S 368 was for another charter concerning Mercian matters in Middlesex. Perhaps Cufa was a thegn from this area.

²² See relevant note for Ælfhere in this table.

²³ See relevant note for Ælfhere in this table.

²⁴ All of these charters were for land to do with Winchester and Bishop Denewulf. Eahlmund, along with Wulfstan and Wulfric, were thus probably prominent thegns local to Winchester.

²⁵ S 380 was for an exchange of land in Somerset for that in Devon. The only other attestations for the thegns Eardulf and Wulfsig 1 to survive apart from those in S 901's very long witness list are for this charter. They were thus probably prominent thegns in Devon.

²⁶ See note for Eardulf.

²⁷ Sigeric was probably a Mercian thegn as two of the three charters in which he attests were for Mercian estates.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Wulfric	3		Attests three 904 charters ... (See note for Eahlmund)
Wulfsige 1	2		In S 380, attests fifth
Wulfstan	3		Attests three 904 charters ... (See note for Eahlmund)

Table 5: Edward's uncertain cases

Analysis: Edward's charters

Charters from Edward's reign only survive from 900-909. We are thus in the dark about the details of land transactions for the majority of his reign, and thus also about the developments amongst the secular membership of the *witan* which would normally be visible thanks to diploma witness lists. For the years 901 to 909 however, it is obvious that Edward had a stable core of ealdormen and thegns in attendance at meetings of the *witan*.²⁸ Much more than in Alfred's reign, there is evidence for individuals' repeated attendance at assemblies over the years, and for the notion that certain individuals held specific places in the witness lists relative to one another over a long period. This may be down to a lower mortality rate amongst both ealdormen and thegns, with Edward's reign being perhaps a less lethal time hold a position of secular power than Alfred's.

Yet Edward's witness lists still hold evidence of ealdormen's and royal thegns' absences from court in a manner uncharacteristic of men in their positions in later reigns. No ealdormen, for example, were present at the important gathering at Southampton in 901 which saw gathered almost all the bishops of the kingdom and a significant number of Edward's top

²⁸ For discussions of Edward's secular *witan* see Yorke, 'Edward as ætheling', at pp. 34-37.

thegns for opening years of his reign;²⁹ ealdorman Osulf did not attest most of the charters issued in 909; and ealdorman Beorhtwulf was absent from lists from 902 until 909. Thegn Ælfred 1 was absent from 903 until 909 and at the Southampton assembly in 901; thegn Beorhthelm only attested in 900, 901 and 904; and thegn Ælfstan witnessed Edward's charter for Æthelwulf in 901 (S 362) in second place and then did not appear again until 909. The endings and beginnings of the careers of several individuals are visible, however these seem to happen organically with the exception of Beorhtsige and Occa, and perhaps Beornstan, all of whom were both regular and prominent in surviving charters from 900 to 901 but who probably ceased attesting in 901 (S 361).³⁰ This may reflect the participants who lost their lives, or royal favour, at the Battle of the Holme in 902. Beorhtsige was certainly said to have died on that day, having fought on Æthelwold's side.³¹ With Edward's lists we thus see a development of the intersection between the role of leading man and the role of witness to diplomas, which will be shown below to have repercussions for the significance of the positions of individual names relative to each other. We also start to see the beginnings of careers at court, and how their progression is normally represented in witness lists, which are important considerations for the issue of incentivisation.

All the surviving grants made by Edward to ealdormen were for confirmations of old landbooks (S 367, 371, 368), meaning we have no evidence of the king granting new lands to men holding this office.³² Edward's only charters to laymen which were not simply renewals of old landbooks or confirmation of previous sales were S 364 to his royal thegn Wihtbrord,

²⁹ S 366. Keynes mentions this absence in 'Edward, king of the Anglo-Saxons', at p. 51, but goes no further on the issue. Keynes also discusses the witness list to S 366 in *LV*, p. 17, but I was unable to find any mention of the absence of ealdormen in this witness list or in those of S 360, 360, 365, and 363. 360 and 370 are spurious, but S 365, 366 and 363 are probably genuine.

³⁰ Beornstan attested once in 903 (S 369) and in S 380. It is not possible to date the latter charter more specifically than sometime in Edward's reign, but this makes it possible that it belongs to sometime before or during 901. Beorhtsige also attested S 380, but again if this charter was issued sometime before or during 901 then it is not fatal to the theory that Beorhtsige stopped attesting in 901.

³¹ *ASC* a. 903 (for 902).

³² On Edward and Alfred's parsimonious approach to the granting of land see Keynes, 'Edward', at pp. 55-56; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 97; and Wormald, 'on þa wæpnedhealfe', at pp. 274-5.

and S 362 to the non-royal thegn Æthelwulf, both for land in Wiltshire. Although Æthelwulf does not seem to feature in witness lists, there is a possibility that he was related to ealdorman Æthelfrith, and by marriage to Deormod.³³ In other words, 100% of the surviving evidence we have for the issuing of new landbooks in Edward's reign is for thegns who were either royal thegns or who were closely connected to royal thegns.

The grant to Æthelwulf (S 362) is of particular interest for its recording of Wulfhere's betrayal of Alfred, and for its witness list.³⁴ Barbara Yorke argued that Edward's granting out of an estate belonging to Wulfhere family in 901 may have been intended as a 'warning shot' to members of his family who may have supported Æthelwold's claim to the throne.³⁵ If this grant can be afforded such symbolic value, then one must also consider the significance of the explicit mention of Wulfhere's betrayal in the charter, particularly in the context of the unusually large number of witnesses present at its issuing. It is plausible that S 362 was intended not only as a warning in terms of the disposition of a powerful family's land, but as a deliberate smear campaign against Wulfhere by instituting a sort of *damnatio memoriae* against him. Such statements about the history of an estate were still rare in the early tenth century, and it is reasonably safe to assume that the notice of Wulfhere's betrayal was included because it was considered particularly impactful information. Now, if one considers the extraordinary length of S 362's witness list compared to those of Edward's other charters (eclipsed only by the witness list to S 378 in 909), and the real possibility that the details included in these charters represented actual topics of discussion at their dispositive assemblies or conversely had been written out and were read in the presence of the king's court,³⁶ then we arrive at the

³³ Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 573, n.14.

³⁴ On Wulfhere's treachery see Yorke, 'Edward as ætheling', at pp. 35-6 and Nelson, 'A king across the sea', at p. 55.

³⁵ Yorke, 'Edward as ætheling', at p. 35.

³⁶ On the complex relationship between charters and assemblies see Charles Insley's articles: 'Where did all the charters go?'; and 'Assemblies and charters'. See also Roach, 'Public Rites and Public Wrongs'. Simon Keynes has also discussed this issue in depth in his 'Church Councils'. For the tradition in tenth-century Spain of reading the text of the charter aloud the time of the donation, in the presence of the king and his court, see Davies, *Acts of Giving*, pp. 100-1. On the relationship between the public ceremony and the writing of charters, see Zeller,

possibility that this grant to Æthelwulf was being made by the king in order publicly and permanently to shame Wulfhere at a moment of renewed crisis in Wessex, and in so doing attempt to dissuade others from following the same path.

In this interpretation, charters could thus be viewed as tools to generate loyalty not only through the land they granted, but also through their faculties as permanent records which could be used not only to set down the details of royal gifts but also to memorialise an individual's infamy. By extension, this would have implications for our understanding of the function charters served for the individuals named within them. If being damned as a traitor in a charter, and thus in the eyes of all present at the assembly and of posterity, was something to be avoided, the conceptualisation lying behind this is that the significance of charters for laymen came in part from their potential to record and broadcast aspects of their status. This would have been not only via the bald fact of being the beneficiary of a royal diploma, but also via the capacity in which one was recorded as participating in the event.

As was the case with Alfred, the charter evidence for Edward's reign is so meagre that it is unwise to rely upon it too heavily, but it leaves the faint impression of a potentially different royal use of land in relationships with ealdormen compared to relationships with thegns, with new grants of land being made to either functionally or socially prominent thegns and none being made to ealdormen. Finally, it is striking that when land was granted to individuals who were not royal thegns (Æthelwulf, Tata and Wigfrith), these beneficiaries did not have any presence at court. This aspect will be returned to in analyses of future reigns.

'Writing Charters as a Public Activity'. The issue of the stages in which Anglo-Saxon charters were written up has been the source of some controversy: see most recently Keynes, 'Church Councils', at pp. 61–92. The arguments in this debate are neatly summarised by Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 77–89.

c. Æthelstan

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen (Wessex and Mercia)

Name, ealdorship and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhere (West-Wessex)	5	939 (S 448)		
Ælfred (East Anglia) ³⁷	3	930 (S 403)	931 (S 416)	
Ælfstan (Northumbria or north Midlands?) ³⁸	12	930 (S 403)	934 (S 407)	
Ælfwald (sub-ealdorman in Mercia)	24	See Edward's ealdormen	938 (S 440)	
Æscbriht (Northumbria or north Midlands?)	8	930 (S 405)	934 (S 425)	
Æthelstan (Half-King) (East-Anglia) ³⁹	14	932 (S 417)		S 442 (Uplyme, Devon, 6)
Ealdred (Bamburgh) ⁴⁰	8	930 (S 403)	933 (S 379)	
Ordgar (Somerset)	2	900 (S 359) or 901 (S 362) - see Edward's ealdormen	926 (S 396)	
Osferth (Unknown)	17	909 (S 375) - see Edward's ealdormen	934 (S 407)	
Uhtred 1 (Five Boroughs) ⁴¹	23	930 (S 403)		
Uhtred 2 (Essex)	7	931 (S 412)	935 (S 430)	
Wulfgar 1 (unknown)	1	926 (S 396)	926 (S 396)	

³⁷ Probably Æthelstan Half-King's predecessor; see Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 120.

³⁸ See Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 235 for the possibility that Ælfstan and Æscbriht were brothers and Northumbrian lords.

³⁹ The authoritative work on Æthelstan is still Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King''. But on his career see also Keynes, 'The Dunstan-B charters', at p. 191 n.108; and Abrams, *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury*, p. 73 n.141. On Æthelstan's influence over and relationship with Anglo-Saxon kings, see the sections on Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig in Chapter Three.

⁴⁰ See Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 235-6 for the convincing argument that Ealdred and Uhtred 1 were brothers, with the Osulf who began attesting in 934 being one of their sons.

⁴¹ Ealdorman of the Five Boroughs, and brother of Ealdred: see Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey', at pp. 31-4.

Name, ealdorðom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wulfgar 2 (Central Wessex) ⁴²	5	939 (S 448)		
Wulfstan (unknown)	1	939 (S 446)	939 (S 446)	

Table 6: Æthelstan's ealdormen

Earls (Northumbria)⁴³

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Fræna	1	930 (S 405)	930 (S 405)	
Grim	2	930 (S 403)		
Gunner	1	931 (S 416)		
Guthrum	10	928 (S 400)	935 (S 430)	
Hadd(r) ⁴⁴	6	931 (S 412)	934 (S 407)	
Halfdene ⁴⁵	1	934 (S 425)	934 (S 425)	
Hawerd	2	931 (S 412)	931 (S 416)	
Inhwær	3	932 (S 417)	934 (S 407)	
Osulf	3	934 (S 425)	935 (S 430)	
Regenwold	4	930 (S 403)	934 (S 407)	
Scule ⁴⁶	7	931 (S 412)		

⁴² This was the Wulfgar who had previously been a prominent thegn at Æthelstan's court. See the entry and relevant note for Wulfgar 1 in Æthelstan's table of royal thegns (Table 8).

⁴³ These 'earls' of Northumbria first begin attesting West-Saxon charters under Æthelstan. The only piece of literature which focuses extensively on these individuals is Banton's chapter 8 on earls in his *Ealdormen and Earls*. See also Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 38, for a sceptical view of the significance of these attestations and the argument that their absence in witness lists cannot be taken as an actual reflection of their absence in person. See also on these attestations Abrams, 'Men of the Danelaw', at p. 185; Jayakumar, 'Politics', at pp. 72-3; and *Charters of the Northern Houses*, p. 102.

⁴⁴ See relevant note for Scule in this table.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ This was probably the same Scule who aided Ragnald's invasion c. 918 and was rewarded with the lands of St Cuthbert from Eden to Billingham after Corbridge (*Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, c. 23). According to Hart, Scule became a type of suffragan ealdorman under Æthelstan Half-King (Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 122), which lead to the argument that a number of other Danish earls (Thurferth, Haddr, Halfdene, and Hereric) were in fact based in Mercia and East-Anglia rather than Northumbria. In her foreword to Blake's edition of the *Liber Eliensis*, Whitelock suggested that Scule's area of jurisdiction was the six hundreds attached to Sudbourne in Suffolk (p. xiv). Banton however argued using evidence from charters and narrative sources that these earls were more concerned with Northumbria rather than the east midlands or East Anglia: *Ealdormen*, p. 240. Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 118 n.5, argues further that a possible reason for the cease in attestations of

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Styrce	2	930 (S 403)	930 (S 405)	
Thurferth ⁴⁷	4	930 (S 405)	934 (S 407)	
Tiesberd	1	932 (S 417)	932 (S 417)	
(Th)urum ⁴⁸	8	929 (S 401) ⁴⁹		

Table 7: Æthelstan's earls

Royal thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah 1 ⁵⁰	21	928 (S 400)	938 (S 443)	S 411 (Farnborough, Berks, 10) S 440 (Pitminster, Somerset, 16, in return for gold and silver)
Ælfhere 1	16	929 (S 401) ⁵¹	938 (S 443)	-
Ælfred 1 ⁵²	16	926 (S 396)?		S 418 (N. Stoneham, Hants, 12)

Regenwold, Thurferth, Haddr and Inhwær in 934 was that they died in the fighting. For further discussion of these men and the implications of their jurisdictions see Æthelstan's section in Chapter Three.

⁴⁷ See relevant note for Scule in this table.

⁴⁸ Probably a Northumbrian Dane who came to own land in north-east Mercia (Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 239-42) but for possible arguments against this see *Liber Eliensis*, p. xiv and Whitelock, 'Dealings', at p. 77-8. Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at pp. 122-3 argued Urum was a Midlands thegn. He brings in evidence from S 1497 as an east-midlands will, but as Whitelock pointed out, its witness list belongs to a royal diploma: *The Will of Æthelgifu*, pp. 25, 42-4.

⁴⁹ S 401 was forged (Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 75, n.150). If its witness list is not to be trusted, then the actual first appearance of (Th)urum is in 930 (S 403).

⁵⁰ It is difficult to establish whether S 411 and S 440 were granted to the Ælfheah who was prominent in Æthelstan's lists (Ælfheah 1). But based on the rarity with which Æthelstan seems to grant land to individuals who were not active at court, and considering that the second Ælfheah in the lists seems to have ceased attesting four years before Æthelstan's first grant to an Ælfheah occurred, I find it likely that both S 411 and 440 went to Ælfheah 1.

⁵¹ S 401 was forged: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 75, n.150. If its witness list is not to be trusted, then the actual first appearance of Ælfhere is in 931 (S 412).

⁵² Based on the witnessing patterns of the name 'Ælfred 1', i.e. the patterns of the first instance of that name in respective witness lists, this is likely to have been a single individual who may have been a Mercian thegn who attested one of Æthelstan's first charters in a very prominent position (second position) and then attested more sporadically from 928 to 937, and then very regularly from 937 to 939. Or, we might be looking at the attestations of two different men, one of whom may have been an Ælfred who was active under Edward. The Ælfred who

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfric 1	28	926 (S 396)		S 413 (Watchfield, Berks, 20)
Ælfsige 1	16	931 (S 412)		-
Æthelmund 1	19	928 (S 400)		-
Æthelstan 1	21	928 (S 400)	938 (S 440)	
Æthelwold 1	18	931 (S 412)		-
Buga	8	901 (under Edward)	933 (S 423)	-
Eadmund	13	929 (S 401) ⁵³		-
Eadric 1 ⁵⁴	26	929 (S 401) ⁵⁵		S 395 (Whittington, Derbys?, 7, confirmation of lost landbook)
Odda	31	904 (under Edward)		-
Ordheah	13	931 (S 413)		-
Sigewulf	10	935 (S 430)		-
Wihtgar	24	928 (S 400)		S 430 (Havant, Hants, 7)
Wulfgar 1 ⁵⁶	24	928 (S 400)	939 (S 448), became ealdorman	S 416 (Ham, Wilts, 9) 379 (Collingbourne)

received S 418 may be the same individual who was leased Chiseldon by the *familia* of the New Minster, Winchester by permission of Æthelstan 924x933 (S 1417; Miller, *New Minster Winchester*, no. 9).

⁵³ S 401 was forged (Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 75, n.150). If its witness list is not to be trusted, then the actual first appearance of Eadmund is in 931 (S 412).

⁵⁴ Kelly, *Shaftesbury*, no. 12, took the Eadric who attested very regularly and somewhat prominently during Æthelstan's reign to be the individual for whom this king confirmed a lost landbook in 925 in Derbyshire (S 395) and again the same individual who received S 478 from Edmund. If this was the case, then Eadric was probably one of Æthelstan's Mercian thegns, and one who began attending the king's southern court in 929/930. On the dynamic between Æthelstan and his Midland magnates, and the reason it took them several years to turn up in witness lists for charters issued in the south, see Æthelstan's section in Chapter Three.

⁵⁵ S 401 was forged (Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 75, n.150). If its witness list is not to be trusted, then the actual first appearance of Eadric is in 930 (S 403).

⁵⁶ Two thegns named Wulfgar attested Æthelstan's charters, one with greater regularity and prominence (Wulfgar 1) who rose to secure the second position in the group of attesting thegns from 931 to 938. Wulfgar 2 attested semi-regularly in a lower position. I find it likely that S 416 at least went to Wulfgar 1, since by that time he had attested each surviving charter from 928 to 931, and based on surviving evidence Æthelstan very rarely granted land to individuals who had not already spent a continuous period at court. By contrast, by the time S 416 was issued Wulfgar 2 had only attested once in 930 and once in 931. The identity of the beneficiary of S 379 is less certain, but on the balance of how prominent Wulfgar 1 was by this point and the fact that the estate at Collingbourne Kingston was but ten miles south-west of Ham, they probably both went to the same individual (Miller, *Charters of New Minster Winchester*, no. 8, agrees). The will of a Wulfgar (S 1533) disposes of the lands in Wiltshire granted in both S 416 and 379, meaning they both went to the same Wulfgar. A Wulfgar was made ealdorman under Æthelstan in 939, with S 448 containing his first attestation in that capacity, and this was probably Wulfgar 1 thegn who attested prominently and who received S 416 and 379. However, in the *Atlas* Wulfgar 1 thegns' attestations continue in 939, but in much lower positions. We should take this to mean that the first instance of the name Wulfgar in the lists of thegns in S 448, 449, 447 and 446 was in fact that of Wulfgar 2. S 446 has the name of two Wulfgars (in sixth and eleventh place), suggesting that a third Wulfgar attested S 446 in eleventh place. Wulfgar 2 was probably the same individual who went on to become a regular and prominent

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
				Kingston, Wilts, 10)
Wulfhelm 1 ⁵⁷ (<i>disc.</i> S 396)	15?	Probably 900 (under Edward)	935 (S 430)?	-
Wulfmær	20	930 (S 405)		-
Wulfnoth	13	930 (S 403)	937(?) (S 411) or 940 (S464)	-
Wulfsige 1 ⁵⁸	24	928 (S 400)		S 458 (Chilmark, Wilts, 20)
Wullaf	13	931 (S 416)		-

Table 8: Æthelstan's royal thegns

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælferth	2	
Ælfgar	2	
Ælfhelm	2	
Ælfhere 2	5	

attesting thegn under Edmund and Eadwig, probably finishing his career in 959 (see relevant notes for Wulfgar in the tables of royal thegns for Edmund (Table 12) and Eadwig (Table 22)). This would mean that the Wulfgar 2 under Æthelstan was active as a royal thegn for a remarkably long time – twenty-nine years (though see notes to his name in subsequent tables for the probability that he fell from favour during Eadred's reign, only returning under Eadwig).

⁵⁷ The patterns of attestation for this thegn suggest the possibility that an individual named Wulfhelm attested in a prominent position from 926 to c.934, whereupon he ceased and another Wulfhelm – perhaps the individual who had attested only twice from 928 to 933 in low positions – began, and was a royal thegn but occurred low down in the witness lists for the rest of the reign. If so, then we might identify the prominent Wulfhelm of Æthelstan's reign with the Wulfhelm who attested regularly in Edward's charters. As for the possibility that the attestations under 'Wulfhelm 1' in Table III (Appendix) were for the same man, it would be unusual for a royal thegn who attested so prominently as does the prominent Wulfhelm under Æthelstan from 926 to c.934 to drop so far so suddenly in the witness lists, and to not regain any height. For the Wulfhelm of Edmund's reign was a regular member of the *witan* but still attested in low positions until 943 when he disappears from the lists. That the Wulfhelm *discthegn* who attested prominently from 926 to c.934 was one of Edward's men is rendered more likely by the fact that the two other royal thegns who were most prominent in the first years of Æthelstan's reign (Odda and Buga) had probably also been Edward's royal thegns. This Wulfhelm's career at court ended c.935, with the first instance of that name in witness lists now belonging to Wulfhelm 2.

⁵⁸ Possibly the Wulfsige 'Maur' of Edmund's reign (recipient of S 479, 484). This based on fact that Wulfsige 1's attestations at the end of Æthelstan's reign were generally in the sixth to fourth position, which is where those of the Wulfsige 1 of Edmund's reign begin, who in turn was probably Wulfsige Maur.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfred 2	2	
Ælfric 2	6	
Ælfric 3	3	
Ælfric 4	1	
Ælfsige 3	1	
Ælfstan 1	5	
Ælfstan 2	2	
Ælfweard	1	
Æthelberht	3	
Æthelferth 1	6	
Æthelferth 2	1	
Æthelferth 3	1	
Æthelgeard ⁵⁹	2	S 417 (12, West Meon, Hants)
Æthelhelm 2	2	
Æthelmund 2	1	
Æthelnoth	4	
Æthelred 2	3	
Æthelsige	5	
Æthelstan 2	6	
Æthelstan 3	2	
Æthelstan 4	1	
Æthelstan 5	1	
Æthelweard 2	2	
Æthelwold 2	3	
Athulf	1	
Beorhtnoth	3	
Beorhtric 1	4	
Beorhtric 2	1	
Beorhtulf	1	
Biorhstan	1	
Biorhthelm	2	
Biornulf	1	
Brihtsige	1	
Burhred	3	
Byrhtferth	-	S 400 (Odstock, Wilts, 12)
Ceolstan	2	
Cutherth	1	
Cyred	2	
Eadhelm	2	
Eadnoth	2	
Eadred 1	1	
Eadred 2	1	
Eadric 2	4	
Eadsige	3	
Eadstan	2	

⁵⁹ This is the individual who would go on to become an important royal thegn in the middle of the tenth century and who held considerable property around Winchester. He received grants from Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig, and was called Æthelgeard *preng* in the New Minster *Liber Vitae* (Keynes, *LV*, p. 86) which could mean either ‘tall and thin’, or ‘fat and lumpish’ (Tengvick, *Old English Bynames*, p. 330). On Æthelgeard and his estates see Hart, ‘The *Codex Wintoniensis*’, at pp. 15-17.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Eadulf	3	
Eadulf	-	S 447 (Meopham, Kent, 12)
Eadwald	2	
Eadwald 2	1	
Eadweard	2	
Ealdred ⁶⁰	-	S 396 (Chalgrave and Tebworth, Beds, 5, formerly purchased from the Danes for 10 pounds of gold and silver)
Ealhhelm 2	1	
Ealhstan	1	
Heathred	1	
Hefa	1	
Hun	1	
Hunlaf	2	
Leofstan	1	
Ordgar	1	
Oswig	1	
Sigeferth	1	
Sigehelm	1	
Sigemaer	1	
Sigered 2	1	
Sigeric	1	
Sigeweard	2	
Sigewold	1	
Swithulf	3	
Sydeinan	1	
Tiobcon	1	
Uhtred ⁶¹	1	S 397 (Hope and Ashford, Derbys, 60, formerly purchased from the Danes for 20 pounds of gold and silver)
Wiferth	2	
Wihtgar 2	1	
Wilaf	2	
Wilferth	1	
Wulfheah	1	
Wulfhelm 2 ⁶²	2?	
Wulfhere	1	
Wulfnoth 2	2	
Wulfric 2	4	
Wulfsize 3	1	
Wulfstan	1	

⁶⁰ A son of Eadwulf lord of Bamburgh, and likely Uhtred's brother (Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 234). See also note to Uhtred in the present table.

⁶¹ A son of Eadwulf lord of Bamburgh, and Ealdred's brother. On Uhtred further see Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey' at, pp. 33-4. Attests as ealdorman, probably of north-east Mercia, from 931 on. See Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey', *passim*, for S 397 and 396 as signifying efforts by Edward to extend West-Saxon royal authority north by encouraging Englishmen to purchase lands from the Danes.

⁶² This Wulfhelm may have moved up to the office of royal thegn in c.934, which would have him attesting most of Æthelstan's charters from c.934 to 939. See note above for Wulfhelm 1 in Table 8.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wullaf 2	1	
Wynsige	4	

Table 9: Æthelstan's non-royal thegns

Uncertain cases

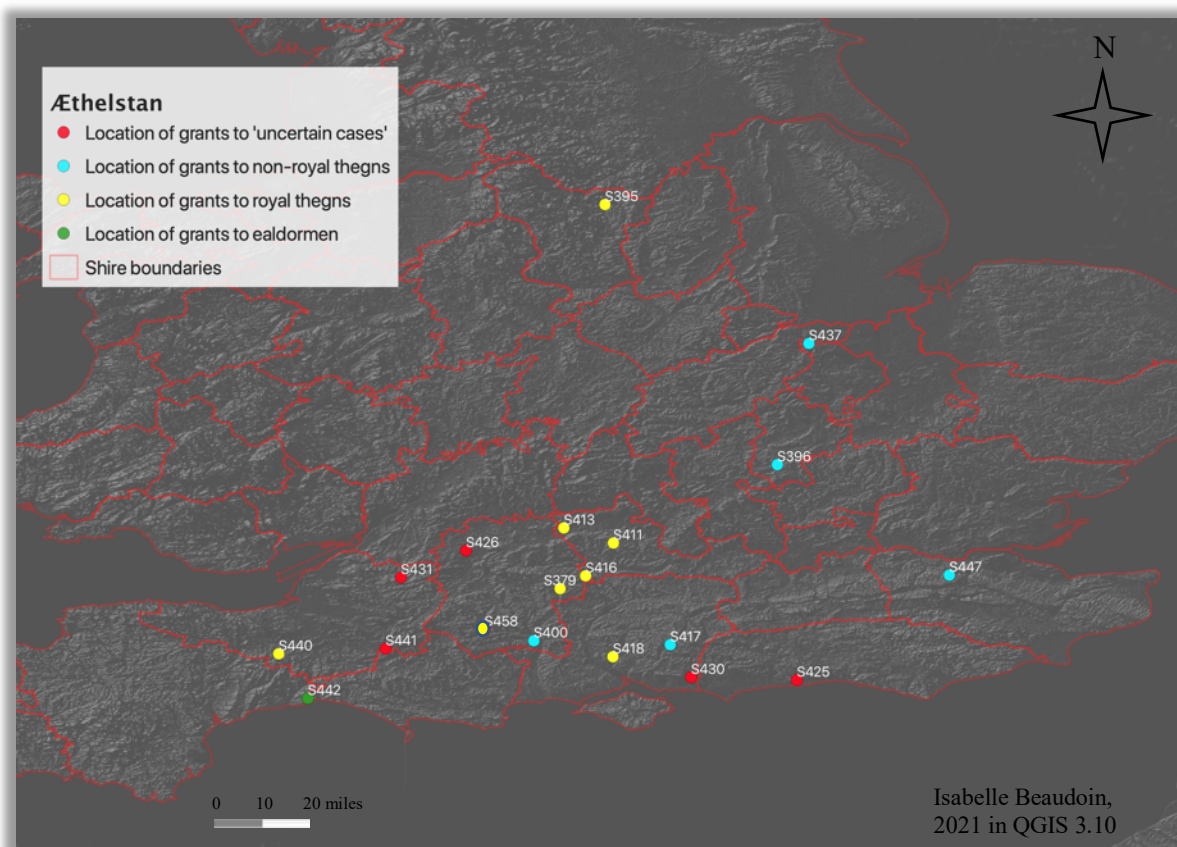
Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfheah 2	5		Somewhat regular and midway 931-935
Ælfnoth	7		Semi-regular 931-937, relatively prominent
Ælfsige 2	10		Irregular and large fluctuations in position
Ælfwald ⁶³	6	S 425 (probably Durrington, Sussex, 12)	Regular 931-932 then drops off
Æthelhelm 1 ⁶⁴	6	S 426 (Kingtone, Wilts?, 15), 431 (Marksbury, Somerset, 10)	Irregular but prominent from 926-930, then drops off
Æthelred 1	11	S 441 (Rimpton, Somerset, 5)	Irregular for most of reign then regular 937-939
Æthelric	5		Regular and midway 931-933
Æthelweard 1	8		Regular 928-932 then drops off
Ealhhelm 1	12		Irregular for whole reign until 939
Sigired 1	15		Irregular and wild fluctuations in position
Wulfbold	6		Somewhat regular 931-934

⁶³ Brooks and Kelly, *Christ Church Canterbury*, no. 106, note that the beneficiary was probably the 'low-ranking minister' who attested several charters in 931-2.

⁶⁴ Two Æthelhelms attested Æthelstan's charters but neither continued after 934. I have placed S 426 and 431 under Æthelhelm 1 but it is possible that at least one of them went to Æthelhelm 2, though based upon Æthelstan's patterns of granting, whereby individuals who had little to no presence at court were seemingly rarely granted land, it is likely that at least one of these relatively sizeable estates went to Æthelhelm 1. Perhaps Æthelhelm 1 was one of Æthelstan's thegns who were prominent in Mercia, but who received lands in the south. Abrams, *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury*, pp. 149-51, summarises the difficulties in identifying the location of this estate.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Wulfgar 2 ⁶⁵	9 (+ 4 for probable attestation of S 446-449 in 939)		Irregular for whole reign (until 939?)
Wulfric 1 (Cufing)	6		Irregular over reign but relatively prominent
Wulfsige 2	6		Active 930-934 then drops off

Table 10: Æthelstan's uncertain cases



Map 1: Location of Æthelstan's grants to thegns and ealdormen

⁶⁵ See note for Wulfgar in the table for Æthelstan's royal thegns above (Table 8). This Wulfgar probably began attesting regularly in 939 when Wulfgar 1 became ealdorman, and continued to have a very long career at court under Edmund and Eadwig.

Analysis: Æthelstan's charters

Æthelstan's is the first reign of the period for which we have good, consistent charter evidence. By 928 it becomes clear that compared to Alfred and Edward's courts there existed at Æthelstan's quite a different conception of where the roles of royal diploma witness on the one hand, and ealdorman and royal thegn on the other, intersected. For the duration of their visible careers Æthelstan's ealdormen now attested every charter, with the exception of ealdorman Æthelstan of East-Anglia who was absent from 935 to 939, but who nonetheless received a grant from the king in 938 (S 442).⁶⁶ Similarly, a group of royal thegns – approximately twelve- to thirteen-strong under Æthelstan – were now present at almost every single assembly, with the individuals occupying first to approximately sixth place present as witnesses to every surviving charter. This indicates a development in the role of royal thegn, in the role of charters and in the role of assemblies. Æthelstan's assemblies have long been noted for their frequency and apparent magnitude as compared to those of his forefathers, and whilst the length of the witness lists may perhaps be attributed to the personal preferences and style of the scribe 'Æthelstan A',⁶⁷ there is nonetheless an obvious shift in the regularity with which the same thegns congregated around the king at assemblies. Regular attendance at these dispositive gatherings now seems to have become a royal expectation of certain thegns, those who we can assume to have been very prominent, regardless of their personal interest in the transaction in question, as one never sees a thegn in a very prominent position who attested only sporadically or even semi-regularly. By extension, regular attendance and a prominent attestation would have become the mark of a thegn engaged in a specific type of service to, or relationship with, the king. This has implications for the function of charters and assemblies. From Æthelstan

⁶⁶ For a more detailed discussion of Æthelstan's management of his *witan* see his section in Chapter Three.

⁶⁷ On 'Æthelstan A' see Woodman, "Aethelstan A" and Chaplais, 'The royal Anglo-Saxon 'chancery'' at pp. 47-9. More generally, Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic style in Anglo-Latin literature'.

onwards, they may have been conceptualised by kings as *milieux* in which to manage their relationships with their men, and in which their men could establish and broadcast their role and status relative to one another. Charters and assemblies, moreover, became conduits for advancement for all involved: the king, his royal thegns, and the beneficiaries of grants. This will be seen more clearly as progress is made through the charters of successive kings.

The witness lists of Æthelstan's charters indicate that several new ealdormen came to be present at his court, with new appointees in Wessex, East-Anglia and Bamburgh appearing, and the names of a number of Danish magnates also occurring between 928 and 935.⁶⁸ Two of these new ealdormen can be identified as having had a presence at court previously as royal thegns. Ælfhere of the Western Shires, who had hovered around the 7th to 4th positions as thegn from 931 onwards, and Wulfgar of Central Wessex who had been regularly in the top two attesting thegns for most surviving charters since 930. This means that both ealdormen who were appointed by Æthelstan to southern ealdormanries are locatable amongst the individuals who were almost constantly by his side previously, but that they were not necessarily those individuals who were previously the most prominent attesting thegns. This indicates that promotion from thegn to ealdorman did not solely occur along the lines of seniority in the ranks of thegns, but that this career path was available to certain men who had already served at court as royal thegns. The prospect of promotion to ealdorman is an important 'soft factor' reward incentive, i.e. a boon of serving the king which was held out by him in addition to the prospect of receiving gifts of land, and it is important that we try to understand how this reward was used and who was eligible for it.

As for the attestation patterns of Æthelstan's royal thegns, they provide interesting information about another potential 'soft factor' reward incentive. There is quite a bit of movement in thegns' relative attestation positions in the charters of Æthelstan's reign, much

⁶⁸ The significance of this will be explored in detail in the section on Æthelstan in Chapter Three.

more than there would be in his successors' reigns, and it is not clear whether this was due to actual shifts in the standings of individual thegns relative to one another in various contexts, to variations in scribal practice, or simply to a tendency in the diplomatic customs at Æthelstan's court not to follow the order of thegns very rigidly. It is striking however that this slightly chaotic aspect applies much less to the upper reaches of the lists of *ministri*, namely the individuals who were in the top three positions – Odda, Buga (stopped in 933) and Wulfgar 1. These men, having reached pre-eminence amongst the *ministri*, only rarely waver from their general positions, and we certainly do not see them moving back down the lists. Additionally, Odda and Buga had held these prominent positions under Edward in the first decade of the century. This may indicate that the prestige of being counted amongst the king's top *ministri*, whilst bringing increased responsibility such as attending all the king's assemblies and attesting all of his diplomas, was a stable situation, and those who held these positions were not subjected to the vagueries of royal personalities. The relationship was strong, and the message must have been that if one gave much for his king, he would be rewarded with stability and predictability of position.

This brings us to the career trajectory of thegns as traceable through witness lists. The great majority of royal thegns and 'uncertain cases' move only in a broadly upwards direction through the witness lists. Examples of 'climbers', as they will be termed, include Ælfric 1, Wihtgar 1, Eadmund, Æthelwold 1, and Ælfsige 2. In most of the cases where it appears that a thegn has dropped down the lists in a sustained manner, there is uncertainty as to whether this drop in attestation position simply represents the ending of one thegn's career and the beginning of that of another thegn with the same name. Examples of 'descenders' include Æthelstan 1, who dropped in 937 from position 2 to 20. Yet Æthelstan 2's attestations (which were anywhere between 11 and 37) however cease around the same time, suggesting that the Æthelstan who had been in a very prominent position until c. 935 had ceased attesting, and the

first time the name Æthelstan occurred in lists from 937 onwards represented a different individual with the same name. The other thegns who seem to have been ‘descenders’, Ælfheah 1 and Wulfhelm 1, were in the same situation as Æthelstan 1, and might thus not have ‘descended’ the witness lists at all rather than simply leaving the court or dying. Then there is the group of royal thegns whose attestation positions remain largely the same, the ‘plateau’ thegns. If the above interpretation is correct, then we are presented with the fascinating possibility that the position of royal thegn was a very stable one. If the names in the top spots of thegns’ witness lists actually represented the status of those individuals relative to one another, which we have no reason to doubt,⁶⁹ then it seems logical to see their positions in witness lists as an extension of their favour in the king’s eyes. Put another way, if they fell from favour in the king’s eyes, this would no doubt have been reflected in their position in witness lists. Conversely, if their names stayed stable at the top of witness lists, this has implications for the stability of their relationship with the king, and thus of ways in which kings treated royal thegns and dispensed royal favour to them.

This suggests that even if personalities clashed sometimes, as must have been inevitable over the course of a reign or across a succession, kings kept their counsellors around, and did not handle their fortunes in a mercurial way. In turn, since it seems extremely unlikely that kings would have kept a thegn around at court if he had been disloyal, we are presented with the possibility that thegns were simply very loyal, and did not often need disgracing. Thus, the ‘soft factor’ of promotion through the ranks of royal thegns as one gave years of service, with little prospect of moving back down, may have been held out by Æthelstan as another type of reward incentive.

⁶⁹ That at least the name of ealdormen appeared in order of seniority is well-known (see for example Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 20-21). Examples of when this assumption is made by historians about thegns include Hart, ‘Æthelstan ‘Half-King’’, at p. 119; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 155-6.

King Æthelstan granted land to only one ealdorman, Æthelstan of East-Anglia, in Devon, for six hides (S 442), which was a relatively small estate by Æthelstan's land-granting standards. This is in huge contrast to the amount he granted to thegns, especially considering the higher status and probably more demanding nature of the role of ealdorman as compared to that of thegn.⁷⁰ An examination of the individual thegns to whom Æthelstan granted land yields that he did so much more often for either royal thegns or to thegns who had spent some time active at court. It was rare for Æthelstan to grant land to men who had not at some point or other been active at court, i.e. may have been considered royal thegns, but amongst the royal thegns we do not have much evidence of him granting to those who were most prominent in the witness lists (thegns such as Odda, Wulfhelm, Æthelstan 1, Eadmund, Wulfsige, etc). Wulfgar is the only royal thegn to have received land when he was one of the top three attesting thegns. Thus in the reign of Æthelstan we have little evidence for the office and status of royal thegn being necessarily or usually accompanied by royal gifts of land, but there is certainly evidence for its greater significance in the relationship between the king and his thegns than between the king and his ealdormen.

Equally however when Æthelstan did grant land, it was rarely to thegns who were not in his service at court. A significant portion of the lands granted to individuals with irregular, little or no presence at court were for estates in shires such as Somerset, Sussex and Kent in addition to lands in the midlands, in other words areas lying outside the areas in which royal land was most concentrated (Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire). By contrast, the majority of the lands granted to royal thegns, i.e. thegns whose attendance at court was obviously the most regular, were for estates in these heartlands (see Map 1).

⁷⁰ Pratt's *Political Thought* contains a useful overview of what is known about the status and duties of ealdormen, pp. 30-2 with notes. See also Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 74-9.

Under Æthelstan we see the first signs of an association between the role of royal thegn and the receipt of bookland. Even so, he seems to have been reluctant to grant to individuals – both ealdormen and thegns – who were at the head of witness lists. As far as granting to prominent royal thegns is concerned, this was in stark contrast with the customs of his successors who regularly granted to thegns who were in the top positions of witness lists. This is but one of the many ways in which land-granting customs to laymen were individualised by kings. It helps to demonstrate why it is unwise to discuss the practice as though it was applied in the same way across the period, and indeed as though it had a static role or use relative to loyalty or in late Anglo-Saxon kings' management of their secular relationships. Perhaps the comparative lack of grants to prominent thegns under Æthelstan compared to his successors meant that the reward for executing these roles lay in the social prestige brought on by the position itself and the chance to be close to the king, to have a personal relationship with him, and to be loved by him. In any case, it had not yet become commonplace under Æthelstan to attach the role of top royal thegn to regular land grants from the king.

d. Edmund

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdor­dom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar (Essex)	1	945 (S 505)	945 (S 505)	
Ælfhere (West Wessex)	5	939 (S 448) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen	940 (S 467)	
Ælfwold (unknown)	1	944 (S 503)	944 (S 503)	
Æthel­mund (Herefordshire)	26	940 (S 465)		
Æthelstan 1 (East Anglia)	33	932 (S 417) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen		S 481 (Mells, Somerset, 20), 480 (Ærmundeslea, Berks, 10), 498 (Brampford Pyne, Devon, 2, in return for 80 mancuses of gold)
Æthelstan 2 ('Rota?') (South-East Mercia?) ⁷¹	14	940 (S 465)		
Æthelwold (East Wessex?)	28	940 (S 465)		
Eadmund (West Wessex)	2	946 (S 508)		
Eadric (Mid Wessex)	10	942 (S 480)		S 490 (Mapperton, Dorset, 11)
Ealhhelm (Hwicce)	27	940 (S 465)		
Osferth (unknown)	1	Unknown date, S 514		
Scule	1	931 (S 412) - see Æthelstan's earls		
Uhtred	20	930 (S 403) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen		

⁷¹ See note for Æthelstan 3 in Eadred's table of ealdormen (Table 15).

Name, ealdorðom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wulfgar (Central Wessex)	21	939 (S 448) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen		

Table 11: Edmund's ealdormen

Royal thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah ⁷²	19	?941 (S 475) or he may be the same Ælfheah who attested under Æthelstan		S 475 (Pitminster, Somerset, 16), 494 (Lyford, Berks, 6)
Ælfred ⁷³	19	926 (S 396?) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	941?	

⁷² There is at least one thegn named Ælfheah visible in Edmund's charters. There is no evidence for a thegn named Ælfheah attesting his charters before 941 (S 475), which is also the charter granting him the same estate in Somerset that Æthelstan granted to an Ælfheah (S 440). This would suggest that the Ælfheah who began attesting Edmund's charters in 941 with S 475 was the same Ælfheah who was a royal thegn under Æthelstan, but who had a hiatus in attestation over 940. The Ælfheah who was beneficiary to S 494 may or may not be the same Ælfheah – there is a possibility that this was Ælfheah future ealdorman of Wessex (see Kelly, *Glastonbury*, no. 27). S 462 is another charter traditionally assigned to Ælfheah future ealdorman of Wessex, but there is good reason to believe that the beneficiary to S 462 was Ælfsige and his wife rather than Ælfheah and his wife: Whitelock, *Wills*, p. 125 and Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 45, but see now Kelly, *Glastonbury*, no. 27).

⁷³ The name Ælfred occurs regularly and prominently in the witness lists of the charters of Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig and Edgar. A tenure of sixty-odd years is impossible, so what we are seeing is probably a combination of several people which it is impossible to disentangle with certainty. Based on the patterns of attestation however, it seems most likely that an Ælfred *minister* attended Æthelstan's court and continued into Edmund's but ceased in 941, with the Ælfred who attests from 943 on being a different thegn. This is suggested first by how unusual it would be for a royal thegn not to attest any charters over a period of a year, especially one who attested typically in the top six positions, as did the Ælfred who was attesting in the early years of Edmund's reign. Secondly, when the name Ælfred reappears sometime in 943 it is in a significantly lower position, and

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfric ⁷⁴	26	926 (S 396) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	943?	
Ælfsige 1 ⁷⁵	30	931 (S 412) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns		S 461? (Waltham, Berks, 30), 486 (Moredon, Wilts, 20)
Ælfsige 2 ⁷⁶	21	See Æthelstan's uncertain cases (p. 125)	944 (S 497)	
Ælfstan 1 ⁷⁷	22	941 (S 475)		S 512 (Thanet, Kent, 6), 497 (Thanet, Kent, 16)
Ælfstan 2 ⁷⁸	12	941 (S 475)	944 (S 494)	
Æthelgeard	11	See Æthelstan's non-royal thegns (p. 123)		S 463 (Exton, Hants, 12), 488 (Tisted, Hants, 7)
Æthelmund	3	928 (S 400) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	940 (S 464)	
Æthelred 1	26	See Æthelstan's uncertain cases (p. 125)		

spends the rest of the reign below tenth position. Thus, what we are seeing is probably the start of a new Ælfred's career at court in 943 (Edmund's Ælfred) and the end of the career of Æthelstan's Ælfred.

⁷⁴ We are faced with much the same problem with the name Ælfric in the thegn witness lists as we are with Ælfred. The name Ælfric occurs prominently for all of Æthelstan's reign, is one of the top two thegns during the majority of Edmund's reign, in the top six during Eadred's, and in a prominent position in Eadwig's (Eadwig in fact has three Ælfrics attesting in 956). Again, the length of this tenure makes it unlikely that this was the same man, with the fluctuations in the name's position on lists rendering this yet more unlikely. It would be very unusual for a royal thegn in the top three positions to cease attesting regularly, as the name Ælfric does from 943-946, and then also to drop down as many places as the name Ælfric does in these years. Furthermore, when the name reappears with regularity under Eadred in 946 it is in sixth place. Thus, the Ælfric who rose to prominence under Æthelstan and in the first half of Edmund's reign was probably a thegn whose career at court ended in 943, with the new Ælfric starting in 944 in twelfth position and working his way up the ranks during Eadred's reign and remaining prominent during Eadwig's.

⁷⁵ There were two thegns named Ælfsige who attested Edmund's charters regularly as royal thegns, one of whom continued in a high position under Eadred. It is not possible to be certain which Ælfsige received which estate, but Susan Kelly has at different times argued that the beneficiary of S 461 from Edmund might in fact be the Ælfsige named in one of Eadred's charters (S 543) as 'the king's gold and silversmith', who himself may also have been the beneficiary of S 522 (Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 32), or that the beneficiary of S 461 could be the Ælfsige who received S 561 and/or 591 (Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 48). Thus, one of the thegns named Ælfsige who attest prominently in Edmund's reign was probably the beneficiary of S 486, and potentially S 461.

⁷⁶ See note for Ælfsige 1 in this table.

⁷⁷ Two Ælfstans were active at Edmund's court. S 512 and 497 for land in Kent probably went to the same Ælfstan, probably a Kentishman, who can probably be identified with 'Ælfstan 1', the Ælfstan who normally attests higher than the second Ælfstan, because the Ælfstan who continues attesting into Eadred's reign did so in a high position and received S 522a on the Essex coast.

⁷⁸ See note for Ælfstan 1 in this table.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelred 2	12	941 (S 475)	944 (S 503)	
Æthelwold	3	931 (S 412) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	940 (S 464)	
Eadmund	31	929 (S 401) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns		
Eadric 1 ⁷⁹ (<i>vassallus</i> , S 478)	9	929 (S 401) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	943 (S 488)	S 467 (Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucs, 4 (lease)), 478 (Beechingstoke, Wilts, 2), 491? (Leckhampstead, Berks, 10)
Ealhhelm	3	See Æthelstan's uncertain cases (p. 125)	940 (S 464)	
Odda	23	901 (S 362) -see Edward's royal thegns	943 (S 486)	
Ordheah	13	931 (S 413) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	943 (S 471)	

⁷⁹ Based on the great continuity in the patterns of attestation of the name Eadric from Æthelstan's to Edmund's reign, this is the same Eadric who was a Mercian royal thegn under Æthelstan. He could either have remained a thegn during Æthelstan's reign and died c.943, having received several estates, or he could be identified with the Eadric, a brother of Æthelstan Half-King, who became ealdorman in 942. This would align relatively well with the attestation patterns of Eadric thegn apart from the lone attestation in third position amongst the thegns attesting S 488 in 943, a year after he had been made ealdorman, and it would also make sense in the context of the general positions in which two of the other ealdormen appointed around this time by Edmund were attesting when they were thegns: Æthelmund was around seventeenth position, Ealhhelm around fourteenth, and Eadric around thirteenth. I find it probable that at least one of the two grants made to an Eadric thegn pre-942 (S 467 and 478) were for the Eadric who was the future ealdorman. In addition to the confirmation of their holdings they received from Æthelstan (S 395), the lease of land in S 467 in Gloucestershire might also suggest that the recipient was Mercian, thus potentially tying together S 395, 467 and 478 to the same Eadric, brother of ealdorman Æthelstan, before he became ealdorman. This would also locate ealdorman Eadric as having been a supporter of Æthelstan's pretensions to power, as S 395 was the first charter issued by Æthelstan, when he was not yet acknowledged as king in Wessex. This potential fact of the thegn Eadric's kinship with ealdorman Æthelstan, a major influence on Edmund, as well as his support of Æthelstan and Edmund, might explain why Eadric is referred to as '*amabilis vassallus*' and '*fidelis amicus*' in S 478. Such affectionate terminology is unusual for this period and seems to reflect a particularly close relationship between the king and Eadric. If the Eadric who was attesting as thegn in the first years of Edmund's reign was indeed the future ealdorman, then S 491 could not have gone to the same individual since it went to Eadric *minister*, not Eadric *comes*. Furthermore, one would need to regard the lone attestation of an Eadric *minister* in third place in S 488 as a copyist's mistake. It is suspicious that the name Eadric in S 488 occurs in third position, which is exactly where Eadric *comes* was regularly attesting at the time, and I am inclined to think this is actually the attestation of Eadric *comes* but simply misplaced somehow into the lists of *ministri*. This individual probably represents an example of a royal thegn whose landed possessions ranged over the West-Saxon heartlands and his Mercian base.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wihtgar	29	928 (S 400) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns		
Wulfgar ⁸⁰	29	928 (S 400) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	946?	S 492 (S. Newton etc, Wilts, 13), 502 (St Mary, Dorset, 5)
Wulfhelm ⁸¹	18	See Æthelstan's royal thegns (p. 122)	S 486 (943)	
Wulfric 1 (Cufing) ⁸²	27	See Æthelstan's uncertain cases (p. 126)		S 471 (Garford, Berks, 15), 503 (Woolstone, Berks, 20)
Wulfric 2 (Dunstan's brother) ⁸³	6	944 (S 495)		S 472 (Grittleton, Wilts, 25), 473 (Langley, Wilts, 30), 504 (Nettleton, Wilts, 20)
Wulfsige 1 (Maur) ⁸⁴	7	928 (S 400) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	940 (S 647)	S 479 (Staffs, 40), 484 (Derbys, 'land') or S1606

⁸⁰ This Wulfgar is a different man from the Wulfgar who attested prominently for most of Æthelstan's reign, and who became ealdorman in 939 (Wulfgar 1 under Æthelstan). The career of the prominent Wulfgar in Edmund's reign probably started under Æthelstan, where he was 'Wulfgar 2' (see relevant note for Wulfgar 1 and 2 in Æthelstan's tables). The career of this individual presents an interesting problem. One of the estates granted to a Wulfgar by Edmund (S 502) was for land at Hinton St Mary. An estate granted in 958 to a Wulfgar by Eadwig (S 656) was for land at Thornton and Iwerne Courtney, attached to the St Mary estate. As noted by Kelly, *Shaftesbury*, no. 15, this makes the identification of these men as one and the same very plausible. A Wulfgar attests regularly throughout Edmund's reign in prominent position from 942. None of Eadred's charters have a man of this name, but a Wulfgar began to attest regularly under Eadwig. Possibly this was a different man, but it may also have been the case that the prominent Wulfgar of Edmund's reign fell out of favour under Eadred and then was reinstated by Eadwig. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Wulfgar of S 502 then had to wait until Eadwig's reign to acquire the appurtenant properties. If this was the case, this Wulfgar's sudden fall from favour and eventual reinstating would be extremely unusual, since royal thegns, once they reached top spot, almost never fell from this place (see Edmund's analysis section below). The fact that the Wulfgar prominent under Edmund dropped to eleventh place in 946, having held first position since 943, may constitute a herald of his coming obscurity during Eadred's reign.

⁸¹ See the relevant note for Wulfhelm 1 in Æthelstan's royal thegns table (Table 8). I find it likely that this Wulfhelm in fact began attesting regularly around 934 when the prominent Wulfhelm of Æthelstan's reign probably stopped.

⁸² The presence of several Wulfrics in the witness lists of the mid-tenth century makes their identification fraught, particularly between Wulfric Cufing and Wulfric brother of Dunstan. Attempts to construct their prosopographies can be found in Hart, *ECNE*, at pp. 370-2; Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 116-118; Brooks, 'Career', at pp. 8-10. I have here followed Kelly's summary of the issue, and her list of estates owned by Wulfric Cufing and Wulfric brother of Dunstan (Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. clxxiv-clxxxv).

⁸³ See the note for Wulfric Cufing in the present table.

⁸⁴ See Sawyer, *Burton*, nos. 5, 6, 7. One of S 484 and S 1606 is a forgery but it is impossible to know which.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wullaf	19	931 (S 416) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	943 (S 488)	

Table 12: Edmund's royal thegns

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhelm	2	
Ælfred 2	1	
Ælfwold 2	1	
Ælfwold and Ordhelm (both styled <i>homo</i> S 510)	-	S 510 (Gamelanwyrthe, Kent, 1 yokelet)
Ælla	1	
Æthelhere ⁸⁵	-	S 508 (Bath, Somerset, 5)
Æthelnoth	-	S 476 (Corston, Somerset, 10), 509 (N. Wootton, Somerset, 5)
Æthelric ⁸⁶	1	
Æthelstan	1	
Beorhtsige	1	
Beorhtwold	3	
Eadulf	-	S 459 (Liddington, Wilts, 10)
Eadweard	1	
Ealdred	1	
Eanulf	1	
Garulf	-	S 468 (Swallowcliff, Wilts, 9)
Ordulf	-	S 500 (Brimpton, Berks, 8 in return for 90 mancuses of gold)
Ordwold	-	S 469 (Wylve, Wilts, 10, renewal of lost landbook)
Sigferth	1	
Sigeric	1	S 501 (Sibertswold, Kent, 2 sulungs)
Wulfheah	1	
Wulfgar 2	1	
Wulfnoth	1	
Wulfsize 2	1	

Table 13: Edmund's non-royal thegns

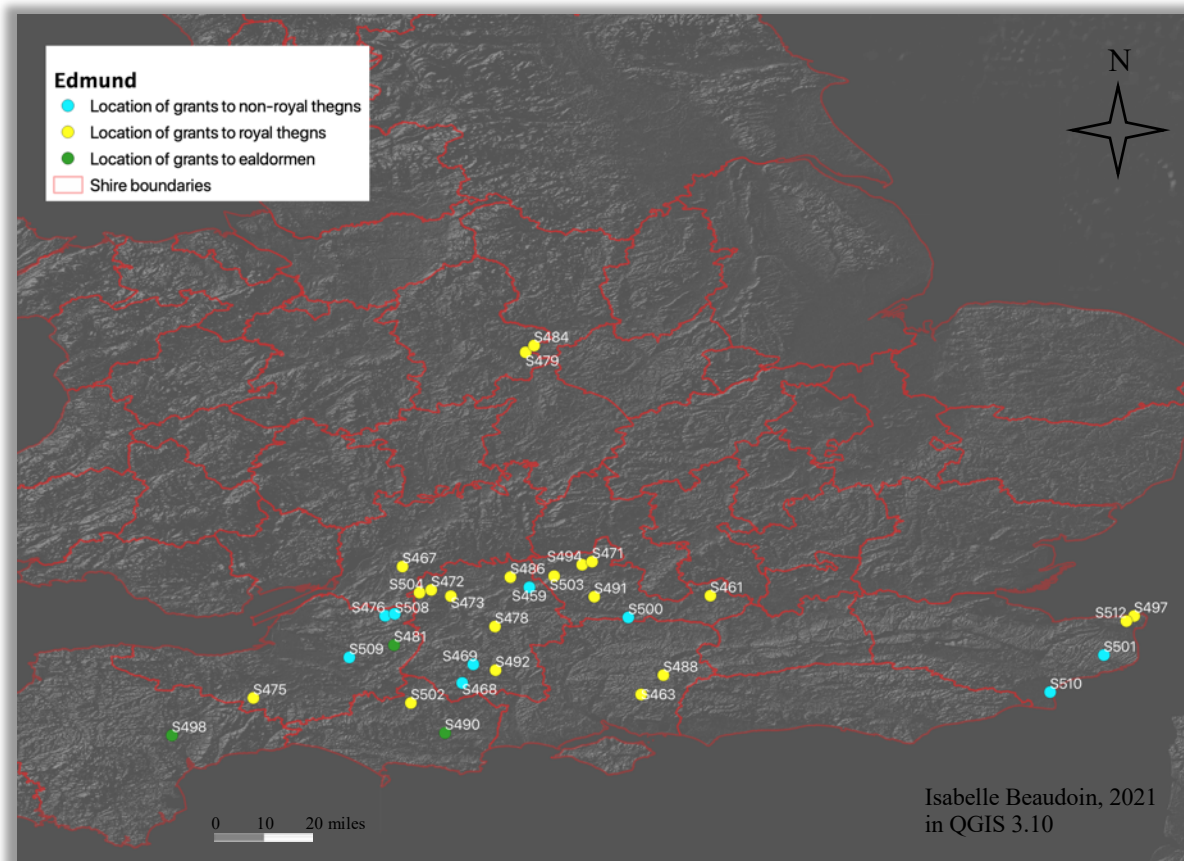
⁸⁵ S 508 has an interesting condition: that the beneficiary remain faithful to Edmund until the king's death and thereafter transfer loyalty to the designated friend (*amicus*) of the king: Kelly, *Bath and Wells*, no. 7.

⁸⁶ It is unclear whether the subscription reads 'Æthelric' or 'Eadric' for S 478.

Uncertain cases

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfgar	3		Regular in final charters of reign
Æthelsige	2		Regular in final charters of reign

Table 14: Edmund's uncertain cases



Map 2: Location of Edmund's grants to thegns and ealdormen

Patterns of attestation and promotion

The consistency with which the same thegns' names appear in the same positions in witness lists continues to increase in Edmund's diplomas. If a thegn participated more than once as a witness at Edmund's court, he was a royal thegn, and was probably expected to be there for most if not all of the meetings of the *witan*. The attendance of ealdormen was also very regular, and we find three, potentially four, being promoted up from the ranks of royal thegns. Ealhhelm, Æthelmund and Æthelwold, all of whom Edmund promoted to the rank of ealdorman, attested most of Edmund's first charters as royal thegns, but interestingly none attested higher than seventh position. The attestations of Eadric before his appointment as ealdorman in 942 might be visible in those of Eadric thegn.⁸⁷ Eadmund, who was promoted to ealdorman in 946, had long been a very prominent thegn. Promotion from thegn to ealdorman was thus potentially also held out by Edmund to members of his *witan* in exchange for loyal service, but again this does not seem to have been a promotion that was restricted, or even granted preferentially, to the men who were in the very top positions of the thegns' lists. Indeed, Æthelstan 'Rota', appointed by Edmund to the new office of ealdorman of south-east Mercia, does not appear at all as a thegn in witness lists before his appointment.⁸⁸

Examination of the patterns of attestation⁸⁹ of royal thegns for 'climbers', 'descenders' and 'plateau thegns' yields similar conclusions to that arrived at in Æthelstan's section above. Royal thegns' positions relative to each other are quite set even amongst the lower rungs of the

⁸⁷ See note to Eadric in Edmund's table of royal thegns.

⁸⁸ See Banton, *Ealdormen*, 109-10 and Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at pp. 126-7, n. 3.

⁸⁹ Consult Table IV in appendix.

group, more so than in Æthelstan's, but the most stable positions were the top four. Once thegns reached these positions, their names did not even have the odd dip as the composition of a witness list changed, which sometimes happened to thegns attesting from position 7 downwards. With the exception of Ælfric 1, who moved from second to roughly fifth position sometime between the last surviving charter of 941 and the first of 942, the names of these men did not fall. Just as under Æthelstan, steady promotion up the ranks of royal thegns was the norm, and almost all of Edmund's royal thegns can be classified as 'ascenders'. The only 'descenders' were Ælfric 1 and Wihtgar, both of whom moved down at the same time as Wulfgar moved up, whilst a few 'plateau thegns' such as Ordheah, Ælfsige 2, Wulfhelm, and Ælfheah are also visible.

There was great continuity amongst royal thegns and even in their relative positions across the succession, with Odda, who had now served the family since the early years of Edward's reign, still in the first position, followed by Ælfric 1, Eadmund, Wulfsige, Whitgar, Æthelwold, Ælfred, Wulfgar, and so on attesting in the same positions they had been in the final years of Æthelstan's reign. All of this strengthens the theories put forward above that the role of royal thegn under a tenth-century English king was a safe and stable one. For the most part the same men held the top positions until their death, and the prospect of steady promotion up the ladder of thegns existed if one served the king long enough, and one assumes loyally enough. Perhaps the best thegns were given these promotions, whilst those mediocre by comparison plateaued. Thegns did not seem to lose the king's favour often, with these relationships seeming to hold fast over decades as kings themselves came and went. Kinship, and having the right family connexions, might also have played a part in who rose faster, but since it is so difficult to identify the kin groups of the majority of thegns, it is not possible to know whether all ascenders had connexions to powerful kindred in common.

Land granting patterns

Almost all the royal thegns who were active for most of Edmund's reign – that is, the royal thegns whose careers did not end at the start or sometime in the middle of the reign – received land from the king, often several grants. Edmund granted often to the royal thegns who were at the top of his witness lists, and also granted more often than Æthelstan to non-royal thegns, i.e. men who had a minimal or non-existent presence at court. Thus, in the reign of Edmund we have solid evidence for the office and status of royal thegn being synonymous with regular gifts of land, and also more evidence for the practice of granting land to thegns who were not in the king's direct or regular service. The majority of royal thegns received land in the royal heartlands of Berkshire, Wiltshire and Hampshire, apart from Wulfsige who received land in the Midlands. Non-royal thegns on the other hand seem to receive land more often in more peripheral shires such as Somerset and Kent, with Ordulf securing land in Berkshire for a large payment to the king. The non-royal thegns Garulf and Eadulf are the odd ones out for seemingly receiving new landbooks in Wiltshire.

As in Æthelstan's reign, grants from Edmund to his ealdormen were quite rare compared to grants made to thegns. It is probably significant that the only ealdormen to receive new landbooks from the king were Æthelstan and his brother Eadric, which suggests that this family was being shown particular favour by the young king.⁹⁰ Most of the lands Edmund granted to Æthelstan and Eadric were in the western shires, outside the areas in which royal

⁹⁰ Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 122-4, has suggested that Edmund was firmly under the influence of his mother Eadgifu and Æthelstan, and that the Half-King and his family's success in these years probably stems from this influence.

thegns normally received lands. One wonders whether Edmund, and to some extent Æthelstan, used land differently in their relationship with ealdormen than with thegns. The granting of new landbooks, whether for brand new estates or for estates already held as loanland,⁹¹ was clearly a much more important part of the relationship between a king and his thegns under Edward, Æthelstan and Edmund than it was between the king and his ealdormen. This leads to the possibility that the service of thegns was incentivised more through gifts of land than that of ealdormen. This in turn leads to the question of how kings then rewarded and incentivised the service, the loyal execution of that service, and the general personal loyalty, of ealdormen. The answer lies perhaps in the nature of the social prestige which the office of ealdorman brought an individual.⁹² It is also possible that ealdormen derived their social capital and prestige less from the amount of land they were granted than did thegns, and thus that a new landbook was not as powerful an incentive, or that kings were reluctant to grant more land to individuals who were ostensibly already quite landed.⁹³ Perhaps kings got around this issue by still granting land to ealdormen but only in the form of loanland, the records of which do not survive.

The use and meaning of titles in Edmund's charters

In Edmund's reign we begin to see a wider variety of titles used to describe the recipients of charters, a practice which would continue throughout the period. This requires analysis, for the use of titles in these documents might help us to understand how royal uses of land may have varied based on the beneficiary's office, status, or other individual factor.

⁹¹ For loanland see John, *Land Tenure*, pp. 16-17 and Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, pp. 16-17.

⁹² Thacker, 'Some terms', at pp. 210-13.

⁹³ Lavelle implied such motivations as potentially lying behind the comparative lack of permanent alienation of land to royal women, *Royal Estates*, p. 100. Baxter also discusses the granting of folcland to earls rather than bookland, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 147-8.

There are two instances in Edmund's charters where a variation upon the traditional *dux* and *minister* is used to refer to the beneficiary of a grant: S 478 to Eadric *vassallus* for two hides in Wiltshire and S 510 to Ælfwold *homo* and Ordhelm *homo* for one 'iuclæte'⁹⁴ in Kent. The Eadric of S 478 was probably the same individual whose landbook for an estate in Derbyshire was re-issued by Æthelstan in 925.⁹⁵ If so, it is of interest that he was styled *minister* in Æthelstan's charter, and also potentially in S 467 and S 491 if they were both for this Eadric as seems likely.⁹⁶ It is probable that this stacking of styles, so to speak, was an indication not only, as Keynes proposed, that the term *minister* concealed distinctions between the several royal officials in a king's household,⁹⁷ but that this title could be held by individuals alongside other titles, whether perpetually or in the short-term, and perhaps as a result of the execution of a particular service. Keynes has interpreted the presence of these titles in charters as depending merely upon 'particular draftsmen deciding at random to be more specific'.⁹⁸ But it is difficult to believe that anything in these documents was random, and it seems improbable in any case that the specifics of the beneficiary's title might be recorded so inconsistently whilst the conventions of ordering thegns in witness lists were so religiously observed year upon year. Title and status, moreover, were important to the Anglo-Saxons, and we should not be so quick to disregard instances in which attention was being deliberately drawn to it.⁹⁹

This particular case drives us to consider the possibility that the issue of titles, and what reasoning guided where and why a given individual was referred to by a certain title, was specific to the grant they were receiving or attesting. In other words, the title accorded to

⁹⁴ I have not been able to find any reference to this unit of land in modern historiography. I assume it refers to a parcel of land smaller than a hide. Edmund furthermore regarded these individuals as 'his' men (*meis hominibus*), suggesting the personal capacity in which they stood relative to the king.

⁹⁵ See relevant note for Eadric in the table for Æthelstan's royal thegns (Table 8).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 135.

⁹⁸ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 160.

⁹⁹ Insley makes a similar point in 'Kings and lords in tenth-century Cornwall', at p. 19. On the topic of title and status more generally see Runciman, 'Accelerating social-mobility' and Campbell, 'Aspects of nobility'.

someone in a given document indicated the capacity in which they were participating in, or putting their name to, the particular transaction or event recorded by said document. The reverse implication of this would be that the land granted to a given lay beneficiary was considered by the king as a reward commensurate with the duties performed by the beneficiary in the capacity in which he is titled in the grant (i.e. *dux*, *minister*, *vassallus*, *homo*, *miles*, etc). To anchor this once more in the example of Eadric, who was Edmund's *minister*, who had been Æthelstan's *minister*, but who in S 478 was also apparently a *vassallus*, the granting of land to the same individual (Eadric) under different designations (*minister*, *vassallus*) might suggest that the grants in question were being offered in the specific context of his performance of those respective roles. An implication of this would be that different reward schemes were considered appropriate for different designations, i.e. types of service to, or relationships with, the king. It is striking in this case that S 478 in which Eadric is designated *vassallus* is also the smallest grant of those which Eadric received.

It is perhaps significant that S 478 also contains an unusual proem, one which explores aspects of hierarchy and lay office which in turn bear upon the relationship between donor and thegn.¹⁰⁰ Edmund made the grant to Eadric, his *amabilis vassallus* and *fidelis amicus* explicitly in return for future loyalty and service to the throne. After his death, Eadric was to pass on the land to any of his successors with the understanding that they would also be loyal to the king. As Kelly notes, there are other charters in which the grant is linked to continuing loyalty, but that this dipomas's expression of this is unparalleled.¹⁰¹ In the light of the theory proposed above, the attention of the draftsman to these themes might make sense in the context of Eadric's performance of the particular duties of a *vassallus*. What these entailed is uncertain, but there are some indications that this term had connotations of someone who was engaged in

¹⁰⁰ Kelly, *Shaftesbury*, no. 12.

¹⁰¹ Kelly, *Shaftesbury*, no. 12. The only other surviving charters which link the grant to an expectation of continuing loyalty are S 508 and 484, both from Edmund's reign.

some type of military service to the king.¹⁰² Asser used this term to describe some of the men who remained loyal to Alfred in 878, and it has been argued that he was making a distinction between *miles* and *vassallus*, with a *vassallus* representing another member of his entourage, one who did not have a military role.¹⁰³ But perhaps Asser's statement was not intended to give the impression of a strict dichotomy between the holders of these titles, but instead to highlight the roles which were fulfilled relative to the king in an abstract sense, i.e. 'with certain soldiers and vassals' meaning individuals who were both, or at various times, soldiers and vassals, in the same sense as one might say 'he was accompanied by men who fought for him and served him'.

Returning to the case of S 478, the unusual content of the proem might offer clues as to what *vassallus* meant. The fact that the beneficiary is described in such unusually affectionate language, and strikingly as the king's *amicus*, whilst the proem focuses on the relationship between kings and their servants, might be interpreted as a celebration of particularly long service as a royal official, one who possibly represented the king in the midlands if he was the same Eadric who held land in Derbyshire and a lease for land in Gloucester. So in this case, *vassallus* might have connoted length of service in a given capacity, whether military or not, and maybe the execution of this whilst representing the king in a locality or periphery.

Turning to S 510 for Ælfwold and Ordwold, these individuals are the only ones amongst the lay beneficiaries of Edmund's diplomas to be styled *homo*. They had no surviving presence at court, and also received the smallest grant to lay beneficiaries from Edmund. Based on the propensity for individuals with little to no presence at court to be offered land in different areas than those who were royal thegns, and on the potentially differing nature of reward to lay followers of different designations, it ought to be considered whether the king's lay followers

¹⁰² Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. 84-5; Insley, 'Kings and lords', at p. 19.

¹⁰³ VA, '*cum paucis suis nobilibus et etiam cum quibusdam militibus et fasellis*', c. 53, p. 41. Keynes, 'Edward king of the Anglo-Saxons', at p. 54. Cf. Abels, 'Household men', at p. 149-50.

were compensated differently based partly upon the offices they occupied or roles they played. By extension, perhaps the title attached to an individual in documents may have been included deliberately because the capacity in which an individual participated in such proceedings was relevant both to measure of their reward.

e. Eadred

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdor­dom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar (Essex)	22	946 (S 519)	951 (S 558)	
Æthel­mund (Herefordshire)	33	940 (S 465) - see Edmund's ealdormen		
Æthelsige (Central Wessex)	5	951 (S 554)		
Æthelstan 1 (East Anglia)	40	932 (S 417) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen		
Æthelstan 2 ('Rota') (South-East Mercia?)	17	940 (S 465) - see Edmund's ealdormen	948 (S 542)	
Æthelstan 3 ¹⁰⁴ ('Rota') (South-East Mercia?)	1	955? (S 570)		
Æthelwold (East Wessex)	1	940 (S 465) - see Edmund's ealdormen	946 (S 517a)	
Byrhtferth (Essex)	4	955 (S 565)		
Eadmund (West Wessex)	19	946 (S 508) - see Edmund's ealdormen		
Eadric (Central Wessex)	22	942 (S 480) - see Edmund's ealdormen	949 (S 544)	S 525 (Washington, Sussex, 20), ¹⁰⁵ 524 (Ashbury, Berks, 20)
Ealh­helm (Hwicce)	31	940 (S 465) - see Edmund's ealdormen	951 (S 556)	

¹⁰⁴ If this is the same individual as ealdorman 'Æthelstan 2', it means he would have ceased attesting from sometime in 948 to 955. See Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at pp. 126-7, n.6.

¹⁰⁵ S 525 and 524 were not new grants of land from the king to Eadric, having already been bequeathed (amongst others) to Eadric by his brother Æthelwold (S 1504) in 947. The king was simply reissuing diplomas for these particular estates, probably, as Kelly has suggested, because their documentation was somehow defective: Kelly, *Shaftesbury*, no. 14 and Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 40. See also Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 120.

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wulfgar (Central Wessex)	10	939 (S 448) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen	948 (S 533)	

Table 15: Eadred's ealdormen

Earls (Northumbria)

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Andcoll	2	949 (S 544)	949 (S 550)	
Grim	2	930 (S 403) - see Æthelstan's earls	949 (S 550)	
Gunner	2	931 (S 416) - see Æthelstan's earls	950 (S 552a)	
Imorcer (Morcar)	2	949 (S 550)	950 (S 552a)	
Osulf (Bamburgh)	4	934 (S 425) - see Æthelstan's earls	950 (S 552a)	
Scule	3	931 (S 412) - see Æthelstan's earls	950 (S 552a)	
Uhtred (Five Boroughs) (<i>dux</i> and <i>miles</i> , S 548)	4	930 (403) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen	950 (S 552a)	S 548 (Bakewell, Derbys, land)
Urm	3	929 (S 401) - see '(Th)urum' in Æthelstan's earls		

Table 16: Eadred's earls

Royal thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah 1 ¹⁰⁶	18	?941 (S 475) - see Edmund's royal thegns	955? (S 570)	S 531? (Knogle, Wilts, 10)

¹⁰⁶ It is not possible to know whether this Ælfheah was the future ealdorman of Wessex, but it is unlikely that S 531 went to Ælfheah future ealdorman because this estate was not part of the ealdorman's will (Whitelock, *Wills*,

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfnoth	9	949 (S 550)		
Ælfred	19	See Edmund's royal thegns, p. 134 ¹⁰⁷		
Ælfric	17	See Edmund's royal thegns, p. 134 ¹⁰⁸	951? (S 560)	S 532 (Alverstoke, Hants, 11), 560 (Curridge, Berks, 5)
Ælfsige 1 ¹⁰⁹	37	See Æthelstan's royal thegns (p. 121) and Edmund's royal thegns (p. 135)		S 561 (Uffington, Berks, 33)
Ælfstan	20	941 (S 475) - see Edmund's royal thegns	949 (S 544)	S 522a (Wigborough, Essex, 17)

pp. 22-5). A second Ælfheah began attesting Eadred's charters from 951 (S 516), and this was according to Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 12 the Ælfheah who was recipient of S 554, which was also not part of Ælfheah future ealdorman's will. It seems to me likely however that Ælfheah 2 was the future ealdorman, since he begins attesting in fifth position c.951, the start of the problematic final years of Eadred's reign, and Ælfheah (the future ealdorman) can be found in Eadwig's Group Two charters (which essentially seem to have respected a pre-951 hierarchy of thegns, for which see Eadwig's analysis section below) in proximate positions.

¹⁰⁷ This is the Ælfred who began his career under Edmund in 943 (see the note for the Ælfred 1 entry in Edmund's table of royal thegns).

¹⁰⁸ This is the Ælfric who began his career in Edmund's reign (see the note for the Ælfric 1 entry in Edmund's table of royal thegns). He seems to have been a kinsman of the king ('*Alfrico ministro meo mihi carnaliter adstricto*', S 560, Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 49), but was probably not Ælfric Cild who was a kinsman of the king through his marriage to Ælfhere's sister.

¹⁰⁹ At least three thegns, potentially four, named Ælfsige attested Eadred's charters, but only one did so with regularity. Eadred granted estates in the Isle of Wight and Wiltshire (S 543) to an Ælfsige goldsmith, who may be the same beneficiary as the 'faithful man' named Ælfsige who received land at Ebbesborne, Wiltshire (S 522), and S 461 (see note to Ælfsige 1 in Edmund's table of royal thegns (Table 12); see also Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 32). It is this interpretation which this table follows. Ælfsige goldsmith does not seem to have attested charters at all, and so S 522 will be found next to Ælfsige goldsmith's name in Eadred's 'Non-Royal thegns' table (Table 18). There was also an Ælfsige Hunlafing who received land from Eadred in the midlands. The only charter in which he is explicitly designated as 'Hunlafing' is S 566, but Kelly and Hart have identified him with the Ælfsige who received S 533 and 556 (Kelly, *Peterborough*, no. 10 and Hart, *ECEE*, p. 162). I think that this Ælfsige hunlafing should be identified with the 'Ælfsige 2' in Keynes' *Atlas*, who attests in 7th and 5th position in S 521 (forged: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 103 n.60) and 561 respectively. This sort of pattern of attestation would match up with the profile of a relatively powerful Mercian thegn who only came to court rarely. It is impossible to know to which Ælfsige S 561 went, but based upon Eadred's generous patterns of granting to his royal thegns I find it probable that S 561 went to the Ælfsige who topped the thegn lists in Eadred's reign. If so, then it is probable that this grant went to the same Ælfsige who received S 486 from Edmund, and S 591 from Eadwig. An Ælfsige was also the beneficiary to S 592 in Northamptonshire from Eadwig. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 72, has argued that this may be the same Ælfsige who received S 591 and S 561. The patterns of attestation for the name Ælfsige, which is consistently prominent over the reigns of Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig, suggest that these attestations really do all belong to one thegn who spent a remarkable twenty-eight years in the service of Edward's sons and grandson, and was well rewarded for it.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelgeard (<i>miles</i> S 523)	25	See Æthelstan's non-royal thegns (p. 123)		S 523 (Brightwell, Berks, 10)
Æthelnoth	14	946 (S 519) but potentially same thegn who receives land from Edmund	948 (S 542)	
Æthelsige	16	See Edmund's uncertain cases (p. 139)		
Byrhtferth	12	949 (S 544)		
Eadmund	20	929 (S 401) - see Æthelstan's royal thegns	949 (S 544) – becomes ealdorman	S 527 (Hankham, Sussex, 3)
Wulfric 2 brother of Dunstan ¹¹⁰ (<i>miles</i> S 550, 551)	19	944 (S 495) - see Edmund's royal thegns	951 (S 554)	S 541 (Idminton, Wilts, 5), 551 (Merton, Surrey, 20), 519 (Didlington, Dorset, 5), 530 (Idminton, Wilts, 5); 550 (total of 46 hides in various locations in Gloucs)
Wulfric Cufing 1 ¹¹¹ (<i>homo</i> S 552; <i>miles</i> S 529, 542)	31	See Æthelstan's uncertain cases (p. 126)		S 529 (Denchworth, Berks, 5), 542 (Stan. In Beedon, Berks, 10), 558 (Chieveley, Berks, 25), 552 (Welford, Berks, 18 in exchange for land in Cornwall)

Table 17: Eadred's royal thegns

¹¹⁰ See notes above for Wulfric Cufing and Wulfric brother of Dunstan in Edmund's table of royal thegns (Table 12) and note for Wulfric 3 in Table 18 below.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhelm	1	
Ælfhere ¹¹² (<i>propinquus</i> , S 555)	1	S 555 (Buckland, Somerset, 20)
Ælfheah 2 ¹¹³	-	S 554? (Northtune, Leics?, 8)
Ælfsige goldsmith (<i>homo</i> S 522, 543)	-	S 522 (Ebbesborne, Wilts, 5), 543 (Isle of Wight and Winterburnan, Wilts, 2)
Ælfsige Hunlafing (<i>miles</i> S 556)	2 ¹¹⁴	S 533 (Ailsworth, Northants, 3), 556 (Haddon, Hunts, 5), 566 (Alwalton, Hunts, 5)
Ælfwold	1	
Æthelmaer (<i>praeses</i> , S 544) ¹¹⁵	-	S 544 (Chetwode and Hillesden, Bucks, 20 in exchange for land at Chadshunt, Warwicks)
Æthelric	3	
Æthelstan	1	
Æthelwine	1	
Beorhtwulf	1	
Berhtwold	1	
Brihtric	-	S 571 (Rimpton, Somerset, 5), 570 (Hentsridge, Somerset, 5)
Clare	1	
Eadhelm	1	
Eadred	1	
Eadsige	1	
Ealdred	3	

¹¹² This is Ælfhere son of Ealhhelm, future ealdorman of Mercia: Kelly, *Glastonbury*, no. 43.

¹¹³ This may have been Ælfheah future ealdorman of Wessex, and brother of Ælfhere. This seems likely to me since he begins attesting in fifth position c.951, the start of the problematic final years of Eadred's reign, and Ælfheah (future ealdorman) can be found in Eadwig's Group Two charters (which essentially seem to have respected a pre-951 hierarchy of thegns, for which see Eadwig's analysis section) back to positions proximate to Ælfheah 2's position in Eadred's reign. If this were the case, then Ælfheah 2 was probably not the Ælfheah who was the recipient of S 554, since this estate was not in his will: Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 12. If Ælfheah 2 was the future ealdorman, then S 554 may have gone to a third Ælfheah, or to Ælfheah 1 (see Eadred's table of royal thegns, Table 17). If the Northtune in question indeed lay in Leicester, then on balance of probabilities, S 554 was going to a local Mercian thegn named Ælfheah, S 531 was going to the royal thegn Ælfheah 1, and Ælfheah 2, who may have been the future ealdorman, did not receive a (surviving) grant until S 564 in 955.

¹¹⁴ It is argued in the relevant note for Ælfsige 1 in Table 17 that the 'Ælfsige 2' in Keynes' *Atlas* should be identified with Ælfsige Hunlafing, attesting S 521 (forged: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 103 n.60) and 561.

¹¹⁵ The Old English note following the bounds reads 'Ælfstan gave this land to Æthelflaed [in exchange] for the land at *ceadeles funtan* and later Eadred gave it to Æthelmaer, who was most dear to him, for the same land, in perpetual inheritance'. This Æthelflaed was probably the lady of the Mercians, Edward's sister (Baines, 'The Chetwode-Hillesden charter', at p. 9-10). From Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 43, p. 178-9: 'The property at *Ceadeles funtan* which Æthelflaed had given to Ælfstan in exchange is best identified with Chadshunt. Æthelflaed's estate at Chetwode and Hillesden [that being granted to Æthelmaer in S 544] descended to her male kinsmen, for in S 544 Eadred disposes of it to Æthelmaer reeve, in exchange for the same quantity at Chadshunt. Presumably Æthelmaer had inherited or otherwise acquired the estate from Ælfstan'. This would make Æthelmaer related to Eadred through his aunt. No Æthelmaer attests Eadred's charters, but a thegn of that name regularly appears in Eadwig's.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Frytheric	-	S 547 (Ofærtune, Hunts?, 4)
Heresige (<i>homo</i> S 518)	-	S 518 (Swalecliffe, Kent, 1.5)
Ordheah	1	
Osferth	2	
Osric	1	
Osulf	2	
Osward	1	
Oswig	-	S 528 (Merstham, Surrey, 20)
Sigeferth	1	
Ufa	1	
Uhtred Cild ¹¹⁶ (<i>pedisequus</i> , S 569)	-	S 569 (Chesterfield, Derbys, land)
Ulfcetel (<i>miles</i> S 549)		S 549 (Suthtone, Salop, 4)
Wigferth	1	
Wigstan	1	
Wihtgar	1	
Wulfheah (<i>homo</i> S 580)	-	S 580 (Little Langford, Wilts, 1)
Wulfhelm (<i>miles</i> S 557)	1	S 557 (Marchingston, Staffs, land)
Wulfric 3 ¹¹⁷	-	S 520 (Warkton, Northants, 7).
Wulfric 4	1	
Wulfsige	1	
Wulfstan	1	

Table 18: Eadred's non-royal thegns

Uncertain cases

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfgar ¹¹⁸ (<i>miles</i> S 578)	3	S 578 (Weonfelda, Berks?, 3)	Absent for most of reign, appears at very end but very prominent

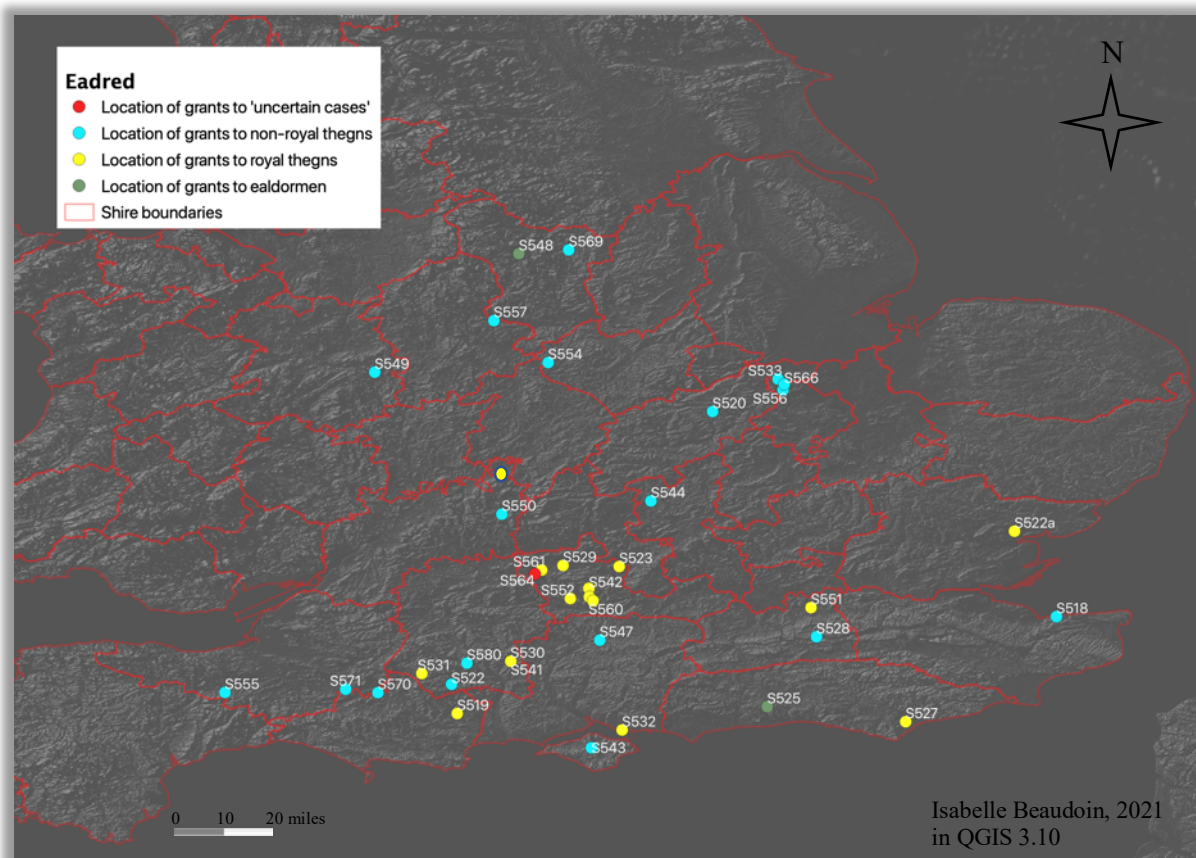
¹¹⁶ Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 13 suggested that this Uhtred may have been a kinsman of ealdorman Uhtred of the region of the five boroughs.

¹¹⁷ This was a different Wulfric than Wulfric Cufing or Wulfric brother of Dunstan. He was a midlands thegn, and the charter S 520 granting him land in Northamptonshire is the first of the surviving charters of Eadred. That so early in his reign Eadred was already focusing upon followers in the midlands is characteristic of the great attention he paid this region over his reign, on which see the section on Eadred in Chapter Three. Hart, *ECNE*, p. 373 and Sawyer, *Burton*, p. xli identify him as related to Wulfric Spott. Sawyer adds that this Wulfric might have been the recipient of the huge grant in Gloucestershire made by Eadred to a Wulfric *miles* (S 550), and this is repeated by Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 118, but the estates in this grant were recorded in Glastonbury sources, tying them to Wulfric brother of Dunstan (Hart, *ECNE*, p. 372; Williams, *Principes*, p. 146, n. 11).

¹¹⁸ A kinsman of the king, and Byrhtferth's brother (the relationship is mentioned in S 651 and *ASC* a. 962. On Ælfgar see Hart, *ECNE*, p. 301).

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfheah (<i>propinquus</i> , S 564)	-	S 564 (Compton Beauchamp, Berks, 8) ¹¹⁹	Unsure if the Ælfheah who is beneficiary to S 564, i.e. the future ealdorman of Wessex, is the same Ælfheah who was attesting prominently during rest of Eadred's reign.
Æthelred	5		Relatively regular from 946-948 then ceases
Beorhtsige	6		Irregular during whole reign but in relatively prominent position when present

Table 19: Eadred's uncertain cases



Map 3: Location of Eadred's grants to thegns and ealdormen

¹¹⁹ This is the first provable appearance of Ælfheah, future ealdorman of Wessex and brother of Ælfhere, in the charter record: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 50.

Patterns of attestation and promotion

The attestation patterns of royal thegns under Eadred between 946 and 951 tell much the same story as those under Edmund and Æthelstan concerning the issue of royal favour and the stability of the top positions.¹²⁰ There was again great continuity over the succession in the presence of thegns and in the relative order of their names in witness lists, and royal thegns for the most part move up the lists, not down. There is in fact no evidence of descenders in Eadred's charters, and only a few plateau thegns.¹²¹ Thus, the same conclusions about the stability of the composition of the secular members of the *witan* can be drawn for 946 to c.951 as were done in Edmund's analysis section. This continues to strengthen the theory that this prospect of steady promotion over time, and the stability of the top positions, both constituted types of reward incentive for loyal service as a thegn. This helps us gain a better understanding of how kings might have conceptualised their relationship with these men. For whilst the personal relationship between a given king and the members of his *witan* must have existed, there is a sense in which the relationship between royal thegns and the ruling family seems more important. Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred, and potentially Alfred and Edward, perhaps saw their relationship with these men as transcending their own lives, treating and rewarding them on the basis of their dedication and length of service to the West-Saxon line of kings, and perceiving the royal thegns as a shared source of trans-generational knowledge, memory and loyalty.

¹²⁰ See Table V in the appendix.

¹²¹ For use of these terms see pp. 129-30 above.

As in Edmund's reign, the ealdormen under Eadred attested charters very regularly from 946 to c.951. All four of the ealdormen whom Eadred himself appointed can probably be seen attesting as thegns previously, and like in Edmund's reign, the majority of these appointments were not made from the very top positions in the lists of thegns. Ælfgar, who began in 946, if he is to be identified with the thegn of that name attesting under Edmund, only did so three times in 10th to 6th position; Æthelsige, who was appointed in the problematic year of 951 and whose attestations immediately disappear until 955, is probably the same individual as the thegn Æthelsige who attested regularly beforehand. Byrhtferth, appointed in 955, was a royal thegn beforehand, and Eadmund had long been in the top position amongst thegns by his appointment in 949.

Something strange happened at Eadred's court around 951, and it is not possible to extend the observations for the first half of his reign into the second. The prevailing diplomatic style changed,¹²² the king's attestations ceased to be present in most of the diplomas from 951 to 955,¹²³ the number of thegns and ealdormen who attested dropped significantly, and in the case of thegns the constitution of the group of remaining attesters changed dramatically. In the ealdormen's case, Ælfgar of Essex, Æthelsige of central Wessex, Ealhhelm of the Hwicce, Æthelmund of Herefordshire – all of these names disappeared in 951.¹²⁴ Of these, Ælfgar and Ealhhelm did not reappear in witness lists, and were not immediately replaced. It was not until 953x955 that Ælfgar was replaced with Byrhtferth, and not until 956 that Ealhhelm was replaced with Ælfhere. Æthelsige and Æthelmund's names reappeared in 955. The ealdormen who continued to attest were Æthelstan Half-King and Edmund, both of whom had been the leading ealdormen of Mercia and Wessex respectively at the time of the changes in 951. Whilst it is of course possible that Ælfgar and Ealhhelm actually died when their names ceased

¹²² On the Dunstan B charter type see Keynes, 'The dunstan B charters'; Brooks, 'Career', p. 17, n.58; Kelly, *Abingdon*, p. 198; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 46-8.

¹²³ For a discussion of Eadred's absence see Keynes, 'The Dunstan-B charters', at pp. 173-5.

¹²⁴ See Table IV in the appendix.

appearing in 951, the fact that this occurred simultaneously with the disappearance of the names of Æthelsige and Æthelmund instead indicates a shift in who was invited to assemblies from 951 to 955 as well as a potential change or delay in the normal mechanisms in place to replace dead ealdormen. It should be noted that by contrast, Eadred had been quite quick to replace Uhtred (d. 946) with Ælfgar, Wulfgar (d. 948) with Æthelsige, and Eadric (d. 949) with Eadmund. A counterpoint might be that all of this was simply the consequence of a change in diplomatic style, whereby with the inception of the Dunstan-B diplomas fewer secular names were noted as witnesses in favour of a greater number of bishops' names.¹²⁵ Instead of the regular seven or so signatories, or the nine or so under Edmund, thirteen bishops attested Eadred's charters from 951-955.¹²⁶ Yet a few points can be made against this: the inception of the Dunstan-B style of diplomatic seems to have lain in 953 or 952, whereas these omissions began in 951. Furthermore, even if these men were in fact in attendance though their names were not being recorded, it would still be significant that their names were not being recorded where they had been regularly before, and it would still be significant that this occurred at the same general time Eadred's name disappeared, and at the same time as the number of bishops' names increased.

This interpretation is strengthened by the analysis of how the lists of thegns' names changed at this time. Only approximately five royal thegns continued to attest charters from 951 until Eadred's death, and these were not, as one might expect, a direct continuation of the top five thegns attesting pre-951. Ælfsige 1 remained in the leading position, but then thegns such as Ælfheah, who had occupied roughly eighth position, Byrhtferth and Ælfnoth who had only begun attesting in 949, and Ælfgar, who began in 951 and was Byrhtferth's brother, took up these positions. The implications of these changes will be discussed further in Eadwig's

¹²⁵ On the attestations of bishops in the diplomas for these years see Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 123-4.

¹²⁶ See table XLIV from Keynes' *Atlas*.

sections in the present chapter and in Chapter Three. It is important to note for the moment that there was a very significant development at the West-Saxon court around 951, where an essentially new cohort of thegns was introduced whilst individuals who had been in the king's service for longer, such as Wulfric Cufing, Ælfric 1, Ælfred, Æthelgeard and Wulfric 2, were passed over.

Land-granting patterns

This change was also reflected in the way land was distributed to thegns. Whilst in the period from 946 to 949 mostly royal thegns were the beneficiaries of the king's largesse, from 949 to the end of the reign it was primarily non-royal thegns who received land grants.¹²⁷ From this one may deduce that in normal times, even more than in Edmund's reign, and certainly more than under Æthelstan's, membership of the group of royal thegns seems to have all but guaranteed repeated grants in the West-Saxon heartlands. The only royal thegns for whom we have no evidence of receipt of at least one estate in north-Wiltshire, west-Berkshire or Hampshire are Ælfstan, the Kentishman who received lands in the south-east from Edmund and Eadred, and Eadmund, who received a small estate in Sussex before he became ealdorman of Wessex in 949. Royal thegns generally received repeated grants and these were likely to be in the heartlands, whilst non-royal thegns were more likely to receive smaller grants in peripheral southern shires or in the Midlands. The only non-royal thegns to receive land in the West-Saxon royal heartlands were Ælfsige Goldsmith, who was probably granted two small estates in Wiltshire totalling six hides (S 522, 543),¹²⁸ and Wulfheah, who received one hide in

¹²⁷ See Table V in the appendix for better visualisation of this. This seems to reflect the situation whereby c.951 the circle of royal thegns seems to have constricted and also suddenly changed in its composition (discussed in Eadwig's analysis section below).

¹²⁸ Ælfsige Goldsmith's receipt of lands in the royal heartlands may perhaps be explained by the nature of his profession. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 32, notes that estates near that granted in S 461 in Wiltshire to an Ælfsige continued to be associated with goldsmiths into the twelfth century. If the Ælfsige who received S 461 was in fact

Wiltshire (S 580). Eadred proportionately made the most grants in Mercia than any king before him, and these will be discussed further below and in section C of Chapter Three.¹²⁹

This brings us to Eadred's ealdormen. The unusually small amount of land granted to Eadmund, a top thegn, might correlate with the fact that he was a future ealdorman, with ealdormen having been shown in the reigns of Edward, Æthelstan and Edmund to receive far less land as a group than did royal thegns. This trend is also visible in Eadred's reign. Evidence of only three grants to ealdormen survive (S 525, 524, 548), two of which (S 525 and 524) were simply confirmations of inherited lands. The data from Eadred's reign also seems to confirm the presence of another pattern of granting to ealdormen: when they did receive landbooks from the king, these tended not to be in the central areas in which royal thegns received theirs. Over the reigns of Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred, the majority of grants to ealdormen were for lands in Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Sussex and Derbyshire (see Maps 1-3). This strengthens the theory that land was granted by kings for different purposes, or along different principles, for different groups of people. Land grants did not always have the same value or significance in relation to the king's management of his relationship with his secular followers.

The use and meaning of titles in Eadred's charters

Of the fifteen individuals who are likely to have received land from the king whilst not having much presence at court, twelve did so with titles other than *minister*, and eight with the title of *homo* or *miles*.¹³⁰ These titles do occur amongst royal thegns, with *homo* and *miles* describing

Ælfsige Goldsmith, then this might suggest that being the king's smith meant one received preferential treatment. Or, perhaps the profession meant one needed to be located in a central area within easy reach of the king.

¹²⁹ See pp. 289-322.

¹³⁰ See Eadred's table of non-royal thegns (Table 18). Ælfhere *propinquus*, Ælfsige Goldsmith *homo*, Ælfsige Hunlafing *miles*, Æthelmaer *præses*, Heresige *homo*, Uhtred Cild *pedisequus*, Ulfcetel *miles*, Wulfheah *homo*, Wulfhelm *miles*, Wulfric 3 *miles*.

at various time Æthelgeard and Wulfric 1 and 2, but with much less proportional frequency. When individuals who were not royal thegns were assigned the titles of *homo* or *miles*, it was almost always in charters which assigned them significantly smaller estates than those granted to royal thegns when they were assigned those titles.¹³¹ The dichotomy is clear enough to conclude with relative certainty that in Eadred's reign, one had access to different incentive programmes depending upon what role one fulfilled for the king. The fact that royal thegns were also sometimes assigned the titles of *homo* and *miles* suggests that when this happened, it signalled that they were being rewarded in that particular capacity. In other words, on top of being royal thegns they had taken on the functional role of a *homo* or a *miles* at certain times, or perhaps that they had qualified the office of royal thegn, which they normally occupied, by acting in ways which a *homo* or a *miles* would do (i.e. in the case of a *homo*, perhaps serving the king in a way in which a commended man might do, maybe in his household or as a messenger, and in the case of a *miles*, fighting for the king), and had been rewarded accordingly. But, since they were a royal thegn, the reward for having acted in the capacity of a *homo* or a *miles* was greater than it would normally be for individuals who acted in that capacity without being a royal thegn.

These ideas can be developed further by the observation of patterns in the location and size of grant being made to non-royal thegns of designations other than *minister*. With a potential single exception (S 578 to Ælfgar *miles*, in 'Weonfelda', location unknown), the non-royal thegns who are styled *homo* receive land in the south, whilst non-royal thegns styled *miles* receive land in the Midlands. Both southern *homini* and Mercian *milites* who were non-royal thegns received small estates in all cases. This suggests that the Mercians in Eadred's

¹³¹ The estates and their sizes granted to non-royal thegns assigned the titles of *homo* or *miles*: S 556 to Ælfsige Hunlafing (5 hides), S 518 to Heresige (1.5 hides), S 549 to Ulfcetel (4 hides), S 580 to Wulfheah (1 hide), S 557 to Wulfhelm ('land'). The estates and their sizes granted to royal thegns assigned the titles of *homo* or *miles*: S 523 to Æthelgeard (10 hides), S 551 to Wulfric brother of Dunstan (20 hides), S 552, 529 and 542 for Wulfric Cufing (18, 5, 10 hides).

service were there as fighting men, and were being rewarded in that capacity. That is not to say that individuals who were granted land in the south were not fighting men, for Wulfric Cufing, Wulfric Dunstan's brother and Æthelgeard all received estates in the south and were styled *miles*. What it might mean is that the denomination *miles* could only be applied to fighting men of a certain status, and that if an individual fought for the king but was below this status, they were considered to have fulfilled this duty in the capacity of a *homo*.

According to this interpretation, the individuals who received grants in the midlands as *miles* would have been of an elevated social status, but lived at too great a remove to be royal thegns and in regular attendance at the southern court. By extension, the title of *miles* could have signified someone who executed a certain type of duty (fighting for the king) whilst occupying a certain social stratum. Eadred's reign has the highest occurrence of the title *miles* of any reign in the period, with a clear concentration in the years 947-951,¹³² whilst just under half of the laymen to whom he grants land from 949-951 are styled *miles*. This suggests Eadred attempted to focus on the military identities of his men at a time when he would have probably relied heavily on martial resources to subdue Northumbria.¹³³

As for Æthelmaer, Uhtred and Ælfheah, the non-royal thegns titled something other than *homo* or *miles* (respectively *praeses*, *pedisequus* and *propinquus*), the size and location of the estates they were granted reinforces the idea that land was granted strategically by kings according to a complex and elastic ranking system of the services executed by individuals, qualified by overlapping considerations of status, participation at court, relation to the king and/or to other powerful individuals, and function as an individual. Ælfheah was Eadred's kinsman, and received a relatively small estate in Berkshire, in an area which was the preserve of royal thegns. Æthelmaer *praeses*, or reeve, received a much larger grant than did any other

¹³² S 523, 529, 542, 548, 549, 550, 551, 578, 556, 557.

¹³³ For a discussion of Eadred's troubles with Northumbria as a context for his issuing of diplomas see his section in Chapter Three.

Mercian, and was also probably related to Eadred through Æthelflaed, the king's aunt.¹³⁴ Finally, Uhtred Cild, the size of whose estate in S 569 is not specified, may have been related to the powerful ealdorman Uhtred,¹³⁵ whose jurisdiction probably lay in north-east Mercia, whilst also holding the title of *pedisequus* which may or may not have been synonymous with *minister* by the mid-tenth century.¹³⁶ All of these individuals were therefore either kin with the king or with another powerful individual, and this seems to have affected the way in which they were rewarded.

Thus, as under Edmund, we see the continued existence of a graduated rewards scheme. Kings rewarded royal thegns generously and repeatedly with estates in the royal heartlands. When land was not being granted to a royal thegn, it was important to designate in what capacity the beneficiary was acting which merited receipt of the reward, which is why most of the individuals who are not royal thegns but still beneficiaries of landbooks from the king are styled with titles such as *homo* and *miles*. The capacity in which one served the king, or the type of relationship one had with him, was reflected in aspects of the estate received such as its location and size. However, the extent of the reward for roles fulfilled in a given capacity was determined by the extent of one's participation at the king's court, and therefore also, but not necessarily, determined by one's status.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the majority of the individuals who received land from the king who were *not* royal thegns were those for whom absolutely no evidence of participation at court as witnesses survives. This suggests that the roles they executed were important enough to be rewarded, but did not involve, or require, their presence at court. Or,

¹³⁴ See relevant note for Æthelmaer in Eadred's table of non-royal thegns (Table 18).

¹³⁵ Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 238; Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey', at p. 34; Hart, 'Ealdordom of Essex', at p. 123.

¹³⁶ In the ninth century, *pedisequus* was apparently used as a synonym for *minister* (Larson, *The King's Household*, pp. 123-4). See the term's use in S 168-70, 188, 328, 1434, 1436, 1861. But by the mid tenth century it may have come to connote a slightly different office, as a distinction seems to be implied between the *pedisequus* and other *ministri* in S 768: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 159-60 n. 24.

conversely, that these individuals were prevented by something from being royal thegns, such as living at a great distance from the court's regular itinerary¹³⁷ or not being of a high enough social status to be members of the *witan*.

¹³⁷ For the locations of assemblies in the late Anglo-Saxon period see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, Chapter Three, and esp pp. 57-64 for illustration of how the centre of royal power was firmly south of the Thames.

f. Eadwig

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdor­dom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelstan 1 (East-Anglia)	60	932 (S 417) - see Æthelstan's ealdormen	957 (S 646)	
Æthel­mund (Herefordshire)	30	940 (S 465) - see Edmund's ealdormen	956 (S 611)	
Eadmund (West Wessex) (<i>optimas</i> , S 624)	74	946 (S 508) - see Edmund's ealdormen		S 624 (Annington, Sussex, 10)
Æthelstan 2 ('Rota') (South-east Mercia?)	34	See Edmund and Eadred's ealdormen (pp. 133, 148)	957 (S 574)	
Byrhtferth (Essex)	20	955 (S 565) - see Eadred's ealdormen	956 (S 636)	
Æthelsige (Central-Wessex)	65	951 (S 554) - see Eadred's ealdormen	958 (S 650)	
Ælfhere ¹³⁸ (Mercia)	52	956 (S 605)		S 587 (Cuddesdon, Oxon, 20), 588 (Wormleighton, Warwicks, 10)
Æthelwold ¹³⁹ (East Midlands)	30	956 (S 617)		
Byrhtnoth ¹⁴⁰ (Essex) (<i>princeps</i> , S 611)	10	956 (S 616)		S 611 (Tadmarton, Oxon, 5)

¹³⁸ A son of ealdorman Ealhhelm and brother to Ælfheah. The most comprehensive analysis of Ælfhere is still Williams, '*Princeps*'.

¹³⁹ A son of Æthelstan Half-King (Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', *passim*.)

¹⁴⁰ The ealdorman of Essex who was to die at Maldon in 991. On his landholdings see Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 131-5; on his family and connexions see further Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his family'; Stafford, 'Kinship and women'; and Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar', at pp. 86-90.

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah ¹⁴¹ (Central-Wessex)	2	959 (S 658)		

Table 20: Eadwig's ealdormen

Earls (Northumbria)

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Anfred	1	957 (S 659)	957 (S 659)	
Gunner	1 (+ 1 as <i>minister</i> , S 633)	931 (S 416) - see Æthelstan's earls		
Leot	1	957 (S 659)	957 (S 659)	
Uhtred ¹⁴² (Cild?) (Five Boroughs?)	1	Unknown		
Urm	1 (+ 1 as <i>minister</i> , S 633)	929 (S 401) - see '(Th)urum' in Æthelstan's earls		

Table 21: Eadwig's earls

Royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar (<i>amicus regis</i> S 652)	50	See Eadred's uncertain cases, p. 153		
Ælfheah 1 (<i>disc.</i> S 597; <i>propinquus</i> S 585, 586)	63	955 (S 582) but received S 564 from Eadred	959, became ealdorman	S 585 (Ellendune, Wilts, 30), 639 (Buckland,

¹⁴¹ A son of ealdorman Ealhhelm and brother to Ælfhere. Williams, '*Principes*', *passim*, and Jayakumar, 'Politics', at p. 85.

¹⁴² It is unknown if this is the same Uhtred as the ealdorman of the Five Boroughs who began his career at the West-Saxon court under Æthelstan. It could also be Uhtred Cild, who was perhaps a relation of Uhtred's (see notes to Uhtred Cild in Eadred's Table 18).

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
				Berks, 10), ¹⁴³ 586 (on River Nadder, Wilts, 4)
Ælfhere (<i>prop. regis</i> S 582)	10	956 (S 955) but received land from Eadred as a non-royal thegn	956 (S 603), became ealdorman	
Ælfred 1	46	See Edmund's royal thegns, p. 134		S 609 (Didlington and Holt, Dorset, 6)
Ælfric 1 (Cild) ¹⁴⁴ (<i>familiarissimus</i> and <i>fidelis</i> S 589; <i>adoptivus parens</i> S 597)	42	955 (S 582)		S 597 (Hanney, Berks, 20), 589 (Arlesford, Hants, 40), 590 (Bayworth, Berks, 25), 640 (Ebbesborne, Wilts, 5)
Ælfsige 1 ¹⁴⁵ (<i>disc.</i> S 597, <i>fidelis</i> S 591)	66	See Æthelstan's royal thegns (p. 121) and Edmund's royal thegns (p. 135)		S 591 (Benham, Berks, 25), 592 (Kettering, Northants, 10)
Ælfsige 2 ¹⁴⁶ (' <i>dyring</i> ' S 582; <i>disc.</i> S 597)	31	See Edmund's royal thegns ¹⁴⁷		

¹⁴³ An authentic charter but with an unreliable dating clause. It is recorded as issued in a. 957, but Ælfheah probably did not become ealdorman until 959: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 75.

¹⁴⁴ Three thegns named Ælfric attested Eadwig's charters, only one with regularity, who was probably Ælfric Cild, the beneficiary of S 597 and 590 (see Kelly, *Abingdon*, nos. 55, 60). It is more difficult to identify the Ælfric who was beneficiary to S 640 and 589, but based upon the customs of granting land in the heartlands to royal thegns laid out in the tables for Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred, it seems perfectly plausible that S 640 was also granted to Ælfric Cild and not to one of the other Ælfrics. As for S 589, the huge size of this estate would not, based upon the precedent set by previous kings and Eadwig himself, point to it being granted to a thegn who was not royal. The only royal thegn under Eadwig named Ælfric was Ælfric Cild. On him see Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 76-7 and Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. cxc-cxci.

¹⁴⁵ Four thegns named Ælfsige attested Eadwig's charters, but only two with regularity. We also have evidence of Eadwig granting two estates to thegns named Ælfsige: S 591 in Berkshire, and S 592 in Kettering, Northamptonshire. The Ælfsige who attested more prominently of these (Ælfsige 1) was probably the Ælfsige who had held one of the top four positions since Edmund's reign, and had been at court since 931. The Ælfsige who attested consistently around the eighth or ninth position is 'Ælfsige 2'. It is plausible that this Ælfsige 2 is in fact the same person as the Mercian Ælfsige Hunlafing of Eadred's reign. Alternatively, 'Ælfsige 2' could be a different individual who received either S 591 or S 592, or both, or Ælfsige 1 could have received either grant or both. S 592 was for an Ælfsige son of Beorhtsige who gave Bishop Æthelwold a silver cup, an act with which his son (and therefore Ælfsige's brother) Leofsige disagreed. After Edgar's death Leofsige seized the Peterborough estates at Kettering, Oundle and Burh. See Kelly, *Peterborough*, no. 12.

¹⁴⁶ See relevant note for Ælfsige 1 in this table. It is plausible that this Ælfsige 2 was in fact the Mercian Ælfsige Hunlafing of Eadred's reign.

¹⁴⁷ For arguments about when this Ælfsige's career began see relevant notes for thegns named Ælfsige in the tables for Edmund's and Eadred's royal thegns (Tables 12 (p. 135), 17 (p. 150)).

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfwig	25	956 (S 590)		
Ælfwine ¹⁴⁸ (<i>miles</i> S 595; <i>familiarissimus</i> S 594)	27	956 (S 597)	957 (S 642) ¹⁴⁹	S 594 (Milton, Berks, 15), 595? (Yaxley and Farcet, Hunts, 15)
Ælfwold 1	18 ¹⁵⁰	See Eadred's non-royal thegns (p. 152)? ¹⁵¹		S 596 (Withiel Florey, Somerset, 4)
Æthelgeard (<i>karus</i> S 599)	49	See Æthelstan's non-royal thegns (p. 123)	958 (S 650)	S 598 (Chidden, Hants, 10), 599 (Niwantune, ?, 5), 641 (Sotwell, Berks, 15), 662a (Godshill, Isle of Wight, Wilts, 5)
Æthelmaer	22	955 (S 582) but a non-royal thegn Æthelmaer receives land under Eadred	957 (S 643)	
Æthelwold (<i>fidelis</i> S 608)	14	956 (S 597)	956 (S 598), (became ealdorman)	S 608 (Wudetune, ?, 4), 606 (Bleadon, Somerset, 15)
Byrhtferth	50	949 (S 544) - see Eadred's royal thegns		
Eadric 1 ¹⁵² (<i>karus</i> S 621)	29	956 (S 597)		S 621 (Pyrford, Surrey, 16), 622

¹⁴⁸ This Ælfwine may have been Ælfhere, Ælfheah and Eadric's brother: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 54. He was the only thegn of this name to witness Eadwig's charters, and was probably the recipient of S 594. S 595 for land in Huntingdonshire would be an unusual place to grant land to this family, since all the land received by Ælfheah, Ælfhere and Eadric so far had been in Wessex. Equally however the family was Mercian, with Ealhhelm ealdorman of western Mercia, around Evesham (Williams, '*Princeps*', 145), so probably had interests in the Midlands.

¹⁴⁹ Ælfwine is visible as a supporter of Edgar upon the division of the kingdom in 957. He is present in Edgar's Mercian charters and became one of his top thegns. See Williams, '*Princeps*', at p. 155.

¹⁵⁰ His attestations were only regular and prominent in Eadwig's 'Group 2' charters (Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 54-6).

¹⁵¹ It is possible that this was the Ælfwold who attested in third place in a problematic charter of Eadred, dated 951x955 (S 579). If not, then his attestation in S 582 (955) is the first evidence we have of him.

¹⁵² There are a few Eadrics who attested under Eadwig, but only one throughout 956, with the second beginning in 957 and attesting only four times before the end of the reign. The Eadric who attested prominently throughout the reign is likely to have been Ealhhelm's son, and brother to Ælfheah, Ælfhere and Eadwine (see Kelly, *Abingdon*, nos. 63, 64 and Hart, *ECNE*, p. 318. On this family and their relationship to Abingdon see Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. clxxxv-xcii). S 621 is granted to 'Eadric *karus*' and is to the same beneficiary as S 622; S 619 and S 654 are for huge estates in Hampshire and Berkshire, which point to their recipient being a royal thegn. These were all likely to have gone to Eadric *karus*, son of Ealhhelm and brother of Ælfhere and Ælfheah. S 620 is another

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
				(Welford, Berks, 22), 619 (Meon, Hants, 50), 654 (Longworth, Berks, 30)
Wulfgar 1 (<i>custos</i> S 658)	31	See Edmund's royal thegns (p. 137)? ¹⁵³		S 656 (Thornton and Iwerne, Dorset, 3)
Wulfric 1 Cufing	36	See Æthelstan's uncertain cases (p. 126)		635 (Ebbesborne, Wilts, 5), 575 (Woolstone, Berks, 20), 577 (Boxford, Berks, 10), 657 (Denchworth, Berks, 5) (? S 634 (Charlton, Berks, 5), 636 (Millbrook, Hants, 7)) ¹⁵⁴

Table 22: Eadwig's royal thegns

Eadwig charter granted to an Eadric, however its small size (five hides) and beneficiary's style (*'homo'*) might indicate that its beneficiary was the second Eadric thegn in Eadwig's charters, who began attesting in 957.

¹⁵³ See relevant note for Wulfgar in the table for Edmund's royal thegns (Table 12). Two thegns named Wulfgar attested Eadwig's charters, one prominently, with the Wulfgar 'leofa' who began in 958 clearly being a different man. S 656 to a Wulfgar was for land attached to that of Hinton St. Mary, received by a Wulfgar in Edmund's reign (S 502). This was therefore probably the same Wulfgar, which means that he had been absent in witness lists for all of Eadred's reign and for most of Eadwig's Group 1 charters. If this was the same Wulfgar however, the situation was probably not as simple as his reappearance signalling a 'return to favour', as stated by Kelly, *Shaftesbury*, nos. 15, 23. Wulfgar had been attesting in top spot under Edmund before he suddenly dropped to eleventh position and then disappeared in 946. He did not return to a high position under Eadwig, instead starting quite far down, starting around thirteenth place, and not moving further up than sixth over the reign (apart from in S 575 which had an uncharacteristically short witness list and in which he held fourth position). His grant of land under Eadwig also came very late (in 958).

¹⁵⁴ Of these grants, S 635 is the only one we can be certain was a legitimate grant to Wulfric Cufing (Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. clxxiv-clxxxv). S 575 and 577 are problematic documents which have been altered. It is probable that these estates at Boxford and Ashbury belonged to Wulfric as he already held estates there, but the charters could nevertheless represent forgeries. Other possibilities are that they were generated as a result of Wulfric's forfeiture and restitution (S 687), or that they were adaptations of the diplomas drawn up by Eadwig for other beneficiaries, which were given to Wulfric after the restoration and adapted: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 77. S 657 covered the same estate as was granted to Wulfric in S 529, and could therefore be a confirmation of a document drawn up as consequence of Wulfric's loss of property: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 81. S 634 and 636 were to beneficiaries or a beneficiary called Wulfric, but it is unknown whether this was to Cufing as the lands they covered were not included in those listed in the restitution charter: Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. clxxiv-clxxxv. They have here been allocated to Wulfric Cufing because of their locations in areas proximate to the locations of grants made to Wulfric Cufing.

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgeard	1	
Ælfhelm	1	
Ælfmaer	3	
Ælfmaer 2	1	
Ælfnoth 2	1	
Ælfred 2	2	
Ælfric 2	8	
Ælfric 3	1	
Ælfric 4	1	
Ælfsige 3	7	
Ælfsige 4	1	
Ælfstan (<i>miles</i> S 672)	-	S 672 (Harwell, Berks, 7) ¹⁵⁵
Ælfweard	2	
Ælfwold 2	1	
Ælfwold 3	1	
Æscwig (<i>custos</i> S 658)	1	
Æthelbriht	2	
Æthelferth	3	
Æthelferth 2	1	
Æthelferth 3	1	
Æthelnoth ¹⁵⁶	-	S 603 (Fyfield, Berks, 13), 602 (Darlaston, Staffs, land)
Æthelred	1	
Æthelric	1	S 642 (Upton, Wilts, 10)
Æthelsige 1 (<i>pincerna</i> S 658)	4	S 604 (East Stoke, Hants, 5)
Æthelsige 2	1	
Æthelstan	1	
Æthelweard 1	2	
Æthelweard 2	4	
Brihthelm	1	
Brihtric 1	1	
Brihtric 2	1	
Brihtwold	1	
Byrhtnoth ¹⁵⁷	3	

¹⁵⁵ This is an authentic charter of Eadwig but had Edgar's name substituted for Eadwig's: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁶ Possibly this is the same Æthelnoth who attested regularly under Eadred as a royal thegn. It is unclear whether the same Æthelnoth was the recipient of both S 602 and 603.

¹⁵⁷ The Byrhtnoth who received S 617 and 611 was the future ealdorman of Essex (and was ealdorman at the time of receiving S 611). There is no evidence that he attested charters as thegn before appearing as ealdorman. When the name Byrhtnoth appears in Eadwig's witness lists it is in three charters at the very end of his reign in 958-9, and represent the attestation of a different individual than Byrhtnoth of Maldon, who was ealdorman of Essex by this point.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Byrhtic ¹⁵⁸	-	S 618 (Tadmarton, Oxon, 5), 581 (Hendred, Berks, 10)
Ceolheah	1	
Ceolweard	-	S 652 (Hamp, Somerset, 1)
Cyneric (<i>propincernarius</i> , S 651)	3	S 651 (Cern, Berks, 2)
Cyneric 2	1	
Cynesige	8	
Eadheah (<i>homo</i> S 653)	-	S 653 (Ayshford and Boehill, Devon, 2.5 hides and 25 <i>segetes</i>)
Eadmund	1	
Eadred	3	
Eadric 2 (<i>homo</i> S 620)?	3	S 620 ¹⁵⁹ (Padworth, Berks, 5)?
Eadric 3	1	
Eadric 4	1	
Eadulf	1	
Eadwig	-	S 623 (Braunston, Northants, 8)
Eadwold	3	S 650 (Drayton, Berks, 10)
Ealdred	2	
Ealdred 2	2	
Eanulf	1	
Hehelm (<i>familiarissimus fidelis</i> S 627)	-	S 627 (Bathampton, Somerset, 5)
Huna	-	S 644 (Lym, Dorset?, 4)
Irdwold	1	
Leofric	2	
Leofstan	1	
Leofwine (<i>prop. regis</i> S 582)	3	
Lyfing	-	S 645 (Loceresleage and Tunworth, Middx, 9)
Lyfing 2	1	
Mæglsothen (<i>homo</i> S 628)		S 628 (Mortune, Derbys?, 3)
Ordgar	3	
Ordnoth	1	
Ordwold	1	
Osulf	5	
Osweard	6	
Oswig	3	
Oswig	2	
Sigeferth	2	
Sigehelm	1	
Siric	1	

¹⁵⁸ Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 66, notes that ‘this may be the same man who received S 581. It is possible he was related to Byrhtnoth. No Byrhtic attests regularly but a thegn of that name does appear on the relatively brief witness list of S 651, where some of other witnesses are identified as members of the king’s royal household. At the same meeting at which thegn Byrhtnoth was granted 10 hides at Tadmarton (617), Byrhtic received S 618. Later in the year Eadwig gave to Byrhtnoth more land in same place (S 611).’

¹⁵⁹ It is argued in the relevant note for Eadric in Eadwig’s table of royal thegns (Table 22) that the beneficiary of S 620 was Eadric 2, not Eadric 1, the powerful thegn and landowner prominent in Eadwig’s witness lists.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wiferth (<i>fidelis vassallus</i> , S 666)	-	S 666 (Knogle, Wilts, 10)
Wihtgar	1	
Wihtsige	2	S 632 (Corfe and Blashenwell, Dorset, 7)
Wistan (<i>fidelis</i> S 631)	-	S 631 (River Nadder, Wilts, 4)
Wulfgar 2 (<i>disc.</i> S 658)	1	
Wulfgar 3	1	
Wulfgar 'Leofa' (<i>karus</i> S 655)	5	S 655 (Shaftesbury, Dorset, land)
Wulfheah	1	
Wulfhere	3	
Wulfmaer	1	
Wulfric 4	1	
Wulfric (<i>dilectus fidelis</i> and <i>famosissimus venator</i> S 637) ¹⁶⁰	1	S 637 (Zeals and Donhead, Wilts, 1.5)
Wullaf	1	
Wynsige	4	S 638 (Moredon, Wilts, 20)

Table 23: Eadwig's non-royal thegns

Uncertain cases

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfheah 2	12		Attests irregularly throughout the reign but when he does he is often in top 7
Ælfnoth (<i>custos</i> S 658)	5		Attests rarely throughout the reign but when he does, normally in top 7
Byrhtnoth ¹⁶¹	-	S 617 (Tadmarton, Oxon, 10)	The future ealdorman of Essex. Does not attest a single charter as thegn, but receives S 617 in this capacity.

¹⁶⁰ This may be the same man which Keynes' *Atlas* labels 'Wulfric 2', who is in the 'uncertain cases' table.

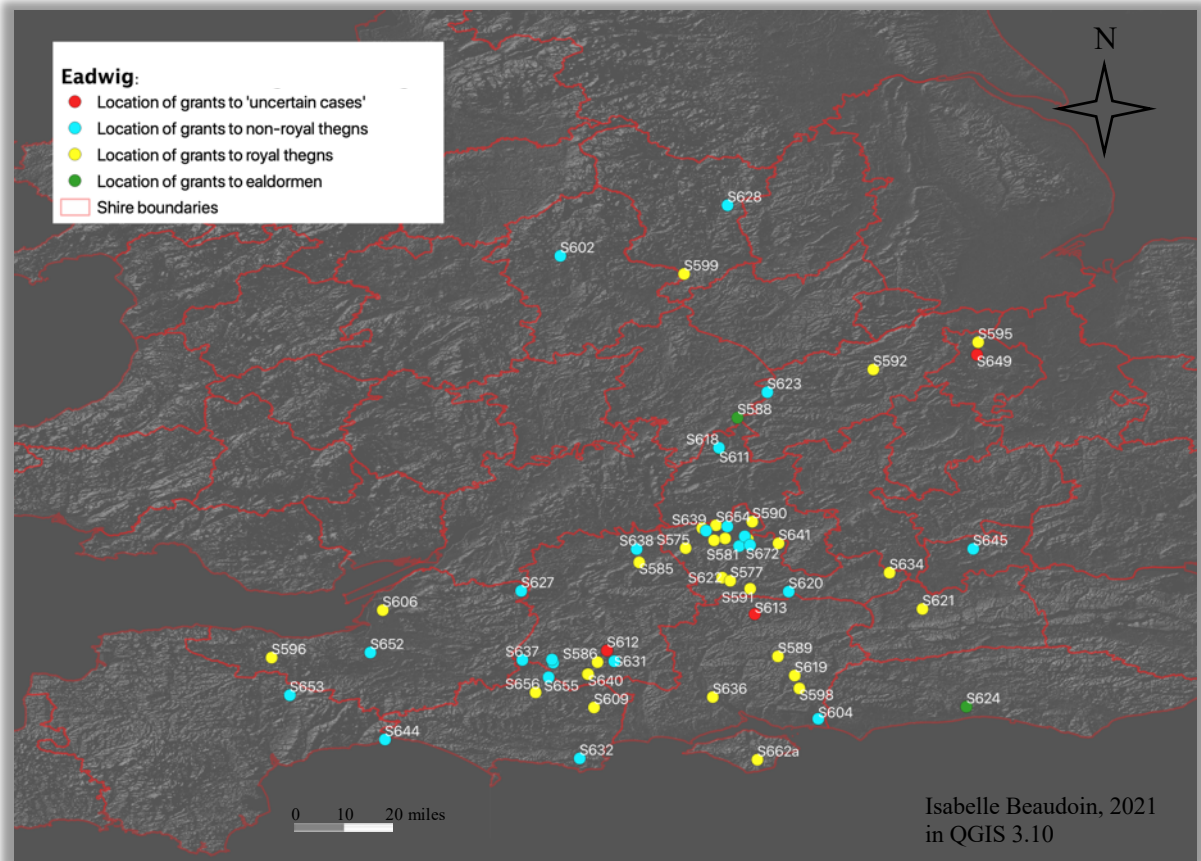
¹⁶¹ In Eadwig's table of assestations, the three attestations belonging to a Byrhtnoth in 958-9 (S 654, 651, 660) were for a different man than Byrhtnoth the ealdorman of Essex, for Byrhtnoth ealdorman was already attesting Edgar's charters in these years as ealdorman.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Byrnric ¹⁶²	5	S 612 (Langford, Wilts, 6), 613 (Poolhampton, Hants, 5)	Attests semi-regularly at end of 956 and for some of 957
Wulfric 2 ¹⁶³	9		Attests irregularly throughout the reign but when he does he is often in top 8
Wulfric 3	5		Attests regularly quite low down in 957 before the division, then ceases
Wulfstan	6	S 649 (Conington, Hunts, 9)	Attests semi-regularly at end of 956 and for some of 957

Table 24: Eadwig's uncertain cases

¹⁶² This individual was closely related to ealdorman Ælfhere and to Ælfric Cild: see Crick, *St Albans*, p. 93.

¹⁶³ This is a different Wulfric from Wulfric Cufing, who was still active and much higher in the witness lists, and also from Wulfric brother of Dunstan, who probably died c. 951. On these individuals see their relevant notes in Edmund's and Eadred's tables of royal thegns.



Map 4: Location of Eadwig's grants to thegns and ealdormen

Analysis: Eadwig's charters

Patterns of attestation and promotion

Compared to the reigns of Edmund and Eadred, Eadwig's saw much less continuity in the presence and position of thegns' names in diploma witness lists. It is important to reflect upon what this might mean concerning the composition of the *witan* from 956 to 959, and by extension how the king may have been managing his relationships with these men. Some of the fluctuations in Eadwig's witness lists have been previously attributed to simple diplomatic convention.¹⁶⁴ But by closely analysing the patterns of these fluctuations in the year 956 and

¹⁶⁴ The key analysis of Eadwig's witness lists remains Keynes' in his *Diplomas*, pp. 46-69, with the role of memoranda and cartulary copyists discussed at p. 62. Although the volume of Eadwig's charters are mentioned by every historian who touches on Eadwig (see for example Stenton, *ASE*, p. 366; Wickham, 'Problems', at pp.

building upon the conclusions of previous sections about the significance of diplomas to those who participated in them, it is possible to come to a new understanding of what the patterns of attestation amongst Eadwig's thegns might represent in relation to the courtly dynamics of the reign, and how the king may have used royal diplomas to incentivise loyalty.

Unlike the consistency in thegns' positions of attestations which characterised the charter witness lists of Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred, the top six positions in the groups of *ministri* in Eadwig's charters were often occupied by different names. Additionally, the names in the top positions of Eadwig's witness lists are largely not those who occupied those positions at the end of Eadred's reign. This goes against the trend identified above wherein there was great stability in the carry-over of names in the top positions of thegns' witness lists across successions. Based upon the order of thegns in Eadred's final charters, one would have expected the order of thegns for Eadwig's first charters to have been roughly Ælfsige 1, Æthelsige, Ælfnoth, Ælfgar, and Byrhtferth.¹⁶⁵ One might imagine that if Ælfsige 1 had died or ceased attesting in Eadwig's reign, that his place would be taken by the thegn generally in the second position, and so on, as had normally occurred in the previous three reigns.

Yet neither of these assumptions would be correct. The order of Eadwig's Group One charters¹⁶⁶ was often Ælfheah, Ælfsige 1, Æthelgeard, Ælfred, Æthelmaer. When Ælfheah's name was absent the first position normally went to Ælfsige, however when Ælfgar and Byrhtferth's attestations were present, they took priority over both Ælfheah's and Ælfsige's. Groups Two, Three and Four see much more continuity, but self-contained within the groups

19-20; Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar', at p. 84; Yorke, 'Æthelwold', at p. 75; Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 127; John, *Orbis*, pp. 190-1; Lewis, 'Edgar', at p. 106; Lavelle, 'Royal control', *passim.*), the composition of the witness lists is never mentioned beyond citing Keynes' use of them to separate the charters of 956 into four groups.

¹⁶⁵ This order is taken from the last charter of Eadred whose witness list and date can be trusted, and which has names of thegns in its witness list, which is S 564. The witness list of S 571, also potentially issued by Eadred in 955, is 'perhaps not to be trusted as it stands' (Keynes, 'The Dunstan B charters', at p. 192, n. 109), and S 567 for 955 is 'probably spurious' (Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 51). See Eadred's table in the appendices for the order of names in S 564 and in other charters issued in Eadred's final years.

¹⁶⁶ The following discussion in its grouping of charters follows that laid out by Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 51-61. Refer to Eadwig's tables of attestations in the appendices for the general orders quoted here.

rather than between them. Those heading the thegns in Group Two charters had the general order of Ælfsige 1, Wulfric Cufing, Æthelgeard, Ælfheah, Ælfgar, and Byrhtferth. Those heading the first half of Group Three charters¹⁶⁷ had the general order of Ælfgar, Byrhtferth, Ælfheah, Æthelgeard, Ælfred, and with that of the second half of Group Three charters¹⁶⁸ being Ælfsige 1, Wulfric Cufing, Æthelgeard, Ælfsige 2/Ælfgar/Byrhtferth. Those heading Group Four charters were variously led by Ælfheah and Ælfsige, with the thegns Æthelmaer, Æthelgeard, Ælfred, Ælfric settling in different spots behind them, Wulfric Cufing disappearing, and Ælfwine, Eadric and Eadwig becoming regular attesters where they had been essentially absent previously. The charters for 957 and 958 see further variations upon these groups heading the lists of attesting *ministri*.

This at first looks like a hopelessly confused picture. We might usefully consider the available explanations for the inconsistencies in the lists of thegns' attestations in the first year of Eadwig's reign before providing a new theory. As Keynes has pointed out, the variations in attestation positions of given names *within* the four groups could be attributed to the existence of several memoranda from the same assembly which did not all record the order of witnesses in the same way.¹⁶⁹ This is plausible, but does not explain why there was such variation in the positions of names in the witness lists *between* the groups. Keynes then accounted for the differences between the groups via their representation of four separate gatherings of the king and his council in 956.¹⁷⁰ Yet one is left wondering – especially in the context of the extremely consistent patterns of attestations in the reigns of previous kings, which spanned much longer time periods – why, within the same year, certain leading names occupied such wildly different positions. Was it down to the proclivities of cartulary copyists, who only chose certain names to copy down? This theory would be plausible relative to the variations between the groups if

¹⁶⁷ S 617, 618, 584, 623.

¹⁶⁸ S 858, 634, 638.

¹⁶⁹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 61-2. On witness list memoranda see Parsons, 'Scribal memoranda'.

¹⁷⁰ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 62

each group belonged to a single house's cartulary, which they do not.¹⁷¹ Or, it would be plausible relative to the variations within the groups if all the diplomas with a certain order of thegns came from one cartulary. We can test this for Group One charters. The charters which have Ælfgar and Byrhtferth heading the lists (S 594, 589, 672) rather than Ælfheah and Ælfsige (S 597, 608, 614, 631) do not however come from the same cartulary. S 594 is found in Abingdon's cartulary, whilst S 589 and 672 are in that of the Old Minster Winchester.

We are thus left with three possible explanations: one, that the same leading thegns were attesting the four great assemblies of 956, but that contrary to the diplomatic practices of all the kings analysed so far, it did not matter in what order their names were written down relative to one another, and so each meeting essentially contains a scrambled, random order of leading thegns' names. Two, that one or more of the links in the (still highly obscure) chain of the production and preservation of charters, leading from tenth-century assembly to our own eyes, was broken by some diplomatic process whereby names were written down in the wrong orders.¹⁷² Or three, that the orders we see were dictated by someone.

The second possibility is irrecoverable, and in any case there is an explanation available for the inconsistencies in the lists of thegns' attestations which simultaneously addresses both the first and third possibilities. If one looks carefully at the order of thegns witnessing the charters of the four groups, it begins to look as if some sort of alternation was going on between the group of thegns who were prominent in Eadred's reign pre-c.951, i.e. when the make-up of witness lists changed drastically in terms of numbers and constitution, and the group of thegns who led Eadred's charters post-c.951.¹⁷³ Before c.951 under Eadred, the most prominent thegns at court (barring Eadmund, who became ealdorman in 949) were Ælfstan, Wulfric 1 (Cufing),

¹⁷¹ See Keynes' tables of attestations for Eadwig, where the location in which each diploma was preserved is recorded at the top of the tables. There is a great mix of all the major (and some minor) houses.

¹⁷² For a useful recent summary of the debate over the centralised or decentralised production of royal diplomas see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 78-89. There is still uncertainty about the nature and order of steps which led from assembly to a recipient having in their hands a royal charter. See now also Keynes, 'Church councils'.

¹⁷³ See in Eadred's analysis section above, pp.154-5.

Ælfsige 1, Wulfric 2 (Brother of Dunstan), Ælfric, Æthelgeard, Æthelnoth, and Ælfred, roughly in that order.¹⁷⁴ Of these, Ælfstan, Wulfric 2 and Æthelnoth seem to have ceased attesting c.951, with Wulfric Cufing, Ælfsige 1, Ælfric, Æthelgeard and Ælfred probably continuing to attest either in Eadred's reign or in Eadwig's. Post-c.951, the top thegns were Ælfsige 1, Æthelsige, Ælfheah (either the same individual who had been attesting pre-c.951, or the Ælfheah who started in 951 in fifth position), Ælfnoth, Byrhtferth and Ælfgar, roughly in that order. Of these, Ælfnoth seems to have ceased attesting in 955,¹⁷⁵ and Æthelsige ceased after attesting once early in 956,¹⁷⁶ leaving us with Ælfsige, Ælfheah, Byrhtferth and Ælfgar as continuers into Eadwig's reign.

If one superimposes these names upon the lists of thegns attesting Eadwig's charters in 956, it seems as though the thegns who were prominent pre- and post-c.951 were given priority at different times. In Group One, for example, priority seems to be given to those who rose to prominence post-c.951: Ælfheah, Ælfsige, Byrhtferth and Ælfgar. Ælfred and Æthelgeard from the pre-c.951 group, for example, are relegated to much lower positions when Ælfgar and Byrhtferth's names from the post-c.951 group are present, and Wulfric Cufing drops several places. In Group Two, we are seemingly back to a roughly pre-c.951 order, with Ælfsige, Wulfric Cufing, Æthelgeard, Ælfheah and Ælfric generally being given priority. In the first half of Group Three charters (S 617, 618, 584 and 623) the thegns who rose to prominence post-c.951, Byrhtferth, Ælfgar and Ælfheah, are once more given priority, with Æthelgeard and Ælfred following. With the second half of Group Three charters (S 585, 634, 638) we are back to a pre-c.951 hierarchy, with Ælfsige, Æthelgeard and Wulfric returning to prominence. Finally, the top positions of the Group Four witness lists seem to host a mix of the names of thegns who were prominent pre- and post-c.951. At first, the thegns who were in the pre-c.951

¹⁷⁴ See the table of attestations for Eadred's reign in appendices (Table IV).

¹⁷⁵ S 564.

¹⁷⁶ S 627.

group are generally in a higher position than those of the post-c.951 group. Ælfsige and Ælfheah vie for first place, Æthelgeard from the pre-c. 951 group appears quite frequently in different positions, Byrhtferth does not appear often but twice in second place, and the same for Ælfred. This latter arrangement continued into 957 pre-division, after which in 957 and into 958 there was still some alternation between Ælfheah leading, and Byrhtferth and Ælfgar leading, with Ælfsige falling several places, and Ælfred generally holding third to fifth position. In no other reign were the top positions of witness lists so contested.

We are thus faced with the following scenario. Eadwig held four large and very productive gatherings in 956, the first year of his reign. The records of what thegn's name went where, both at individual assemblies and across them, vary, but not randomly. Within groups, such as within Group One, the same names, with roughly the same order relative to one another, occupy the same positions in certain charters, with another group of names and another order of precedence in the rest of them. This is also the case for the positions of names across the four groups. It is not as though there occurred completely new lists of names in every charter or in every group, where names from very low positions were suddenly in high ones, etc. The same orders of names, whose individual prominence had roots at different points in Eadred's reign, were being cycled in the top positions of the lists of attesting thegns in Eadwig's reign. Could this be explained by memoranda from Eadred's reign being used to draw up diplomas in Eadwig's, perhaps because the time pressures inherent in the creation of so many diplomas meant that certain corners needed to be cut? The regularity of the changeover in the groups of names given prominence in Eadwig's 956 charters precludes this possibility, and in any case if the goal were to save time, why not then use the same memorandum for all the charters issued in 956?

We are left with the possibility that the orders of names in the lists of thegns attesting Eadwig's charters were dictated by someone, for some purpose. Could this person not have

been the king, or the king in conjunction with ealdormen or bishops? Historians readily treat the composition of witness lists of kings as indicators of the political atmosphere of the time and as barometers of the favour or status of a given individual relative to others.¹⁷⁷ We have furthermore seen, over several reigns, the methodical progression of thegns' names up witness lists over time, the only reasonable explanation for which is the existence of normative frameworks of promotion. These at the very least would have needed the king's tacit approval or would have been orchestrated by senior members of the *witan* in the king's interests, and at the most would have been dictated by the king himself. This means that the positions of names relative to each other in witness lists should be taken literally and more or less as reflections of the king's will, and not as literary fabrications.¹⁷⁸

If we accept the possibility that the positioning of leading thegns relative to one another in Eadwig's charters was deliberate and thus probably manipulated to some extent by the king, this has corollaries for our understanding of how he managed his thegns, the significance to these thegns of the capacities in which they were recorded and seen as participating in meetings of the *witan*, and thus how the king might have incentivised service to himself. The alternation of groups of thegns at the head of witness lists in Eadwig's reign who were prominent before and after a time of disruption at Eadred's court suggests an effort on Eadwig's behalf to maintain equilibrium between these groups of powerful individuals potentially at a time when he was dealing with challenges to his authority.¹⁷⁹ Implicit in this interpretation is the assumption that the position a thegn occupied in a witness lists relative to his peers held

¹⁷⁷ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 37; Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', *passim*; Williams, 'Princes', *passim*; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 42; etc.

¹⁷⁸ We should of course always employ some caution in this interpretation because of the possibilities that the witness lists as they come down to us are not accurate reflections of who was actually at a given assembly, whether because of errors on behalf of later cartulary copyists or scribes creating the memorandum for a given assembly, or indeed the reuse of older memoranda if for some reason newer ones were not available, tampering with witness lists, etc. For some discussions and examples of these phenomena see Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. lxxxii-lxxxiii. Bates, 'The prosopographical study', at pp. 91-2 and Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 79.

¹⁷⁹ This will be developed at length in Eadwig's section in Chapter Three below. On the factions at Eadwig's court however see Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar', at pp. 84-90 and specifically on the issue of Eadwig's marriage to Ælfgifu see Yorke, *Æthelwold*, pp. 76-88.

significant value to said thegn. Why should it not have? Social hierarchy was important in Anglo-Saxon society,¹⁸⁰ and one can imagine that the chance to signal and reaffirm one's status, not only to one's contemporaries but to posterity, would have been prized. Additionally, if we think of assemblies and the drawing up of charters there in practical terms, the positioning of names in different places on the witness list might actually have been physically represented in, say, seating or standing arrangements,¹⁸¹ or perhaps in the order in which individuals were called up by the king to declare their approval as a witness. There must have been an element of pride and honour in being called up before others or being placed closer to the king. If there was, then this could be exploited by the king to his advantage. The fluctuations amongst leading thegns' names in Eadwig's witness lists might moreover be seen as evidence of the king attempting to incentivise the loyalty of different factions to himself by offering them equal chances to participate in coveted capacities in the big assemblies of his first year in power. They also invite us to rethink the significance of witness lists themselves. These were dynamic reflections not only of the realities at court, but of kings' engagement with thegns' socio-political ambitions in order to incentivise service and loyalty to themselves. Because of its

¹⁸⁰ Archbishop Wulfstan of York, for example, compiled three ninth-century texts on social status, two from Mercia and one from Northumbria, revised by Wulfstan and placed between two of his own compositions. For translation and commentary see Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 65-75. On the stratification of society via arms and heriot in late Anglo-Saxon England see Brooks, 'Arms, status and warfare' and for a discussion of the delineations of status under Alfred see Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 29-38. For concern amongst eleventh-century lawmakers about ambiguities in social status, see Senecal, 'Keeping up with the Godwinesons', at pp. 256-8.

¹⁸¹ There is no surviving mention in Anglo-Saxon sources of seating arrangements at assemblies, but unless standing was known as a traditional or ritualised component of the meeting, or was prescribed explicitly in order to make room for more people, provisions would have been made for seating. Whether seated or standing, it is difficult to imagine that an ealdorman would have accepted being placed further away from the king than say a thegn who attested twenty-fifth down the list. Placing the most important individuals around the king would also have made the most sense logistically, for it would have been difficult to converse otherwise. See however Roach, 'Hosting', p. 42, and Campbell, 'Some agents'. For discussions of the importance of seating arrangements at Carolingian church councils, see for example Kramer, 'Order in the church', at p. 59; Bachrach, 'Charlemagne's health', at p. 20; Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, pp. 18-20. Richer of St. Rémi mentioned that Charles the Simple sat Hagano, a low-born upstart, closer to himself than he did Robert of Neustria, and that this caused great offence: Richer, *Historiae*, I, pp. 46-8. For a discussion of the importance of seating amongst bishops as representations of hierarchy at much later English assemblies under Henry II, see Vincent, 'Shall the first be last?', at pp. 288-92.

representative value, getting to broadcast one's status through witnessing royal charters in elevated positions was, in other words, an incentive to act loyally.

Coming now to the issue of promotion, a greater number of new royal thegns rose to prominence at Eadwig's court than one would expect in the context of such a short reign: Ælfheah and Ælfhere (both of whom became ealdormen under Eadwig), Ælfwine, Eadric and Ælfric Cild, all kinsmen of king;¹⁸² Ælfwig, the king's butler,¹⁸³ Æthelwold, a son of Æthelstan Half-King,¹⁸⁴ Æthelmaer,¹⁸⁵ and Byrhtnoth. Of these men, only Ælfheah left any potential trace of having been a prominent participant at court before Eadwig's accession.¹⁸⁶ The rise of 'new men' at Eadwig's court has often been commented upon, particularly in the context of his promotion of Ælfhere and Byrhtnoth to the rank of ealdormen without their having spent any time at court as thegns.¹⁸⁷ One might see in this confirmation of B's famous accusation that Eadwig was 'losing the shrewd and wise who disapproved of his folly and eagerly annexing men like himself [*consimiles*]'.¹⁸⁸ But whilst Eadwig certainly seems to have introduced a comparatively high number of thegns into the *witan*, interpretations of his promotion of Ælfhere and Byrhtnoth as irregular should be reconsidered. If one looks back over the patterns of attestation of ealdormen, whilst it would have been extremely irregular for an individual who became ealdorman of *Wessex* to not have had a presence attesting as thegn beforehand, this was not unheard of for ealdormen north of the Thames. Æthelstan Half-King of Mercia had not attested at King Æthelstan's court as thegn before being made ealdorman at the death

¹⁸² Williams, '*Princeps*'. For background on these thegns see their respective entries and notes in Eadwig's table of royal thegns.

¹⁸³ Hart, *ECNE*, p. 275.

¹⁸⁴ Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at pp. 127-31. Eadwig promoted him to the position of ealdorman in 956.

¹⁸⁵ Hart, *ECNE*, p. 287, wrote that 'it is just possible that he is the Æthelmaer *praeses* (reeve) who received 20 hides from Eadred in Buckinghamshire in 949'.

¹⁸⁶ S 564 from Eadred to an Ælfheah thegn was to the future ealdorman. It is unclear whether this is the same individual who attested prominently throughout Eadred's reign. Eadwig would eventually promote Ælfheah to ealdorman, but only in 959 (see Williams, '*Princeps*', at pp. 147-8).

¹⁸⁷ Yorke, 'Æthelwold', at p. 75; Williams, '*Princeps*', p. 155; Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar', at pp. 86, 89; Blanchard, 'A new perspective', at p. 248.

¹⁸⁸ B's *VD*, c.24. I follow here Hart's translation, *ECNE*, pp. 322.

of his predecessor, Ælfred;¹⁸⁹ and the same was true of Uhtred of the Five Boroughs, who also appeared as ealdorman first under Æthelstan,¹⁹⁰ and Æthelstan ‘Rota’, ealdorman of south-east Mercia, promoted under Edmund.¹⁹¹ Ealhhelm and Æthelmund, also promoted to ealdormanries in Mercia under Edmund, had attested as thegns previously but both had done so in relatively low positions. Both Ælfhere and Byrhtnoth came from ealdormen’s stock, and neither were appointed to West-Saxon ealdormanries. It may not have been so thoroughly irregular for Eadwig to appoint them without their having spent time as thegns at court previously, especially if, for example, they had been sharing in the administration of the ealdormanries of Mercia and Essex with their fathers (Ealhhelm and Byrhtferth), thus perhaps explaining their absence from court before their promotions. Despite this, for the length of his reign Eadwig does seem to have made greater use of promotion than had his predecessors. In the context of his potential inheritance from Eadred of factionalism amongst thegns, we might see this as an effort to create his own group of loyal supporters, upon whom he might fall back if his attempts to negotiate existing tensions failed. In promoting Ælfhere and Ælfheah to positions of power, and thus seemingly backing the interests of this family against those of Æthelstan Half-King’s, we might read the same strategy.¹⁹² A kin group given the chance to carve out their niche against a more prominent one might have been more committed to the king’s cause.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ See Table III in the appendix. Whilst there were probably four different Æthelstans witnessing King Æthelstan’s charters as thegns, none of these can plausibly be associated with the Half-King. They either attest the same charters he does as ealdorman, or they attest too low down the list of thegns to be considered a possible scribal mistake. His brothers can however probably be seen attesting as thegns: see Hart, ‘Æthelstan ‘Half-King’’, at pp. 119, n. 3, 120, n. 1.

¹⁹⁰ See Table III in appendix. No thegn named Uhtred attested Æthelstan’s charters. S 397 in 926 was a confirmation of lands purchased from the Danes by Uhtred (future ealdorman) in Derbyshire in Edward’s reign, but he is not named *minister* in this charter, nor given any title for that matter.

¹⁹¹ See Table IV in appendices. On Æthelstan Rota see also Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 109 and Hart, ‘Æthelstan ‘Half-King’’, at pp. 126-7, n. 3.

¹⁹² For the implication that Eadwig was intentionally favouring Ælfhere’s family over that of the Half-King’s, see Hart, ‘Æthelstan’, at p. 128 and Williams, ‘*Princeps*’, at p. 160. See also Jayakumar, ‘Eadwig and Edgar’, for discussions of the relative strength of the Half-King’s family versus that of Ælfhere, at p. 94.

¹⁹³ The ambitions of kin groups could pose opportunities as well as dangers for kings – for a discussion of this see Stafford, ‘Reign of Æthelred’, at p. 33. For a discussion of how kings negotiated the issue of social mobility in a Carolingian context see Airlie, ‘Bonds of power’.

Land-granting patterns

Despite the increase in volume of Eadwig's disposition of royal land relative to that of his predecessors, it is still possible to see within it a continuation of previous kings' customs of granting larger estates on a repeated basis in the West-Saxon heartlands to royal thegns. Referring back to Table 22, most of Eadwig's grants to royal thegns, when they were in Wessex, were in north-Wiltshire and west-Berkshire. Eadwig seems however to have accelerated the rate at which royal thegns claimed this reward relative to the customs of his predecessors, for during the reigns of Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred it was rare for royal thegns to receive land within two years of the start of their political career at court.¹⁹⁴

It is illuminating to examine the terms in which the draftsmen (and perhaps by extension, Eadwig) framed and justified these gifts. The dispositive section of a diploma to Wigstan his *fidelis* issued in 956 stated, 'I Eadwig, king of the English, through the charity which extensively poured into our heart by the mercy of Christ, undertake and arrange for mine [men] to be enriched, and likewise my loyal men. To this end, likewise to my loyal man named Wigstan I concede four *mansae*...' ¹⁹⁵ Similar reflexive references to the king's policies towards his leading men may be found in three other of Eadwig's charters, all belonging to Group One, namely the group of charters probably issued upon Eadwig's coronation.¹⁹⁶ Such references are almost unique to these four of Eadwig's charters, with another iteration existing

¹⁹⁴ See for example the following careers, which may be traced with reference to the tables of attestations in the appendices: Wulfgar under Æthelstan, who received his first grant (of which we have evidence) in 931 after starting to attest in 928. Under Edmund, Ælfheah received land less than two years from the time of his first attestation under Edmund, but he was likely the same Ælfheah who had been a royal thegn under Æthelstan. Ælfgar started in 941 and was granted land in 943. Wulfgar began in 940, and received land in 943. We do not have evidence that any of the royal thegns who began their political careers in Eadred's reign (Ælfnoth, Æthelnoth, Byrhtferth) received land from that king.

¹⁹⁵ S 631, '*Cui etiam dono ego Eadwi rex Anglorum gratulabundus insisto ac per caritatem quam late infudit in cordibus nostris misericordia Dei ditari dispono meos quoque fideles. Huic quoque meo fideli Wistano nomino [...]*': Finberg, *ECW*, no. 283.

¹⁹⁶ The three other charters are S 637, 608 and 597. On the date of issue of Group One charters see Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 62. On the proems of Group One charters as 'astonishing literary concoctions', with that of S 597 being the most remarkable of these, see Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 55, p. 236.

in a charter reportedly issued by Edgar for Ælfstan his *miles* but which is in actuality a forgery modelled on an authentic instrument of 956.¹⁹⁷ Other kings from Alfred to Æthelred never even alluded to, let alone explicitly described, their own policies of reward toward laymen. If we take the sentiments in these charters to represent those of the king, Eadwig may thus at the inception of his reign be seen explicitly citing a general policy of munificence towards lay beneficiaries in charters granting land to laymen.

A trend that has become visible in the analysis of the three reigns before Eadwig's is the tendency for land grants to non-royal thegns to have gone to those for whom there exists no evidence of attestations. This helps us discern three categories of thegn in diplomas' converging evidence of land grants, rank and extent of participation at court (as measured by the act of witnessing). First, the local thegns who received land from the king for things unrelated to being in his direct service (i.e., non-royal thegns who did not attest often at court but who were probably of local importance).¹⁹⁸ Second, the thegns who attested charters, but irregularly and in low positions, and who in the vast majority of cases are not recorded as receiving any grants, but when they did it was not normally in the West-Saxon heartlands.¹⁹⁹ We do not know where these thegns were local to, but one assumes that they cannot all have been from peripheral southern shires or the midlands. And third, the royal thegns, who in their vast majority receive repeated, large grants in the West-Saxon heartlands.²⁰⁰

We can deduce from these patterns that land was normally either granted on the basis of dedicated service as a royal thegn, in which case one received land in the heartlands and repeated grants, or one was a thegn of local importance who received land in one's locality, perhaps as a result of petition, the success of which was brought about by the performance of

¹⁹⁷ S 672. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 63.

¹⁹⁸ Examples of this category include thegns such as Æthelnoth and Eadulf (Table 13); Ælfsige Goldsmith, Brihtric, Heresige, Uhtred Cild (Table 18); Ælfstan, Æthelnoth, Eadheah (Table 23).

¹⁹⁹ Examples of this category include thegns such as Sigeric (Table 13); Ælfhere, Æthelmær, Wulfhelm (Table 18); Æthelsige 1, Wihtsige, Wulfgar Leofa (Table 23).

²⁰⁰ See individuals in Tables 12, 17, 22.

some type of service for the king other than that of a royal thegn – his representative in that locality, perhaps. But one did not receive land if one attested very irregularly – presumably these individuals were not engaged directly in kings' service, and were simply brought in to witness land transactions which were of particular interest or relevance to them, and in which their attestation would have particular value – i.e. they lived in the surrounds, were kin of the beneficiary, etc. Eadwig seems to have made some changes to this system, and to have granted estates in the heartlands much more liberally to individuals with whom he had a greater variety of relationships. There is a clear departure in either the type or length of service one was required to have undertaken in order to receive land in the West-Saxon heartlands.²⁰¹ Before this point, when land was granted to thegns other than those who had a very regular presence at court, it had normally gone to thegns who did not attest at all. Eadwig's grants to non-royal thegns were however still relatively small compared to those he made to royal thegns, which is in line with the practices of previous kings.

Eadwig's patterns of granting in the midlands are also instructive. He was potentially the first king for whom we have evidence of granting land in the midlands to West-Saxon thegns. The Ælfsige who attested prominently under Eadwig (Ælfsige 1) and was one of the king's *discthegns* at his accession was probably the same individual who had begun attesting under Æthelstan in 931 rather than earlier in his reign, and thus by extension was likely to have been a West-Saxon.²⁰² In 956 Eadwig granted him an estate at Kettering, Northamptonshire.²⁰³ In another example, if Eadwig's grant of Yaxley in Huntingdonshire to an Ælfwine²⁰⁴ was to the Ælfwine who was brother to Ælfheah and Ælfhere, then this would have been in addition to an estate he granted to this individual in Berkshire (S 594). Although the brothers were

²⁰¹ Examples of this include thegns such as Æthelric, Æthelsige 1, Cyneric 1, Eadric 2, Wynsige (Table 23).

²⁰² See the relevant notes to 'Ælfsige 1' in the tables of royal thegns for Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig (Tables 12, 17, 22).

²⁰³ S 592.

²⁰⁴ S 595.

descended from ealdorman Ealhhelm of Mercia, and Ælfhere had been promoted to this role immediately upon the king's accession, all the grants they had received by this time from Eadred and Eadwig had been in Wessex. Another thegn named Æthelnoth, for whom no evidence of attestations survive, may have been the recipient of land in both Berkshire and Staffordshire. It is just possible that this suggests an anticipation on Eadwig's behalf of the kingdom's division, and that he was attempting to plant in Mercia West-Saxon thegns, or thegns with a strong presence at the West-Saxon court, whom he hoped would support him in this area. Overall however, considering the volume of Eadwig's grants, the attention he gave to Mercia was comparatively and proportionally minimal, and we are left with the impression of a king whose eyes were fixed on accumulating as much support in Wessex as possible.²⁰⁵

As far as Eadwig's ealdormen were concerned, much the same situation seems to have existed as under his predecessors. Ealdormen barely received any lands, and when they did, these were not in the central areas in which royal thegns were receiving grants, instead lying in Sussex, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire.²⁰⁶ Whilst Ælfhere's receipt of estates in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire might prompt the theory that ealdormen received lands within their geographical areas of jurisdiction, Sussex did not lie within that of Eadmund, and Oxfordshire did not lie within that of Byrhtnoth. Maybe kings granted estates to ealdormen without the bounds of their ealdormanries in order to avoid concentrating the power and resources of these men further than they might already have been.²⁰⁷ Alternatively they might have aimed to

²⁰⁵ This *contra* Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 452, who argues that both Eadwig and Edgar focused upon the midlands in terms of grants more than had their predecessors. Also cf. Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 149, who emphasised the preference given by Eadwig to Mercian agents when promoting thegns to the position of ealdormen. I find it plausible that Eadwig was fully aware that this might raise some hackles, and was attempting to balance this out by granting lands in Mercia to some West-Saxon thegns, and also by granting lands in the West-Saxon heartlands more liberally than had previously been the norm.

²⁰⁶ See Table 20. S 624, 587, 588, 611.

²⁰⁷ Chapter Four in Baxter's *Earls of Mercia* remains the most comprehensive analysis of the resources of an earl (or ealdorman) and his family. Baxter argued that the Leofwinesons held power in each of the regions they served as ealdormen and earls, and that their tenurial resources grew out of a core in the West-Midlands (p. 150). He does not focus particularly upon the locations of royal grants of bookland to the family, but notes that this type of estate does not seem to have stayed within the family long, and may have held a special value as land the earls could alienate themselves (p. 147), thus giving them power and influence as patrons. Perhaps, then, ealdormen

create a situation wherein ealdormen had landed interests beyond their jurisdictions and therefore had an interest in the unity of the kingdom or in its communal defence.²⁰⁸

The use and meaning of titles in Eadwig's charters

An examination of the styles used for laymen in Eadwig's charters also allows us to build upon the conclusions reached on this subject for Eadred's reign. A greater variety of these styles are applied to the lay beneficiaries of Eadwig's charters than in those of any king before him: *amicus regis*, *fidelis*, *miles*, *karus*, *adoptivus parens*, *propinquus*, *propincernarius*, *homo*, *vassallus* and *venator*. There is no immediate pattern in the distribution of estates to individuals of the same designation such as there was under Eadred in the case of *milites* and *homini*.²⁰⁹

There is however an indication that the title *homo* was never applied by Eadwig to his royal thegns, as it never appears attached to a thegn who was active at court, only to non-royal thegns. There was also a much lower instance of the title *miles* in Eadwig's charters than in Eadred's, and although several individuals are given titles for positions in the royal household when they attest, such as *discthegn*, *custos*, and *pincerna*, with one exception²¹⁰ these titles are never used when the individual was the object of a grant.

In the light of these observations, we ought to consider once more whether the inclusion of beneficiaries' titles in charters was deliberate, and whether, as argued above, the nature of the land granted to a given beneficiary was connected to the latter's role. It will be marked that

petitioned kings for bookland outside of their traditional spheres of power in order to extend their influence via patronage. Or, alternatively, perhaps the impetus came from kings who knew that ealdormen and earls were well-equipped to secure land on the land market (on this topic see now Naismith, 'The land market') in their tenurial heartlands and, when came the time to reward them with bookland, preferred to do so in ways which did not so directly increase their power.

²⁰⁸ Whitelock framed the issue of powerful men's service to the king in the context of the location of the lands from which they drew their income in her discussion of the bishops appointed by West-Saxon kings to York ('Dealings', at p. 74). Perhaps kings thought in similar terms when granting land to ealdormen.

²⁰⁹ See pp. 157-60 above.

²¹⁰ S 651 to Cyneric *propincernarius*.

again under Eadwig, royal thegns could be styled in more than one way. Ælfheah was styled the king's kinsman in S 585 and 586, but *minister* in S639; Ælfric Cild was styled *fidelis* in S 589, *adoptivus parens* in S 597, and *minister* in S 590 and 640; Ælfsige 1 was *fidelis* in S 591, but *minister* in S 592; Æthelgeard was *karus* in S 599, and *minister* in S 598 and 641; Eadric was *karus* in S 621, *minister* in S 622, 619, 654; and Wulfric Cufing, who had been styled *miles*, *homo* and *minister* by Eadred was only called *minister* under Eadwig.²¹¹ The fact that a multiplicity of titles could be assigned to the same individual does away with the possibility that their use in charters connoted a static role or social status held by the beneficiary to the exclusion of others. Styles such as *miles*, *karus*, *fidelis* etc probably constituted a deliberate effort to distinguish something about the individuals to which they were attached from the ubiquitous title of *minister*, by which all of them can be shown to have been known in most cases (i.e. in the combined cases of their attestations as *ministri* and their receipt of grants as *ministri*). This 'something' must have been the role they played or a position they filled. Thus, if an individual was styled differently over their career, it probably meant that they were fulfilling different roles relative to the king, perhaps simultaneously, perhaps successively. The presence of a given denomination in a charter was a reference to the capacity in which that individual was to be known and granted land in that particular charter, and thus probably represented the rewarding of the individual for the execution of the duties encompassed within that title.

This conclusion is further nuanced by the fact that these titles could be held by individuals who were of clearly different status and closeness to the king. A good example is Wulfric Cufing, the hugely prosperous landowner and member of the *witan* who was styled *homo* in a charter from Eadred,²¹² a title which up until this point was assigned exclusively to

²¹¹ For all of these see Table 22.

²¹² S 552. On Wulfric Cufing see the footnote accompanying him in Table 12. He reoccurs in the tables of royal thegns for Eadred and Eadwig (Tables 17, 22).

individuals who barely if ever leave traces of participation at court as witnesses.²¹³ Under Eadwig even more reoccurrence of titles can be seen irrespective of the individual's status. Importantly however, different individuals who held the same title were not always rewarded in the same way, with non-royal thegns who were styled *homo*, *miles*, *vassallus* and *fidelis* in the reigns of Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig generally receiving less land than royal thegns styled the same way.²¹⁴ Thus, not only did the occurrence of these styles in charters probably represent a king's reward to the individual in the specific capacity of that title. They also imply that designations such as *homo*, *vassallus*, *miles* etc were used to connote a common way or style of executing duties, but these duties could be different, or they could be executed by people of different social strata. I.e., they were not social designations in and of themselves, but the scale in which the responsibilities they encompassed were rewarded could depend upon the extent of the individual's involvement at the king's side in political matters, and thus by extension, on his status. For example, Ælfric Cild was a prominent member of Eadwig's *witan*, and S 590 and S 640 to Ælfric *minister* would have been granted in his capacity as royal thegn, but Eadwig's grant of twenty hides at Hanney, Berkshire (S 597) to Ælfric *adoptivus parens* would have been in Ælfric's capacity as his kinsman and perhaps mentor, and of forty hides at Arlesford, Hampshire (S 589) to Ælfric *fidelis* would have been for Ælfric's execution of his duties of royal thegn in a particularly faithful or honourable way, or having gone on a king's

²¹³ All of the cases examined so far where the title *homo* was assigned to an individual in charters of kings are: Ælfwold and Ordhelm (Table 13); Ælfsige Goldsmith, Heresige and Wulfheah (Table 18); Eadheah, Eadric 2, Maeglsiothen (Table 23).

²¹⁴ Compare the size of estates granted to royal thegns styled *homo* (Wulfric Cufing, S 552, 18 hides (exchange for land in Cornwall)) to the size of estates granted to non-royal thegns styled *homo* (for example, Ælfwold and Ordhelm, S 510, 1 yokelet; Ælfsige Goldsmith, S 522, 5 hides; Heresige, S 518, 1.5 hides; Wulfheah, S 580, 1 hide; Eadheah, S 653, 2.5 hides; Eadric 2, S 620, 5 hides; Maeglsiothen, S 628, 3 hides). Compare the size of estates granted to royal thegns styled *miles* (Æthelgeard, S 523, 10 hides; Wulfric Brother of Dunstan, S 551, 20 hides; Wulfric Cufing, S 529, 5 hides and S 542, 10 hides; Ælfwine, S 595, 15 hides) to the size of estates granted to non-royal thegns styled *miles* (Ælfsige Hunlafing, S 556, 5 hides; Ulfcetel, S 549, 4 hides; Wulfhelm, S 557, unknown size of estate). Compare the size of estates granted to royal thegns styled *vassallus* (Eadric 1, S 478, 2 hides) to the size of estates granted to non-royal thegns styled *vassallus* (Wiferth, S 666, 10; Wulfnoth Rumuncant, S 755, 3 hides). Compare the size of estates granted to royal thegns styled *fidelis* (Ælfric Cild, S 589, 40 hides; Ælfsige 1, S 591, 25 hides; Æthelwold, S 608, 4 hides) to the size of estates granted to non-royal thegns styled *fidelis* (Hehelm, S 627, 5 hides; Wistan, S 631, 4 hides; Wulfric 5, S 637, 1.5 hides).

errand to Mercia, or having represented his interests in a locality. The *fideles* who were rewarded in this capacity by Eadwig who were not demonstrably royal thegns, such as Hehelm and Wistan, received estates of five and four hides respectively.²¹⁵ Thus, the role of *fidelis* was worth less when performed singly (e.g. not on top of the duties of council, political involvement, military direction, etc which would have been the preserve of a member of the *witan*) than when the style of service or responsibilities encompassed by the title *fidelis* were executed by someone of Ælfric Cild's calibre.

²¹⁵ S 627, 631.

g. Edgar

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdor­dom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah (Central-Wessex)	81	959 (S 658) - see Eadwig's ealdormen	962 (S 784)	S 702 (Sunbury, Middx, 10), 747 (Merton and Dulwich, Surrey, 5)
Ælfhere (Mercia)	105	956 (S 605) - see Eadwig's ealdormen		
Æthel­mund (Herefordshire)	22	940 (S 465) - see Edmund's ealdormen	965 (S 736)	
Æthelstan ('Rota') (South-East Mercia?)	80	See Edmund and Eadred's ealdormen (pp. 133, 148)	970 (S 779)	S 676 (Ham, Essex, 5)
Æthelwine ²¹⁶ (East-Anglia)	68	962 (S 706)		
Æthelwold ²¹⁷ (East-Midlands)	32	956 (S 617) – see Eadwig's ealdormen	962 (S 704)	
Byrhtnoth (Essex)	79	956 (S 616) - see Eadwig's ealdormen		S 726 (Wolverley, Worcs, 2,) 750 (Bragenfelda, either Bucks or Northants, land)
Eadmund (West-Wessex)	25	946 (S 508) - see Edmund's ealdormen	963 (S 714)	
Eadulf (Bamburgh)	4	968 (S 766)	970 (S 779)	
Malcolm (Cumbria)	1	970 (S 779)	970 (S 779)	
Ordgar 1 (West-Wessex)	29	964 (S 724)	970 (S 779)	
Ordgar 2 (Unknown)	1	969 (S 771)	969 (S 771)	

²¹⁶ A son of Æthelstan Half-King and brother of Æthelwold. See Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', *passim*.

²¹⁷ A son of Æthelstan Half-King and brother of Æthelwine. See Hart, 'Æthelstan Half-King', esp at pp. 127-31.

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Oslac ²¹⁸ (Northumbria)	30	963 (S 712a)	975 (S 801)	S 712 (Sherburn-in-Elmet, Yorks, 20, with dependencies in multiple locations in Yorks)
Thored (Unknown)	1	966 (S 738)	966 (S 738)? (May be the same Thored who attests as ealdorman under Æthelred)	

Table 25: Edgar's ealdormen

Earls (Northumbria)

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ascured	1	958 (S 679)	958 (S 679)	
Ayered	1	958 (S 679)	958 (S 679)	
Cytelbearn	1	963 (S 716)	963 (S 716)	
Durre	1	963 (S 712)	963 (S 712)	
Gunner ²¹⁹	3	931 (S 416) - see Æthelstan's earls. Or perhaps this was a new Gunner?	963 (S 712)	S 716 (Newbald, Yorks, 30)
Halfden	1	934 (S 425) - see Æthelstan's earls. Or perhaps this was a new Halfden?		

²¹⁸ S 712 reads 'Æslac', which was probably the proper rendering of the powerful northern ealdorman's name rather than 'Oslac' (Keynes, 'The additions in Old English', at p. 87, and Whitelock, 'Dealings', at pp. 77-9). See Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, p. 123, for a summary of the debate around the date at which Oslac became ealdorman, and for the convincing proposition that the terms used to style northern figures (i.e. *dux*, *dominus*, *minister*) were not as rigid as they were for individuals in the south.

²¹⁹ Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, no. 5, p. 129, favours the theory that this was the same Gunner who had attested a variety of charters since the reign of Æthelstan, and that he died soon after this date. His son Thored can be found harrying 'Westmoringa land' in the ASC a. 966, which Stenton (*Preparatory Papers*, pp. 218-9) interpreted as an act of personal violence rather than one ordered by Edgar. Whitelock, 'Dealings', p. 78, viewed Gunner as a subordinate earl in Northumbria.

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Leod	1	958 (S 679)	958 (S 679)	
Mirdach	2	958 (S 679)	963 (S 712a)	
Morcar	1	958 (S 679)	958 (S 679)	
Uhtred (Cild?) (Five Boroughs?)	2	See pp. 118, 153, 165		
Urm	1	929 (S 401) - see '(Th)urum' in Æthelstan's earls, Or perhaps this was a new Urm?	958 (S 679)	

Table 26: Edgar's earls

Royal thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar (<i>consul</i> S 692)	22	See Eadred's uncertain cases, p. 153	962 (S 703)	
Ælfhelm 1 ²²⁰ (Mercian)	21	958 (S 675)		S 739 (Parwich, Derbys, 10), 771 (?) (Witney, Oxon, 30), 794 (Wratting, Cambs, 2.5), 794a (Brickendon, Herts, 9)
Ælfric 1 'Cild' ²²¹	33	955 (S 582) - see Eadwig's royal thegns		S 691 (Ardington, Berks, 9), 709 Milverton, Somerset, 1), 790 (Harwell, Berks, 7)

²²⁰ Sawyer argued that Ælfhelm 'Polga' was certainly the beneficiary of S 739, 794 and 794a (and maybe S 771) based upon the estates disposed of in his will (S 1487), *Burton*, no. 21. He was an important Danelaw thegn who died in 989 (see also Hart, *ECEE*, pp. 28, 31, 44). Considering that there was only one other Ælfhelm attesting Edgar's charters and that he did not begin attesting until the year after S 771 was issued, it is probable that S 771 was also for Ælfhelm Polga who seems to have been active throughout Edgar's reign.

²²¹ See the relevant note for Ælfric Cild in Eadwig's table of royal thegns (Table 22). S 709 is assigned to Ælfric Cild with more difficulty, but Kelly, *Wells*, no. 32, suggests that he is the beneficiary based upon the fact that in the early 960s Edgar's diplomas were mostly attested by a single Ælfric (Ælfric Cild), with a second only appearing from 965 on. S 709 was granted in 963.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfsige 1 ²²² (Mercian?)	66	958 (S 674)		S 710? (East Orchard, Dorset, 5), 748? (Eastune, 5) ²²³
Ælfsige 2 ²²⁴	18	958 (S 675)		710? (East Orchard, Dorset, 5), 748? (Eastune, 5)
Ælfweard 1 ²²⁵	40	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns, p. 159		S 800 (Fyfield, Hants, 5)
Ælfwine 1 (<i>disc.</i> S 768)	81	956 (S 597) - see Eadwig's royal thegns	c.970 (S 779), became a monk	S 680 (Highclere, Hants, 10), 761 (Boxford, Berks, 10) ²²⁶

²²² We are once more presented with issues in identifying Ælfsiges. Three thegns named Ælfsige attested Edgar's charters, two with relative regularity (Ælfsige 1 and 2, with Ælfsige 1 always significantly higher in witness lists) and one who attested only twice during the reign, and very low down. It is argued above that an Ælfsige *minister* attested prominently during the reigns of Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig, and that he is the man behind the 'Ælfsige 1' attestations in charters (see notes to 'Ælfsige 1' in Tables 12, 17, 22). The end of Eadwig's reign is given as the end of his career because he continued to attest in a prominent position under Eadwig after the division of the kingdom (though he dropped significantly from his position as top thegn after the division in favour of Ælfheah, Ælfgar, Byrhtferth, Ælfred and Wulfgar) into 959, at a time when the most prominent Ælfsige thegn of Edgar's reign was attesting Edgar's Mercian charters in 958 and 959. These were therefore different men. 959 marked the (sudden) end of the career of the Ælfsige who had served Æthelstan-Eadwig, whilst a new Ælfsige (Ælfsige 1 in this table), probably a Mercian, began in 958 under Edgar and spent his reign working his way up the witness lists. This could either be a new man, or it could in fact be either Ælfsige 3 or 4 (non-royal thegns) from Eadwig's reign. Ælfsige 3 from Eadwig's reign attests irregularly but stops in 957 in sixteenth position in the last surviving charter before the division. Ælfsige 1 from Edgar's reign appears in the king's first Mercian charter in eighteenth place. If Ælfsige 1 from Edgar's reign was the same man as Ælfsige 3 under Eadwig, then he was either a Mercian thegn attesting Eadwig's charters occasionally, or an unimportant West-Saxon thegn who attested irregularly and who supported Edgar in 957. This is impossible to prove, but it is important to consider the different possibilities in order to better understand the composition of the *witan* and thus royal management of these relationships. The Ælfsige 2 of Edgar's lists also attests Edgar's Mercian charters beginning with S 675. He could also either be a new man, or one of either Ælfsige 3 or 4 from Eadwig's reign.

²²³ One or more of these may of course have gone to the other Ælfsiges present in Edgar's charters. It is not possible to know to whom they went, but none of the grants to an Ælfsige are large, and none are in the royal heartlands. The Ælfsige *decurio* of S 711 is probably to be interpreted as referring to the beneficiary's role as some royal official, perhaps a reeve (*Bath*, p. 16). It would have been unusual for a top royal thegn to be identified in such a manner in a charter however, and so I find it unlikely that Ælfsige 1 may be identified with the beneficiary of S 711. He was probably the beneficiary to either S 710 or S 748, or both.

²²⁴ See note for Ælfsige 1 in this table.

²²⁵ PASE notes that this might be Æthelweard's (ealdorman and chronicler) brother. This individual attested Edgar's first charter as king of the English in 959, very low down, and then disappeared until 964 when he made a sudden entry into the ranks of the top four thegns attesting charters. The Ælfweard who attested a few times under Eadwig does so in positions immediately adjacent to that of a thegn called Æthelweard. These were thus probably the future ealdorman and his brother.

²²⁶ Kelly, Abingdon, no. 107, notes that the charter is dubious as it stands but may be based on an authentic document recording a transaction.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfwold 1 ²²⁷ (Mercian?)	38	958 (S 674)	972 (S 786)	S 772 (Aspley Guise, Beds, 15), 773 (Kineton, Warwicks, 10)
Æthelsige 1 ²²⁸ (<i>camerarius</i> S 713; <i>pedisequus</i> S 768)	63	958 (S 674)		S 713 (Steventon (etc), 11, Berks)
Æthelweard 1 ²²⁹	56	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns, p. 169		
Æthelwine ²³⁰ (Mercian)	17	958 (S 675)	962 (S 702), became ealdorman	
Æthelwold ²³¹ (Mercian?)	8	958 (S 674)	961 (S 692)	S 692 (River Camelar, Somerset, 1)
Byrhtferh ²³² (<i>consul</i> S 692)	72	949 (S 544) - see Eadred's royal thegns	970 (S 779)	
Eadric 1 ²³³	17	956 (S 597) - see Eadwig's royal thegns	963 (S 712a)?	S 668? (Winterburnan,

²²⁷ This was probably another son of the Half-King's, and brother to Æthelwine and Æthelsige. This Ælfwold was at Edgar's court from its inception in Mercia, whilst the royal thegn Ælfwold under Eadwig was at Eadwig's court in 958-9, meaning these were different men. Donald Bullough agrees with the identification of the recipient of S 772 and 773 as the same individual, the *fidelis minister* of Edgar (Bullough, 'St Oswald: monk, bishop, archbishop', at p. 11). On Ælfwold in the context of his family see Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at pp. 131-2 and on the 'particularly warm' terms used to address Ælfwold in this charter see Keynes, 'Edgar', at p. 35.

²²⁸ At least 4 thegns with the name Æthelsige subscribed to Edgar's charters. It is probable that the beneficiary to this one, styled *camerarius* (chamberlain) is to be identified with Æthelsige *pedisequus* who in 968 attested S 768 (Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 23) together with 3 thegns titled *discifer* (steward) (Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 97). He was probably another son of the Half-King (Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 132).

²²⁹ Probably the future ealdorman and chronicler, and brother of Ælfweard. He and Ælfweard attested Edgar's earlier charters, with Æthelweard being present in the Mercian ones before the re-unification of the kingdom. Both Æthelweard and Ælfweard then drop out of witness lists until 964, when they both suddenly begin attesting most charters and in very prominent positions. This is discussed in the analysis section.

²³⁰ This is the future ealdorman Æthelwine, '*amicus dei*'. Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', pp. 133-38 and Williams, '*Princeps*', *passim*.

²³¹ This thegn seems to have been part of Edgar's Mercian entourage, as he attested prominently and regularly in Edgar's years as king of the Mercians and then drops off after Edgar acceded to the whole kingdom.

²³² Brother of Ælfgar, kinsman to the king (the relationship is mentioned in S 651 and *ASC* a. 962. On Ælfgar see Hart, *ECNE*, p. 301).

²³³ The first instance of the name Eadric in charters from 959 to 963 may have been Eadric, brother of ealdormen Ælfhere and Ælfheah. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 91 has suggested that S 698, one of the two grants Edgar made to an Eadric, was for Eadric brother of Ælfhere and Ælfheah because of this family's close connexion with Abingdon. There is a break in the patterns of attestation for the name Eadric around 963. Where previously this name had been occurring around 4th to 6th position, there occurred a hiatus in attestations until 966 when the name was in sixteenth place. It is possible that Eadric sustained a loss of favour, but given the rarity with which thegns seem to have moved down witness lists, especially so drastically, then it seems probable that the Eadric who attested from 966 on was a different individual. It is probably him who was the recipient of S 668, the other grant to an

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
				Wilts, 10), 698 (Hamstede, ?, 3)
Ealdred 1 ²³⁴	21	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns?, p. 170		
Eanulf 1 ²³⁵ (<i>disc.</i> S 768) (Mercian)	35	958 (S 675)		S 678 (Ducklington, Oxon, 14), 684 (Cornwall, 11)
Leofwine 1	22	965 (S 734)		
Osulf	35	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns, p. 170	970 (S 779)	
Osweard (<i>propinquus</i> , S 803) ²³⁶	36	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns, p. 170		S 803 (South Stoke, Sussex, 4, original landbook lost)

Eadric made by Edgar, since the other two Eadrics attested only once apiece in Edgar's coronation charter (S 673).

²³⁴ Two Ealdreds began attesting in Eadwig's final years, one of whom relatively prominently on the witness lists, and who is thus placed in the royal thegns table. His (and the other Ealdred's) first attestation under Edgar came with the charter marking the re-unification of the kingdom (S 673). Like several of the (presumably West-Saxon) thegns whose first attestations under Edgar occurred in this charter and who attest regularly from 959-962, Ealdred's attestations drop off after 962. It is argued in Edgar's analysis section below that the drop-off in attestations of West-Saxon thegns c.962 may be symptomatic of Edgar's attempts to replace these thegns with those who had been loyal to him in his early years as King of the Mercians, but that he did this in a delayed manner in order not to disrupt the status-quo too abruptly.

²³⁵ Another one of Edgar's Mercian thegns. Probably the same individual who was titled *discifer* later in Edgar's reign. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 82, notes that the estate received by the Eanulf in S 678 was detached from the lands of a royal vill at Ducklington, and that this may be significant in the light of his position as royal steward. See also Hart, *ECNE*, p. 329. S 684 for land in Cornwall was probably to the same individual, considering that there is evidence for only one other thegn named Eanulf (Eanulf 2) attesting in Edgar's reign, who only attested once (S 748). This case offers a case study for how estates may be assigned to certain thegns based upon what can be deduced about their origins. It is interesting to note that there were three thegns who witnessed S 748 who were very rare attestors, and did so in a group (11th (Leofwine 2) 12th (Godwine) and 13th (Eanulf 2)). The only other charters this Leofwine attested were S 772 and 773 for lands in Bedfordshire and Warwickshire. We might therefore extrapolate from Leofwine's presence in the witness list of S 748 that the *Eastune* of this charter was in the midlands, and that Leofwine 2, Eanulf 2 and perhaps Godwine were thegns brought in to witness this transaction because they were local. If a thegn's name appears as witness only to a grant (or grants) for land in areas of the kingdom that were remote relative to the West-Saxon heartlands, they can normally be assumed to be an individual of local importance to the estate being granted. With this knowledge about the probable origins of Eanulf 2, we can once more return to our original problem, that of the grants made by Edgar to Eanulf(s). If we know that S 678 was likely to have been granted to Eanulf 1, who was himself a Mercian, we are left wondering to whom S 684 was granted. It is unlikely that the king would grant an estate in Cornwall to a thegn of local importance in perhaps Bedfordshire or Warwickshire such as Eanulf 2. As will be shown in analysis sections below, it was unusual for non-royal thegns to receive lands at a great remove from their locality, whereas this seems to have become more and more common for royal thegns. So, we are left with the conclusion that S 684 was probably granted to Eanulf 1, not Eanulf 2.

²³⁶ He attests regularly with Osulf thegn under Edgar in adjacent positions or proximate ones. They also attest together several times under Eadwig. This suggests they were brothers. If so, then both Osulf and Osweard would then have been Edgar's kin.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wulfgar ²³⁷ (Mercian?)	19	958 (S 677)		
Wulfhelm 1 ²³⁸ (Mercian?)	29	958 (S 674)	963 (S 714)	S 721 (Ottery St Mary, Devon, 2)
Wulfstan 1 ²³⁹ (disc. S 768) (Mercian)	58	958 (S 677)		S 769 (Whistley, Berks, 10)

Table 27: Edgar's royal thegns

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfheah (Mercian)	4	S 674 ²⁴⁰ (Orton, Hunts, 5)
Ælfheah Gerent (<i>homo</i> S 770)	-	S 770 (Probus, Cornwall, 2)
Ælfhelm 2	2	

²³⁷ This was a different Wulfgar to the Wulfgar who attested prominently under Eadwig. Eadwig's Wulfgar continued attesting under Eadwig after the division, whereas the Wulfgar under Edgar can be seen attesting Edgar's Mercian charters at this time. He was therefore probably another of Edgar's Mercian thegns. He continued attesting several charters in the top ten positions after Edgar acceded to the whole kingdom, but then becomes much more irregular, though still normally in the top ten, for the rest of the reign.

²³⁸ Based on when he began attesting and his patterns of attestation after the reunification of the kingdom, this individual may also have been a Mercian thegn – see Edgar's analysis section below for a fuller exposition of this reasoning.

²³⁹ At least two thegns named Wulfstan appear among the witnesses of royal diplomas in Edgar's reign, one of whom began to attest more frequently from 962, who in 968 was titled *discifer*, and who went on to hold the top position in witness lists relatively frequently from the late 960s onwards. Hart, *ECNE*, p. 379, argued that this Wulfstan should be identified with Wulfstan of Dalham, who was a royal reeve and who was in charge of administering the estates of Ely. He is named a *secretis regis*, a *praepositus* and a *sequipedus* by the *Liber Eliensis*, ed. Blake, p. 73. He was employed on royal business in 973-4 in Kent to take possession of property forfeited by a widow (Roberston, *Charters*, p. 122). The reeve Wulfstan of Dalham's ties with East Anglia strengthen his identification with the Wulfstan who attested S 677 (958) when Edgar was King of the Mercians and who rose in prominence in Edgar's witness lists in the 960s, and who was a member of the royal household. It is not possible to be certain that this man was the beneficiary of S 769, but the timing of S 769 to a Wulfstan fits well within the timeline of Wulfstan of Dalham's rise to prominence. On his opportunism see Jayakumar, 'Reform', at p. 338-9.

²⁴⁰ Edgar's first charter as King of the Mercians. Kelly, *Peterborough*, no. 13, notes that all attesting bishops were from dioceses north of the Thames. Prominence is also given to Mercian ealdormen. Ælfhere is first, who was in central Mercia; then Æthelstan 'Rota', Æthelmund, Æthelwold of East-Anglia and Byrhtnoth of Essex. The other three ealdormen have Danish names (Urm, Gunner, Uhtred); of these Gunner may have had authority over part of Northumbria. For discussion of the context of this witness list see Abrams, 'King Edgar and the men of the Danelaw'. The beneficiary is probably the same Ælfheah who had been granted land at *Northune* in 951 (S 554), who was in turn the Ælfheah who attested only a few of Eadred's final charters. If this was indeed the same man, we see that Edgar was reaping the seeds of what Eadred sowed seven years beforehand. Ælfheah was probably a Mercian with whom Eadred had established a connexion in the early 950s, who supported Edgar's bid for kingship in the late 950s, who was rewarded for it (S 674) and who went on to attest a few other charters under Edgar.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhere	2	S 795 (Down St Mary, Devon, 3)
Ælfmaer	1	
Ælfred	1	
Ælfric 3	2	
Ælfric 4	1	
Ælfsige 3 (<i>decurio</i> S 711)	2	S 711? ²⁴¹ (Standon Prior, Somerset, 2.5)
Ælfstan	2	
Ælfweard 2	2	
Ælfwig	4	
Ælfwine 3	3	
Ælfwold 2	8	
Æscferth	1	
Æsclac ²⁴²	-	S 712 (Sherburn in Elmet, York, 20)
Æthelferth 2	1	
Æthelferth 3	1	
Æthelm	5	
Æthelmaer	3	
Æthelmund	2	
Æthelnoth (<i>homo</i> S 669)	-	S 669 (Clyst St Mary, Devon, 1)
Æthelric	3	S 675 (Wootton, Oxon, 20)
Æthelsige 4	1	
Æthelweard 3	1	
Æthulf (Æthelwulf?)	1	S 693 (Bishops Waltham, Hants, 10, for 3 lives with reversion to St Peter's)
Brihtric 2	4	
Brihtsige	1	
Brihtwald	2	
Byrthelm	2	
Byrhtmaer	2	
Byrhtulf	2	
Byrnsige	-	S 696 (Ebbesborne, Wilts, 5)
Cenulf (<i>homo</i> S 697)	-	S 697 (Withiel Florey, Somerset, 4)
Ceolheah	2	
Ceolwold	1	
Cnut	1	
Cyneric	3	
Cytelbearn	1	
Dragmel	1	
Dunstan	2	
Duntan	1	
Eadred	1	

²⁴¹ See the relevant notes for Ælfsige 2 in Edgar's table of royal thegns (Table 27).

²⁴² The beneficiary is probably eldorman Osclac, on whom see Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, York, no. 4; Keynes, 'The additions in Old English', at p. 87 and Whitelock, 'Dealings', at pp. 77-9.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Eadric 2	1	
Eadric 3	1	
Eadulf	3	
Eadwig	3	
Eadwold (Mercian?)	-	S 676a (Coundon, Warwicks, 3)
Ealdred 2	2	
Ealhhelm (Mercian?)	-	S 802 (Wellington, Salop, 3, at request of the monk Ælfwine, kinsman of the king)
Ealhstan ²⁴³ (Mercian?)	-	S 677 ²⁴⁴ (Staunton on Arrow, Herefords, 6, in return for 40 mancuses of gold)
Eanulf 2	1	
Forno	2	
Frena	2	
Frithegist	2	
Frithegist 2	1	
Godwine (<i>satraps</i> S 705)	3	S 705a (Ilton, Somerset, 1)
Gota	1	
Heanric	3	
Hringulf ²⁴⁵	3	
Hrowald	2	
Hrowald	1	
Ingeram ²⁴⁶		S 717 (Vange, Essex, 7)
Leofric (Mercian?)	5	S 833 (Claydons in Alveston?, Warwicks, woodland) ²⁴⁷
Leofstan	2	
Leofwine 2	3	
Lyfing 1	2	
Lyfing 2	1	

²⁴³ See Kelly, *Wells*, no. 31. No trace of an Eahlstan survives in diplomas as a witness. Staunton was close to the Welsh border, which raises the possibility that Edgar was establishing his thegn on border territory in order to strengthen defences in that area. Kelly's assumption here seems to be that the thegn was not necessarily local to that area, which further supports the argument that we ought not simply assume that patterns of distribution of land were based upon expediency or pre-existing living situations rather than upon royal strategy.

²⁴⁴ S 677 is one of the charters whose witness list has been noted for reflecting that a straightforward territorial division existed between Eadwig and Edgar in 957-8, which 'may not be compatible with the necessary tumult of rebellion [...] the bishops and ealdormen gravitated toward the court of the king ruling their section with no sign of the contradictory loyalties that would be expected after a period of civil war' (Keynes, 'England c.900-1016', and Kelly, *Wells*, 31). Yet as will be argued in Chapter Three, it does not necessarily follow from a simple lack of open rebellion that the division in 957 was planned or mutually agreeable to both Eadwig and Edgar. Assuming this has the effect of misrepresenting royal agency in this event, and of obscuring the extent to which securing the loyalty of leading men – West-Saxon and Mercian – would have been a prime royal directive, which in turn obscures the role and strategies kings had in effecting the loyalty of these men.

²⁴⁵ One of a group of Danes who attested charters in 970-1: Osulf 2, Thurferth, Heanric, Ulf, Frena, Hrowald, Thurstan, Osgod, Gota, Frithegist, Thurgod, Oscytel, Cnut, Thurkytel 2, Frithegist 2 (see Table VII in appendix).

²⁴⁶ Brooks and Kelly, *Christ Church Canterbury*, no. 126 point out that the name is continental Germanic, not English, and that it occurs most frequently in the Rhineland and low countries. Was this an East-Frankish serving an English king as a thegn?

²⁴⁷ This charter is dubious for its substitution of the name Æthelred for Edgar's, but seems to be a genuine transaction otherwise: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 95.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Mangoda (<i>homo</i> S 805)	-	S 805 (Hampstead, Middx, 5)
Ordnoth	1	
Ordulf	2	
Ordwald	3	
Oscytel	1	
Osgod	1	
Oslac	2	
Osmaer	1	
Osmund	1	
Osulf 2	2	
Ourde	1	
Sigeferth 1	1	
Sigeferth 2	1	
Sigestan	-	S 730 (Teffont, Wilts, 5)
Sighelm	1	
Soca	1	
Sumerled	1	
Thor	1	
Thurerth	1	
Thurferth	3	
Thurgod	1	
Thurkytel 2	1	
Thurstan	1	
Titstan ²⁴⁸ (<i>cubicularius</i> S 706)	-	S 706 (Afene, Wilts, 5)
Ulf	2	
Ulfketel	3	
Waerstan	1	
Wihtsige	4	
Winstan (<i>camerarius</i> S 719; <i>cubicularius</i> S 789)	-	S 719 (Afene, Wilts, 3), 789 (Afene, Wilts, 4)
Wulfgar 2	1	
Wulfheah	3	
Wulfhelm 2	1	
Wulfheard (<i>homo</i> S 736)	-	S 736 (Cheselbourne, Dorset, 3 'virgae')
Wulfhere	4	
Wulfmær 1 ²⁴⁹	2?	S 707? (Hillmarton, Wilts, 10) or 793? (Berrow? Somerset, 5)
Wulfmaer 2 ²⁵⁰	2?	S 707? (Hillmarton, Wilts, 10), or 793? (Berrow? Somerset, 5)
Wulfnoth Rumuncant (<i>vassallus</i> S 755)	-	S 755 (Lesneage and Pennare, Cornwall, 3)

²⁴⁸ Part of the king's household in the early 960s (*cubicularius*). Another member of Edgar's household (Winstan) also received land at Afene, in the next year (963, with S 719).

²⁴⁹ Keynes' *Atlas* names only one Wulfmær, who purportedly received S 707 and 793, eleven years apart, and who witnessed two charters in this time. Based on the customs of kings granting to non-royal thegns however, in which it was highly unusual for a non-royal thegn to receive repeated grants, I think these grants were made to different Wulfmaers, both non-royal thegns. Supporting this theory is the length of time between the grants, and the fact that they were not even in the same general area.

²⁵⁰ See relevant note for Wulfmær 1 above. The entry Wulfmær 2 will not be found in Table VII in the appendix because Keynes' *Atlas* had only one Wulfmær – but see the note for Wulfmær 1.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wulfric 2	2	
Wulfric Cufing	-	S 687 ²⁵¹ (restitution charter of many properties in Berks, Hants and Sussex)

Table 28: Edgar's non-royal thegns

Uncertain cases

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfnoth (Mercian?)	3		Attests both of Edgar's first charters as king of Mercia and his first charter as king of the English then ceases
Ælfred (Mercian?)	10		Attests both of Edgar's first charters as king of Mercia in 11 th place, then regular in 14 th place until 962, then ceases
Ælfric 2 (Mercian?)	11		Attests Edgar's first charter as king of the English, then ceases until 965-972 when he makes occasional appearance
Ælfwine 2 (Mercian?)	11		Prominent in Edgar's charters as king of Mercia, then attests very irregularly for rest of reign in wildly different places
Æthelferth (Mercian?)	11	S 712a (Ballidon, Derbys, 5)	Attests one of Edgar's Mercian charters in 3 rd place, his first charter as king of the English in 26 th place, becomes relatively regular from 966-968, then ceases
Æthelsige 2	11		Attests prominently and semi-regularly from 959-962, then ceases

²⁵¹ See Kelly's discussion of Wulfric's restitution charter in *Abingdon*, pp. clxxiv-clxxxv.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Æthelsige 3	7		Attests prominently and semi-regularly from 959-962, then ceases
Æthelstan (Mercian?)	2		Attests both of Edgar's first charters as king of Mercia in 7 th place, then ceases
Æthelweard 2	22		Attests Edgar's first charter as king of the English, ceases until 964, then relatively regular
Brihtric	13		Attests Edgar's first charter as king of the English, then irregular but often in top 10, then in last five years in top 5
Eadwine	11	S 705 (Rodbourne Cheney, Wilts, 20); S 763 (Moredon, Wilts, 20)	Starts in 963, irregular but normally in top 7
Leofa	13		Attests Edgar's first charter as king of the English, then very irregularly until 969. From 969-975 he is regular and often in top 10.
Leofsige	10		Starts in 962, irregular but sometimes in top 10
Ordgar	10		Attests Edgar's first charter as king of the English, irregular but sometimes prominent until 964, then ceases
Osferth (Mercian?)	21		Attests four of Edgar's charters as king of Mercia, and then attests irregularly, sometimes in prominent positions, for rest of reign, until 971
Oswig ²⁵²	5		Attests prominently and semi-regularly

²⁵² Oswig is part of a small group (presumably West-Saxon) thegns whose first attestations under Edgar occur in his first charter as King of the English (S 673) and who attest regularly for the first few years of his reign but

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
			from 959-962, then ceases
Sigered (Mercian?)	3		Attests both of Edgar's first charters as king of Mercia in 10 th place, then until one attestation in 974
Sigulf (Mercian?)	3		Prominent in Edgar's charters as king of Mercia, then ceases
Thurkytel (Mercian?)	4		Attests three of Edgar's charters as king of Mercia then ceases until one attestation in 970
Thurmod (Mercian?)	2		Attests both of Edgar's first charters as king of Mercia then ceases
Ufa (Mercian?)	5		Attests four of Edgar's charters as king of Mercia, three of which in 3 rd place, then ceases until one attestation in 967 in which he is 4 th
Winsige (Mercian?)	7		Attests two of Edgar's charters as king of Mercia in 5 th place, then very sporadically over reign, but sometimes in top 5 again
Wulfgeat	11	S 720 (Duddeston?, Warwicks, 3)	Starts in 965, and from 969-974 regular and climbing list to 5 th
Wulfnoth (Mercian?)	8	S 722 (Hocan edisce, ?, 5)	Prominent in Edgar's charters as king of Mercia, absent from 959-963, from 963-970 irregular and quite low down, 970-970 absent

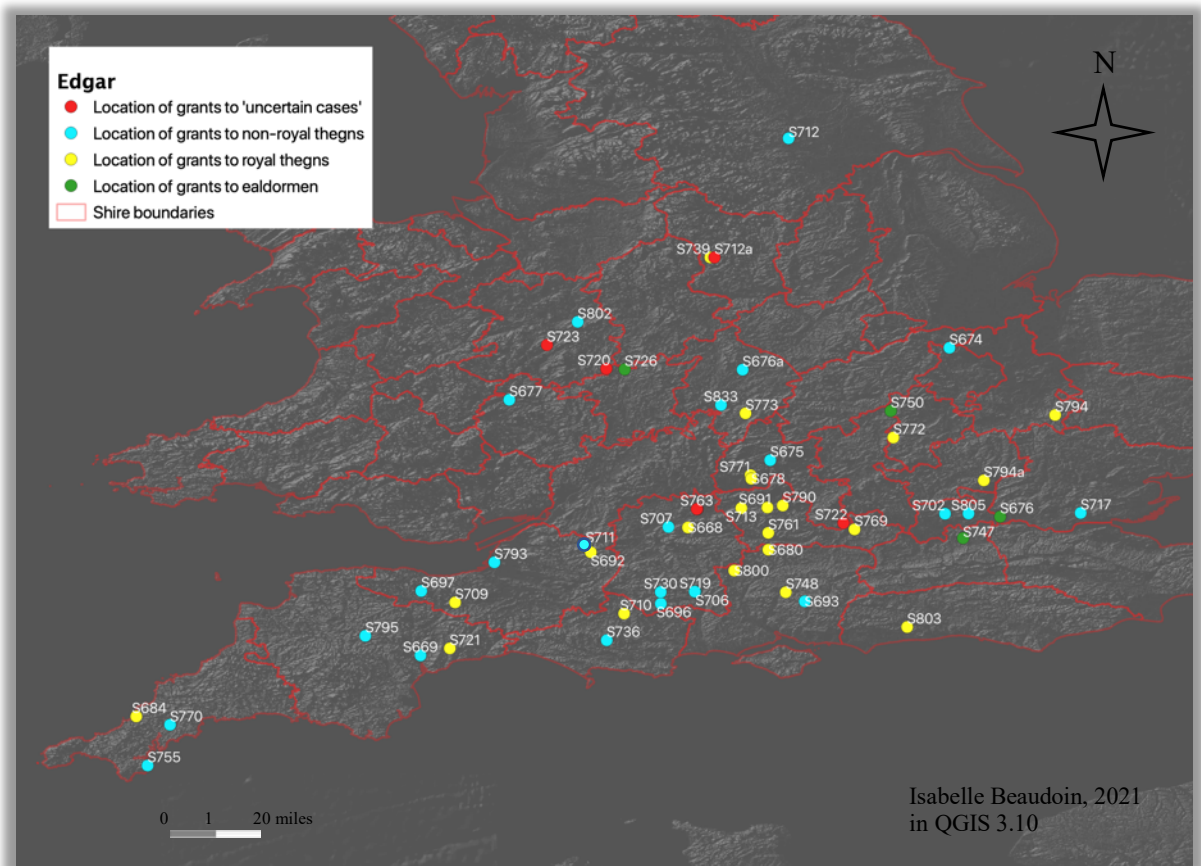
whose careers probably began under Eadwig (Ealdred, Eadric, Osulf, Osward, Æthelsige 3, Æthelsige 2, Oswig, potentially Ælfsige 2 (see relevant note for Ealdred in Edgar's table of royal thegns). All of these men stop attesting sometime in 962. See analysis section below for a discussion of this.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Wulfric 3 ²⁵³ (Mercian?)	-	S 576 (Austrey, Warwicks, 5), ²⁵⁴ 723 (Church Aston, Salop, 6)	Receives two grants in the midlands; he was perhaps the thegn titled 'Wulfric 1' in Keynes' <i>Atlas</i> who attested ten times over the reign but normally relatively prominently.
Wulfric 1	10		Probably a West-Saxon thegn as his first appearance was in S 673; appears very sporadically, often in 5 th to 8 th position
Wulfsige 1 (Mercian?)	12		Prominent in Edgar's charters as king of Mercia, absent from 959-963, from 963-970 irregular and quite low down, 970-970 absent
Wulfstan 2	7		Starts in 967, regular in charters from 969-972

Table 29: Edgar's uncertain cases

²⁵³ One of Edgar's Mercian thegns. This Wulfric and the Wulfric *miles* who was probably beneficiary to S 520 and 550 from Eadred might be one and the same. If so, then we might see in Edgar's unusual granting of two estates to one individual who had no presence at court the continuation of a special relationship with a Mercian supporter, begun in the first instance by Eadred.

²⁵⁴ S 576 is a problematic charter. It was probably issued by Edgar for Wulfric in 958 but tampered with, substituting Eadred's name for Edgar's. See Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 18.



Map 5: Location of Edgar's grants to thegns and ealdormen

Analysis: Edgar's charters

Patterns of attestation and promotion

The categorisation of thegns as royal and non-royal under Edgar is fairly difficult compared with that for previous kings, with a much greater number falling into the 'uncertain cases' category. This is because there are a significant number of thegns who appeared prominently at the start of the reign, and either vanished when Edgar acceded to the whole kingdom, or only continued to attest regularly for a short while thereafter whilst continuing to make irregular appearances for the rest of the reign. Yet this variability, and its timing and context, actually

serves to sharpen the outline of the principles behind the management of the *witan*'s membership, and to build upon previous sections' conclusions about what these principles represent in relation to the issue of the king's incentivisation of loyalty.

The patterns of thegns' attestations in Edgar's reign can be separated into phases, but ones whose collective implication, unlike Eadwig's, is still that of stability and security.²⁵⁵ The first phase constitutes the first years of Edgar's reign (958 to his succession to the whole kingdom in 959) when he was king of Mercia, and is defined by the regular attestations of individuals who can be assumed based upon two indicators to have been predominantly Mercian. First, several of these individuals' attestations under Edgar in this period constitute their first attestations in the charter record as a whole.²⁵⁶ The second indicator lies in whether or not these men continued to attest – and if they did, in what position – Edgar's charters when he acceded to the whole kingdom. If they ceased attesting when Edgar's court moved south, or if they dropped significantly in favour of West-Saxon thegns (i.e., those who start with S 673, Edgar's first charter as king of the English), there is a good chance they were Mercian. Wulfhelm, for example, who was a different thegn than the Wulfhelm who attested prominently under Eadwig,²⁵⁷ attested second in Edgar's Mercian charters, but dropped to thirteenth in the witness list for S 673. It took until 962 for him to move back up to the top four positions. Æthelwold, Æthelsige, Ælfsige 1, Wulfgar and Wulfstan 1 are the other royal thegns who may have been part of Edgar's initial Mercian support-group according to these criteria, with the cases of Ælfhelm, Ælfwold and Eanulf being almost certain due to their receiving grants in Mercia,²⁵⁸ and Æthelwine who was probably a son of the Half-King.²⁵⁹ As mentioned

²⁵⁵ That these phases do not match the time period in which the respective agencies responsible for the production of Edgar's charters seem to have been in business, outlined by Keynes, makes them unlikely to be products of documentary filters. On these agencies see Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 12-23, and his *Diplomas*, pp. 69-79. For a list of the authentic charters of Edgar's reign see Keynes, 'A conspectus'.

²⁵⁶ See in Table 27 (with their accompanying notes) for example Ælfhelm, Ælfsige 1, Ælfwold.

²⁵⁷ See note on Wulfhelm above in Table 27.

²⁵⁸ In the cases of Ælfhelm and Ælfwold, they received lands only in Mercia. See Table 27.

²⁵⁹ On Æthelwine see Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at pp. 133-38 and Williams, 'Princes', *passim*.

above, there are also many thegns who fall into the ‘uncertain cases’ category because they attested either regularly though not very prominently, or prominently though not regularly, in this period and then petered out later, such as Ælfnoth, Ælfred, Ælfwine 2, Osferth, etc.²⁶⁰

The second phase begins with Edgar’s first charter as king of the English (S 673) in 959 and ends sometime in 962. This phase is defined by the obvious preference given by Edgar to West-Saxon thegns once he moved his court south. The Mercian thegns who were prominent in Edgar’s early charters as king of the Mercians all, without exception, drop at least one place when Edgar became king of the English in order to make room for individuals who we presume were West Saxon thegns. Examples include Ælfwine, whose position at the head of the group of *ministri* was taken over by Ælfgar in 959; Wulfhelm, who was normally in second position in 958, but who dropped to thirteenth upon the reunification of the kingdom; and Ælfsige 1, who was between second and sixth position in 958, and dropped to twelfth in 959.²⁶¹ The charters from this phase reveal there to have been a rather large core of royal thegns, sixteen individuals. Most of the Mercian royal thegns continued to attest in this group but in much lower positions than they had done in 958-959, with the rest of the group being made up of thegns who began attesting in 959 at Edgar’s accession. These thegns were Byrhtferth, Ælfgar, Oswig, Eadric 1, Osward, Osulf, Æthelsige 2, Ealdred, and Æthelsige 3.²⁶² When Edgar acceded to the whole kingdom therefore, he did not flood the court with new figures from Mercia, instead working with established partners and networks.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ See the entries with ‘Mercian?’ beside them in the first column in Table 29.

²⁶¹ Refer to Table VII in the appendix.

²⁶² This is not in order of precedence but in the order in which they appear in Table VII in the appendix. Byrhtferth is somewhat of an enigma, as there exist two attestations of a thegn with this name in Edgar’s Mercian charters (S 678 and 676) in eighth and seventh position, but the Byrhtferth who was the prominent West-Saxon thegn was at this time still at Eadwig’s court and attesting regularly in 958-959 in the top three positions. When Edgar acceded to the whole kingdom in 959, this Byrhtferth’s name appeared immediately in these positions with S 673. It thus seems probable that the Byrhtferth who attested S 678 and 676 (probably a Mercian thegn) was a different Byrhtferth than the one who began attesting with S 673 in third position.

²⁶³ Louis the Pious did the same when he arrived from Aquitaine to become emperor in 814. For discussion see Airlie, *Making*, p. 129. Depreux’s prosopographical work has shown that of the roughly forty-five men holding office at court under Charlemagne, thirty-five survived Louis’ immediate accession: *Prosopographie*, pp. 410-11.

The third phase, which began sometime in 962 and lasted until c. 970, is of particular interest because of what it reveals about Edgar's longer-term strategies for the recognition of the thegns who were at his initial Mercian court, and contextualises the preference he showed for West-Saxon thegns c. 959-962 as a fixture in a long-term strategy. This in turn has implications for how the secular membership of the *witan* was manipulated in order to effect support at times when the atmosphere at court may have been particularly charged. In a trend visible first in the witness list of a charter for Ælfheah issued in 962,²⁶⁴ several of the West-Saxon royal thegns who had begun attesting upon Edgar's accession to the whole kingdom ceased to attest either at all or regularly,²⁶⁵ whilst with the exceptions of Ælfred and Ælfsige 2, the nine Mercian royal thegns who had continued to attest regularly past 959 moved up again in the lists.²⁶⁶ From sometime in 962 until about 970, the king's core group of royal thegns, in rough order of precedence, was Byrhtferth, Ælfwine, Æthelsige 1, Wulfhelm/Æthelweard 1,²⁶⁷ Æthelwine/Wulfstan,²⁶⁸ Ælfsige 1, Ælfwold, Ælfweard, Eanulf.²⁶⁹ All of these individuals apart from Byrhtferth and Ælfweard were the men who had been Edgar's royal thegns before he became king of the English. Even then, when his brother Ælfgar died in 962, Byrhtferth was the most senior thegn at court, so it made perfect sense to keep him on in a prominent position, and the other exception (Ælfweard) was probably Æthelweard 1's brother. This phase was thus also characterised by the sudden entrance into prominent positions in the lists of three thegns:

²⁶⁴ S 702.

²⁶⁵ Ælfgar, Oswig, Eadric 1, Osweard, Osulf, Æthelsige, 2, Ealdred, Æthelsige 3. This is not in order of precedence but in the order in which they appear in Table VII in the appendix. The exception, i.e. the West-Saxon thegn who continued to attest, was Byrhtferth.

²⁶⁶ These were Ælfwine, Wulfhelm, Ælfred, Æthelsige 1, Ælfwold, Ælfsige 1, Wulfgar, Ælfsige 2, Æthelwine. This is not in order of precedence but in the order in which they appear in Table VII in the appendix. This is the time at which Æthelwine was also made ealdorman.

²⁶⁷ Wulfhelm's last appearance was in S 714, and his position was taken over almost immediately by Æthelweard 1.

²⁶⁸ Æthelwine's last attestation as thegn is in S 702 in 962, but Wulfstan steps almost immediately into his position (see S 708 in 963 for the beginning of Wulfstan's regular attestations).

²⁶⁹ There was some fluctuation in this hierarchy, with Eanulf for example climbing the lists to become very prominent c. 968. Ælfweard suddenly started attesting regularly and prominently in 964 (S 724) but then moved down slightly from c.968 to 970, and then normally occupied the top three positions from 970 to 975.

Æthelweard 1 (who took Wulfhelm's place), Wulfstan (who took Æthelwine's place), and Ælfweard. These thegns did not climb the lists slowly, as was the norm. All of them can however be shown to have either been prominent in Edgar's Mercian *witan* or to be the kin of a thegn who was. So, not only was the third phase defined by the recovery of prominence, at the expense of West-Saxon thegns, by thegns who had been in Edgar's Mercian *witan* but who had been eclipsed by these West-Saxon thegns from 959 to 962, but this effect was sharpened by the direct introduction of other individuals from Edgar's Mercian court into the hierarchy of thegns when positions became available.²⁷⁰

The consistency of these patterns, and the fact that the thegns from Edgar's Mercian court were kept around, albeit attesting in lower positions from 959-962, only to recover their prominence, implies forethought and strategy. The hierarchy of thegns witnessing Edgar's witness lists was being manipulated in ways that can only mean these lists were reflections of hierarchies in reality, and in ways that imply it was important for Edgar's consolidation of loyalty in Wessex to balance the interests of West-Saxon thegns with those of his initial Mercian support group. Edgar smoothed over his transition from king of the Mercians to king of the English by allowing West-Saxon thegns to participate in the apparatus of governance in certain capacities – temporarily. The fact that this was temporary is a testament not only to the strength of Edgar's personal, royal agency, but to the strength of his dedication to men such as Ælfwine, Wulfhelm and Æthelsige 1, and to the premium placed upon participating at court in these capacities by contemporaries. By extension therefore, and in the context of the conclusions of previous sections, the management of these dynamics and the balancing of

²⁷⁰ For separate but related comments upon the 're-emergence' of the Mercian *witan* under Edgar as a self-conscious political entity see Williams, '*Princeps*', at p. 163. Edgar seemingly also demonstrated consciousness of, and perhaps an interest in promoting, one of the older tribal identities in Mercia when he granted land in 'pago magesaetna' to Ealhstan thegn in 958 (S 677): Keynes, 'Edgar', at p. 13. On the other charters which framed grants in such culturally historic ways see S 723 ('*provincia Wrocensetna*') and S 712a ('*pago Pecset*'), discussed in Lewis, 'Edgar', at p. 118, and the latter being the subject of Brooks, 'A new charter'.

interests therein would have been an important fixture in kings' strategies to make loyal service to themselves appealing.

The fourth and final phase of patterns of attestation in Edgar's charters is from c.970 to the end of his reign, when the group of core royal thegns seems to have constricted to only about six regulary-attesting individuals: Æthelweard 1, Ælfweard 1, Ælfsige 1, Leofwine, Eanulf and Wulfstan. What should be observed here is once more the great consistency and security inherent in the role of royal thegn. The thegns whose names occupied the top positions in these years had reached them through long and consistent service over at least a decade.²⁷¹ Indeed, although the patterns of Edgar's thegns' attestations can be separated into four general groups, these groups are linked by the principles of stability and security. Rather than engaging upon a 'settling of scores' upon his accession to the English kingdom,²⁷² Edgar was careful to maintain stability at court by integrating his Mercian and West-Saxon *witan*, after which he made sure to reward those men who had been with him since the beginning with the honour

²⁷¹ The thegn in this group who had begun attesting latest at Edgar's court was Leofwine in 965 with S 734, though the authenticity of this charter is suspicious (Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 104); the first solidly authentic charter in which Leofwine's name appears is S 745 in 966.

²⁷² Jayakumar, 'Edgar and Eadwig', pp. 91-100, esp. 91. It should also be noted that the evidence cited by Jayakumar about Edgar's confiscation of Wulfric Cufing's land (S 687) cannot be used in conjunction with an argument for Edgar's ill-treatment of Eadwig's men since we do not know the reasons behind the confiscation. Besides, Wulfric had been around at court since Æthelstan's day, and there is no evidence that he would have been considered by Edgar to have been particularly Eadwig's man and thus worthy of censure – not to mention the fact that Edgar restored his lands. At most, Edgar's restitution of Wulfric's lands could be seen as a back-handed gesture because it explicitly mentions the fact that Wulfric committed 'offensaculi', and thus recording to all present and to posterity Wulfric's wrongdoings. Mention has been made above of his as a potential strategy to encourage loyalty from onlookers in the context of Edward the Elder's grant referencing Wulfhere's disloyalty (see Edward's analysis section, Chapter Two), but Stuart Airlie arrived to similar conclusions in the case of Louis the Pious' restitution of an estate in the Ardennes to Count Richard. Richard had thrown his lot in with Lothar in the 830s; when Louis returned the estate in 839 at a large assembly at Worms (MGH *Dip.* II, no. 401), Richard's former treachery was explicitly highlighted (Airlie, *Making*, pp. 157-8). The only other potential victim of a vengeful Edgar cited by Jayakumar, Æthelgeard, had by this point had a career at court spanning at least twenty-four years. It is entirely possible that his death coincided with the reunification of the kingdom, thus explaining his absence thereafter, and in any case why would Edgar single him out, a thegn who like Wulfric Cufing had served four kings, rather than focusing his ire upon those who had been promoted specifically by Eadwig? Jayakumar here seems to follow Keynes' discussion of Wulfric Cufing and Æthelgeard as analogues representing the 'widespread dangers faced by young, upwardly mobile thegns in a potentially volatile world of the new kingdom of the English' in 'Edgar', at p. 38. In the context of the stability of careers at court demonstrated by this chapter however, there are little grounds upon which to assert the presence of 'widespread dangers' at the courts of late Anglo-Saxon kings.

that was their due.²⁷³ He did this whilst still maintaining the positions of thegns such as Byrhtferth, Ælfgar and Eadric 1, and the ealdormen Ælfhere and Ælfheah, all of whom had risen to prominence under Eadwig. Like in all of the reigns discussed above, serving the king as a royal thegn almost always meant security in that position, to the extent that this aspect may have been actively cultivated by the king as a defining characteristic of royal service in order to incentivise the lay nobility's dedication.

In what remains a key reference work on the politics of Edgar's reign, Simon Keynes commented that 'the witness lists in Edgar's charters provide a small and clouded window into political and social structures at court', and that it was 'hazardous' to go beyond the analysis of Edgar's top thegns (whom he identified as Ælfwine, Ælfgar, Byrhtferth and Æthelweard) and the fortunes of ealdorman Æthelstan's and Ælfhere's kin groups.²⁷⁴ Yet if we push slightly further down into the dynamics of the *witan* than this, the window does not seem so clouded. Edgar, like his brother Eadwig, was a strong-willed king who took matters into his own hands, and as demonstrated above, the witness lists surviving from his reign reveal more about the political and social structures at court than has previously been allowed. In an article in the same volume as Keynes', Christopher Lewis rightly pointed out that despite recurrent interests in the division of the kingdom in 957, far less had been written about how the period of Edgar's government of Mercia fit within the longer history of his reign.²⁷⁵ This section shows that Edgar's mutual ties of loyalty with his Mercian support group continued to influence royal policy long after he had become king of the English, with the ripple effects of these early years being felt by all at court even in the 970s when Edgar's main thegns were still primarily those whose careers began in, or via connexions to, Edgar's Mercian *witan*.

²⁷³ It is salutary to note that one of Edgar's later grants of land to a member of this group, Ælfwold thegn, for land in Bedfordshire, was framed in particularly warm terms in the Old English endorsement at the head of the diploma: '*leofan getreowan þegne*' (noted by Keynes, 'Edgar', at p. 35).

²⁷⁴ Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 33, 31.

²⁷⁵ Lewis, 'Edgar', at p. 104.

Concerning the promotion of thegns to the position of ealdorman, the three ealdormen Edgar appointed of whose identity we can be certain are Æthelwine of East-Anglia, Ordgar of the Western Shires, and Oslac of Northumbria. Both Æthelwine and Ordgar are visible attesting as royal thegns at Edgar's court before their promotion,²⁷⁶ suggesting that Edgar returned to the time-honoured tradition of promoting ealdormen from the ranks of proven kings' thegns rather than follow the example Eadwig had set by promoting Ælfhere and Byrhtnoth, men who may have been related to ealdormen but who had not yet spent any (demonstrable) time in the king's service.²⁷⁷ As in the reigns prior to Eadwig's however, it will be noted that neither Æthelwine nor Ordgar headed the lists of thegns, nor were they even in the top three positions. The fact that being the most prominent king's thegn did not often turn one into an ealdorman suggests that the position of ealdorman was available to some thegns as an incentive or reward, and not to others, and that this was not based solely upon length of service.

Land-granting patterns

There are patterns visible in Edgar's grants to royal thegns which shed further light on how this resource was brought to bear upon the issue of the lay elite's loyalty. As was mentioned above, several of the royal thegns who attested prominently in Edgar's council when he was king of the Mercians received lands in areas north of the Thames.²⁷⁸ This was also the case for a thegn categorised above as an 'uncertain case' (Wulfric/Wulfric 1)²⁷⁹ whose first appearance in the charter record was probably as a beneficiary to land in Warwickshire in 958.²⁸⁰ That these

²⁷⁶ Æthelwine witnessed most charters until 962, with his final appearance as thegn in S 702. The thegn Ordgar who attested irregularly from 959 to 964, normally in the top eight positions, was the future ealdorman. On Edgar's appointment of ealdormen see Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 31-2.

²⁷⁷ See pp. 177-8 above.

²⁷⁸ Ælfhelm, Ælfwold and Eanulf – see Table 27.

²⁷⁹ See this individual with footnote in Table 29.

²⁸⁰ S 576. This individual was probably also the Wulfric who was beneficiary to land in Shropshire in 963 (S 723).

individuals received land in the midlands lends confidence to their identification as Mercian, but it is significant that not all of the land granted to the royal thegns who attested Edgar's initial Mercian charters was north of the Thames. Several of these men received lands in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall (*Æthelwold, Ælfsige 1, Eanulf, Wulfhelm*)²⁸¹ – areas which had, based upon the analysis of the granting patterns of previous reigns, largely been the preserve of reward for non-royal thegns. The majority of the royal thegns who received estates in the West-Saxon heartlands from Edgar were those who had held this position under Eadwig: *Ælfric Cild, Ælfweard, Ælfwine and Eadric*.²⁸²

This possibly reflects a cautiousness on Edgar's part not to disrupt the status quo in Wessex any more than was necessary, and to respect the way things had been done there for what was probably living memory. Significantly however, the royal thegns who were part of Edgar's initial support group in Mercia, and who seem to have regained prominence at court c. 962, were predominantly the ones to receive land from Edgar. No evidence survives for grants of land to any of the West-Saxon thegns who were given precedence or attested very regularly in the second phase of the patterns of attestation under Edgar (*Byrhtferth, Ælfgar, Oswig, Eadric 1, Osweard, Osulf, Æthelsige 2, Ealdred, and Æthelsige 3*). The only possible exception to this rule is *Ælfric Cild*, who had strong Mercian connexions through his marriage to ealdorman *Ælfhere's* sister.²⁸³ It was thus evidently important to grant land to the individuals who had been in Edgar's initial support group. Perhaps the information provided in his charters is indication of a choice they had: to receive estates in the midlands, as had *Ælfhelm* and *Ælfwold*, or to receive estates in some of the more peripheral southern shires. The southern heartlands had now long been primarily the preserve of West-Saxon royal thegns. Edgar may have been keen to demonstrate to the West-Saxon thegns, upon whose support he depended for

²⁸¹ See the entries for these thegns in Table 27.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ On *Ælfric* see Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 76-7 and Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. cxc-xci.

authority in Wessex, that although he had started out as a Mercian king, and brought a cohort of new faces to court, he would not jeopardize their ascendancy or give what they may have ostensibly considered ‘their’ potential lands to newcomers. Neither however does Edgar appear to have actually granted much land to the West-Saxon royal thegns who were integrated into his court at his accession in 959.

As for non-royal thegns, it will be observed that a significant number also received lands from the king, as was the case under Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig, but that Edgar seems not to have continued – or at least seems to have continued with far less frequency – Eadwig’s practices of granting lands in the West-Saxon heartlands to such men.²⁸⁴ The majority of lands granted by Edgar to thegns who had a negligible or non-existent presence at court were in the peripheral southern shires or in the midlands, and indeed the majority of these were to individuals who leave no trace whatsoever in charters other than as the beneficiaries of these grants.²⁸⁵ A fair number of these grants were for estates in the midlands (those to Ealhstan, Ælfheah, Æthelric, Eadwold, Ealhhelm and Leofric), the majority of which took place in the first three years of Edgar’s reign, probably reflecting his efforts to stay true to the thegns who supported him in Mercia regardless of whether they remained royal thegns after 959. Moreover, we get a similar impression from Edgar’s grants to non-royal thegns as we did from Æthelstan’s, Edmund’s and Eadred’s: they were to thegns or individuals who were of local importance and probably engaged in some type of service to the king in that capacity, rather than to thegns who were simply made occasional appearances as witnesses to charters. This rule was required to bend somewhat in order to accommodate the new and significant Mercian component of the *witan*, and the reality of Edgar’s commitments to the Mercian thegns who

²⁸⁴ See pp. 180-1 above.

²⁸⁵ See for example Ælfheah ‘Gerent’, Æthelnoth, Cenulf, Eadwold, Ealhhelm, Ealhstan, Ingeram, Mangoda, Sigestan, Titstan, Winstan, Wulfherd and Wulfnoth ‘Rumuncant’ in Table 28.

supported him in the 950s but did not, or perhaps could not, all remain in constant attendance at his southern court.

As far as ealdormen are concerned, the trend first visible under Edward the Elder still continues. Edgar's ealdormen received far less land than did thegns, and none of them received lands in Berkshire, Wiltshire or Hampshire, i.e. where royal thegns more often than not were granted bookland up to this point. Of the ealdormen who received land, only Oslac of Yorkshire and Gunner received lands within their respective spheres of authority.

The use and meaning of titles in Edgar's charters

Edgar's charters continue to illustrate how the nature of an individual's service qualified the type of reward available to them from the king. They also contain fewer examples of the use of styles which deviated from *minister* than did Eadwig and Eadred's diplomas, and no examples of the use of the term *miles*. Following the theory laid out in the sections above with reference to Edgar's royal thegns, this might reflect less emphasis on offering rewards to royal thegns for executing their duties in capacities other than those of *ministri*, with a premium resting upon their participation at court and their fulfilment of their terms of service to him in their general faculties as servants of the king. Perhaps this implies by extension that Edgar made less distinction between these different faculties amongst his leading men and was more concerned to address and reward all of them in the same general manner in order to best level the playing field between his incoming Mercian entourage and the West-Saxon thegns who had been his brother's supporters.

As for the ways in which non-royal thegns were styled in Edgar's charters, this was normally as *minister* or *homo*, with one occurrence each of *vassallus* and *decurio*.²⁸⁶ The

²⁸⁶ See Table 28.

individuals who were styled *homo* and *vassallus* do not leave traces of attestation.²⁸⁷ This suggests that executing the duties involved when designated as king's *homo* were worth rewarding, but that this position, when not applied to leading men, was not one which involved being at court at all. The fact that there was now such a clear predominance of 'special' styles such as *homo*, *vassallus* etc amongst non-royal thegns strengthens the theory that such styles were important in explaining why an individual was receiving land who was not a royal thegn.

The evidence for the rewarding of members of the royal household is also illuminating. Æthelsige is the only member of the royal household who was also a prominent thegn to receive land in this capacity (S 713 to Æthelsige *camerarius*). Although Ælfwine, Eanulf and Wulfstan attest as *disciferi* in S 768, with Æthelsige himself attesting now as *pedisequus* in the same document, they do not receive lands in these capacities. By contrast, Winstan and Titstan were named as members of the royal household in the grants they received (Titstan as *cubicularius* in S 706, Winstan as *cubicularius* in S 789 and as *camerarius* in S 719), but they do not appear to have attested any charters at all.²⁸⁸ They, along with the thegn named Sigestan, and one of the Wulfmaers, were the only non-royal thegns to receive lands in the West-Saxon heartlands under Edgar.²⁸⁹ Winstan and Titstan received small estates in Afene (Stratford-sub-Castle), Wiltshire,²⁹⁰ which were adjacent to one another, and one wonders whether this along with the similarity in their names indicates a family relation. Sigestan's Wiltshire estate in Teffont²⁹¹ was but ten miles west of Afene, strengthening the theory that Winstan, Titstan and Sigestan were three brothers in the personal service of the king and receiving valuable lands in this capacity. This strengthens the conclusions arrived at for Eadwig's reward of members of the royal household: that it was rare for a prominent royal thegn who was a member of the royal

²⁸⁷ Ælfheah 'Gerent', Æthelnoth, Cenulf, Mangoda, Wulfherd. See Table 28.

²⁸⁸ Keynes in 'Edgar', at p. 36, noted that Titstan and Winstan were beneficiaries without attesting charters, but did not further explore the implications of this for the intersection of role and reward at court.

²⁸⁹ See these entries in Table 28.

²⁹⁰ S 719, 789, 706.

²⁹¹ S 730.

household to be rewarded in this capacity, with these individuals normally being rewarded instead for their political and administrative roles in the *witan*. It was, on the other hand, more common for members of the royal household to be rewarded in this capacity who did not hold positions which entailed regular participation in court matters. This would qualify Keynes' assertion that the upper reaches of the lists of *ministri* should 'be regarded as a reflection of the membership of the king's household',²⁹² for there was clearly a distinction between politically active thegns in the king's household and non-politically active thegns, one which was by-and-large reinforced by distinctions in how these individuals were rewarded.

²⁹² Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 158; Kelly is more cautious in her assessment of the intersection between the roles of household member and charter attester, asserting that it is 'far from certain' whether household officials would attest regularly: *Abingdon*, no. 120, p. 466.

h. Edward the Martyr

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdor­dom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhere (Mercia)	5	956 (S 605) - see Eadwig's ealdormen		
Æthelweard (West-Wessex)	3	976 (S 830)		S 832 (St Keverne and Tretheway, Cornwall, land)
Æthelwine (East-Anglia)	5	962 (S 706) - see Edgar's ealdormen		
Byrhtnoth (Essex)	4	956 (S 616) - see Eadwig's ealdormen		
Leofwine (Unknown)	2	976 (S 830)	977 (S 832)	

Table 30: Edward the Martyr's ealdormen

Thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar	2	976 (S 830)		
Ælf­ric 1 (cild)	2	955 (S 582) - see Eadwig's royal thegns		S 831 (Wyl­ye, Wilts, 10)
Ælf­sig­e	4	See Edgar's royal thegns, p. 194		S 830 (Cheriton Bishop, Devon, 1)
Ælfweard	5	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns, p. 159		
Ælfwig	1	Potentially the Ælfwig in Edgar's non-		

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
		royal thegns, p. 198		
Ælfwold	2	Potentially the Ælfwig in Edgar's non-royal thegns, p. 198		
Æthelric	1	Probably 977 (S 831)		
Æthelsige	1	Probably one of the Æthelsiges under Edgar		
Æthelweard	2	Potentially 'Æthelweard 2' in Edgar's uncertain cases		
Æthelweard 2	2	Potentially 'Æthelweard 3' in Edgar's non-royal thegns		
Æthelwold	1	Potentially the Æthewold in Edgar's royal thegns		
Bryhtmaer	4	See Edgar's non-royal thegns, p. 198		
Byrhtferth	1	Probably S 828		
Eadwig	1	See Edgar's non-royal thegns, p. 199		
Eadwine	1	Potentially the Eadwine in Edgar's uncertain cases		
Eardulf	1	Probably S 828		
Leofric	1	Potentially the Leofric in Edgar's non-royal thegns		
Leofric 2	1	Probably 977 (S 831)		
Leofwine	4	965 (S 734) - see Edgar's royal thegns		
Leofwine 2	1	Potentially 'Leofwine 2' in Edgar's non-royal thegns		

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Wulfgeat	1	Potentially the Wulfgeat in Edgar's uncertain cases		

Table 31: Edward the Martyr's thegns

Analysis: Edward the Martyr's charters

Edward's reign was too short, with too few surviving diplomas, for the categorisation of thegns to have any particular value. Indeed only three of the five surviving diplomas attributed to Edward are likely to be authentic (S 830, 831, 832). S 828 and 829 cannot be authentic as they stand, but their witness lists were probably derived from genuine texts.²⁹³ It is perhaps possible to discern a group of thegns whose names appear most regularly, consisting of Leofwine, Bryhtmær, Ælfweard and Ælfsige, but some of the other thegns who attest only once or twice were very likely individuals who had been royal thegns under Edgar, such as Ælfwold and Ælfric. It may be significant that the only royal grants to laymen from Edward for which we have evidence go to thegns in this group, namely ones who were very likely to have been prominent under Edgar. The witness lists of Edward's reign do not contribute much to the present discussion except for revealing the start date of Ælfgar's career at court, who would go on to become prominent under Æthelred, and that of ealdorman Æthelweard of the Western Shires. Æthelweard had been a very prominent thegn under Edgar, normally holding the top position from 971 to 975, whilst the other ealdorman appointed by Edward, Leofwine, cannot

²⁹³ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 34 n. 1.

be identified.²⁹⁴ Although the available evidence under Edward is negligible, it is still worth noting that whereas two thegns receive land grants, only one ealdorman does (Æthelweard), and again not in the central shires of Berkshire, Wiltshire or Hampshire.

²⁹⁴ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 175, n. 84.

i. Æthelred

Tables of ealdormen and thegns

Ealdormen

Name, ealdordom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhere (Mercia)	12	956 (S 605) - see Eadwig's ealdormen	983 (S 844)	S 834 (Olney, Bucks, 10)
Æthelwine (East-Anglia)	34	962 (S 706) - see Edgar's ealdormen	990 (S 874)	
Æthelweard (West-Wessex)	51	976 (S 830) - see Edward's ealdormen	998 (S 895)	
Byrhtnoth (Essex)	34	956 (S 616) - see Eadwig's ealdormen	990 (S 874)	
Eadwine (Sussex)	8	979 (S 834)	982 (S 842)	
Æthelmær (Hampshire)	9	979 (S 834)	982 (S 842)	
Thored (Northumbria)	13	979 (S 834) (But may be the same Thored who attested as ealdorman once under Eadwig)	989 (S 877)	
Ælfric 1 (Central Wessex)	76	982 (S 842)	1016 (S 935)	
Ælfric 2 ²⁹⁵ (Mercia)	8	983 (S 851)	984 (S 852)	
Ælfhelm (Northumbria)	28	993 (S 876)	1005 (S 912)	
Leofsig ²⁹⁶ (Essex)	18	994 (S 880)	1001 (S 889)	
Leofwine (Hwicce)	44	994 (S 880)		S 892 (Ladbroke and Radbourne, Warwicks, 7.5), 932 (Mathon, Herefords, 4)
Northman (Northumbria?)	1	994 (S 881)	994 (S 881)	

²⁹⁵ Banished, *ASC* a. 985.

²⁹⁶ Banished, *ASC* a. 1002. It has been argued that Leofsig may have gained initial advancement in the household of the ætheling Æthelstan through Ælfthryth's assistance: Pratt, 'The voice of the king', at p. 184 n.211; Whitelock, *The Will of Æthelgifu*, pp. 22-4 and 29; Hart, 'The ealdordom of Essex', at pp. 126-38.

Name, ealdorðom and title if not <i>dux</i> or <i>comes</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Waltheof (Northumbria?)	1	994 (S 881)	994 (S 881)	
Eadric (Streona) (Mercia)	10	1007 (S 915)		
Uhtred (Northumbria)	7	1009 (S 921)		
Æthelmær (West-Wessex)	1	1014 (S 933)	1014 (S 933)	
Godric (Unknown)	2	1014 (S 933)	1015 (S 934)	

Table 32: Æthelred's ealdormen

Royal thegns

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns ²⁹⁷	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar 1 ²⁹⁸	27	976 (S 830) - see Edward the Martyr's thegns	874 (S 990), blinded?	1	S 839 (Charlton, Berks, 5), 861 (Ebbesborne, Wilts, 5), 868 (Wylye, Wilts, 5)
Ælfgar 2 (Meaw?) ²⁹⁹	12	989 (S 877)	1014 (S 933)	4	

²⁹⁷ This column reflects Keynes' categorisation of Æthelred's thegns into groups based on those individuals who enjoyed ascendancy at different times during the reign. See Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 162-231.

²⁹⁸ This Ælfgar might be identified as the son of ealdorman Ælfric of Hampshire (Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 183-4, 186), who defected to the Danish side in 992 but who was at some point reconciled with Æthelred because the Chronicle has him feigning sickness in 1003 in order to avoid leading an army against Swein, and fighting for the English in 1016. This individual might in turn be identified as the beneficiary of one or more of Æthelred's charters in favour of an Ælfgar: S 839, 861 and 868, see Keynes, *ibid.*, and Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 118. Keynes has proposed that the Ælfgar who was prominent in Æthelred's lists was one and the same with the Ælfgar son of Ælfric who was blinded, with the *praepositus* (reeve) who encouraged the king to appropriate Abingdon estates between 985 and 990 (these events are recorded in S 918 (suspicious: see Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 135) and S 915: see Keynes, *Diplomas*, 183, n.110) and at least with the beneficiary of S 861 which granted lands that had belonged to the Old Minster, Winchester to an Ælfgar. This Ælfgar would thus fit the bill of the advisors whose 'abhorrent greed' Æthelred blamed in S 876 for his youthful indiscretions in the 980s.

²⁹⁹ Ælfgar 'Meaw' was probably a 'Danish' associate or relation of Æthelmær, son of Æthelwold thegn (Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 209, 227, n.265). Since S 915 was probably not for Ælfgar Meaw, possibly it was intended for one of the other Ælfgars active after 1002 (Ælfgar 3 or 4).

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns ²⁹⁷	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfhelm 1 ³⁰⁰	14	982 (S 841)	990 (S 874), ealdorman	2	
Ælfric 1 (Cild)	10	955 (S 582) - see Eadwig's royal thegns	983 (S 844), became ealdorman	1	
Ælfric 2	18	980 (S 837)	990 (S 874)	1	
Ælfsige 1 ³⁰¹	34	See Edgar's royal thegns, p. 194	995 (S 886)	1	
Ælfweard 1	19	See Eadwig's non-royal thegns, p. 159	986 (S 861)	1	
Æthelmaer 1 ³⁰² (<i>discifer</i> , S 914; <i>miles</i> , S 871)	52	983 (S 843)	1005 (S 910), retired to Eynsham	2	S 847 (Thames Ditton, Surrey, 5), 871 (Winchester, Hants, 1 messuage, to Æthelmaer and Æthelsige Bishop)
Æthelmaer 2/3? ³⁰³	23	994 (S 880)		4	

³⁰⁰ The brother of Wulfric Spott, and father of the thegn Wulfheah. He was killed in 1005. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 189, 210-11.

³⁰¹ Three thegns of this name attest Æthelred's charters, but only one with any regularity and prominence (Ælfsige 1). Like in Æthelsige's case, if this Ælfsige was the same as Edgar's Ælfsige 1 then we are once more faced with a royal thegn who spent thirty-five years in the combined service of Edgar and Æthelred. The progression in the position of attestation for 'Ælfsige 1' during the reign of Edgar is too regular for it to have represented more than one individual, and the same is true for that of 'Ælfsige 1' during Æthelred's reign. Æthelred's 'Ælfsige 1' also began the reign in roughly the same position on the lists as Edgar's 'Ælfsige 1' had occupied in the closing years of that king's reign. Thus the 'Ælfsige 1' who attested very prominently under Æthelred until 995 was probably the same individual as the thegn who had supported Edgar's accession in Mercia.

³⁰² The son of ealdorman Æthelweard and thus a kinsman of Æthelred. Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 188. Several Æthelmærs potentially attested Æthelred's charters, but S 847 and 871 both appear to have been granted in the period when only a single Æthelmær was present in witness lists, i.e. probably the son of the ealdorman.

³⁰³ The subscriptions of a second Æthelmær, or more than one, begin in 994 and continue semi-regularly until the end of the reign. He/they always attested below Æthelmær son of Æthelweard, who was by 994 consistently top of the lists until his retirement in 1005. 'Æthelmær 2' may have been the Æthelmær son of Æthelwold specified in S 896 and an associate of Ælfgar Meaw (Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 209, 212) or he could have been the brother of Eadric Streona (Keynes, *Diplomas*, n.202, cf. Roberstson, *Charters*, p. 386). It should be noted that the Æthelmær who attested in the 990s (S 880, 878, 887 and 890) but who was not Æthelmær son of Æthelweard did so very prominently and suddenly just a few years before Eadric Streona's first appearance in the lists. It seems probable this was the Æthelmær who was Eadric's brother, particularly as the name Æthelmær does not occur next to Æthelwold's in these charters. The attestations we see as one Æthelmær in Keynes' *Atlas* from the 990s to 1016 (who were not Æthelmær son of Æthelweard) are thus probably overlapping subscriptions of two Æthelmærs, with one – Æthelmær son of Æthelwold (according to Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 209) attesting more frequently, and finishing the reign in the top position in the lists of *ministri*. There exist no records however of these men receiving new grants of bookland from the king. This Æthelmær son of Æthelwold was associated with Ælfgar Meaw, and

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns ²⁹⁷	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelnoth	12	982 (S 840)	996 (S 877)	other	S 870 (Wilton, Wilts, 1 messuage ass. with St. Benedict's)
Æthelric 1	37	986 (S 862)		3	S 856 (Harwell, Berks, 17)
Æthelsige 1 ³⁰⁴	25	Unknown	995 (S 883), potentially disgraced ³⁰⁵	1	S 864 (Bromley, Kent, 4 sulungs), 863 (Asce, ?, 12)?

potentially related to Ælfhelm Polga, if another charter's (S 868) reference to the land being granted having been held by 'Æthelwold and his brother Ælfhelm' is referring to Æthelwold father of Æthelmær, and to Ælfhelm Polga. The timing would make sense. S 868, issued in 988, referred to Æthelwold and Ælfhelm as having held the land, but Edward the Martyr had granted the estate to an Ælfric in 977 (S 831). This means that the Æthelwold and Ælfhelm to whom S 868 refers would have needed to be active sometime between 977 and 988. An estate at Wylve had been granted to Winchester c. 947 by ealdorman Æthelwold, but this could not have been the Æthelwold referred to by S 868 since this Æthelwold was Æthelstan Half-King's son, who is not known to have had a son named Ælfhelm. The timing certainly fits for Ælfhelm Polga, who died in 989 (this being the date of his will (S 1487)), with the attestations Æthelwold father of Æthelmær beginning in 986. It would also make sense for the family of Æthelwold and his son Æthelmær to be associated with the Danish Ælfgar Meaw if they themselves were of Danish extraction, as implied if Æthelwold was the brother of Ælfhelm Polga. If the land in S 868 at Wylve had been held by Æthelwold father of Æthelmær, and if the Ælfhelm mentioned was Ælfhelm Polga, this means their estate might have been exchanged by Æthelred for another, since Æthelwold father of Æthelmær shows no sign of having lost favour in a way which would accompany the forfeiture of an estate. In any case, if Æthelmær son of Æthelwold was actually of Danish extraction, along with Ælfgar Meaw, the presence of this cohort at court starting in the late 980s, with Æthelmær's and Ælfgar Meaw's influence waxing slowly to a crescendo by the end of the reign, might represent Æthelred's diversification of his royal thegn base to include more Danes, perhaps in order to keep loyal the localities whence they had their roots.

³⁰⁴ This could be the same Æthelsige as the royal thegn who attested regularly and prominently in Edgar's reign, but since the Æthelsige who attests prominently in Æthelred's reign only ceases doing so in 995, and even then perhaps not from old age but instead through potential disgrace (see footnote below), a tenure as royal thegn from 958-995 (thirty-seven years) seems unlikely. The name Æthelsige which figures prominently under Edgar and Æthelred probably represents a combination of several people which it is impossible to disentangle. Four thegns named Æthelsige attested Edgar's charters. Suffice it to say however that the Æthelsige of Æthelred's reign is unlikely to have been the same thegn as the one of this name who supported Edgar in Mercia. Keynes suggested that the Æthelsige of Æthelred's reign was perhaps the one who attested sporadically and without prominence under Edgar, i.e. either Æthelsige 2 or 3, which is convincing: Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 184.

³⁰⁵ It is possible that the Æthelsige who attested prominently in Æthelred's reign could be identified with the thegn of that name who was censured by Æthelred for perpetrating various crimes of theft and plunder. The preamble to S 893 reports that an Æthelsige who was in a position to exercise influence over the king reportedly tricked him into taking land from Rochester and killed a loyal reeve who was defending king's possessions. It seems probable that this prominent Æthelsige was the beneficiary at least of S 864, which records the appropriation of land at Bromley, Kent, from the see of Rochester: see Keynes *Diplomas*, pp. 184-5, and Campbell, *Rochester*, no. 30. S 863 was for an estate which has not been identified, and could have gone to the prominent Æthelsige, or perhaps to 'Æthelsige 2' who attests four times during the reign, or perhaps of course to a different Æthelsige who did not have a presence in the witness lists. See also Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 25.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns ²⁹⁷	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Æthelweard 1 ³⁰⁶	32?	Unknown		1 or 3	S 874 (Wooton St Lawrence, Hants, 15)
Æthelwine 1 ³⁰⁷	15	996 (S 877)	1013 (S 931)	3	S 848 (Clyff Pypard, Wilts, 10)
Æthelwold 1 ³⁰⁸	15	986 (S 862)	1012 (S 927)	4	S 865 (Manningford Abbots, Wilts, 10)
Brihtwold ³⁰⁹	25	980 (S 837)	999 (S 896)	2	
Eadric 1 (Streona) ³¹⁰	14	997 (S 890)	1007 (S 916), ealdorman	3	
Eadwine	5	1005 (S 911)		other	
Fræna ³¹¹	13	See Edgar's non-royal thegns?	1004 (S 906)	other	

³⁰⁶ Two or more thegns named Æthelweard attested Æthelred's charters. One seems to have been very prominent, attesting in the top three positions from 981-983. He may have been Ælfweard's brother (Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 183 n.107). There is then a period from 983 to 994 where the name occurs only very sporadically, normally in a low position. It was in these years that Æthelred granted S 874 to an Æthelweard. From 994-998 the name is once more regular and averaging between 12th and 6th position; another hiatus between 998-1002; then regular from 1002-1016 with a steady progression up to top thegn in 1016. These attestations are likely to represent several different individuals who were royal thegns at different times. It has been suggested that S 874 went to Æthelweard high-reeve of Hampshire who died in 1001 (Rumble, *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester*, XXV, p. 205) in which case the spate of attestations between 994-998 could represent this Æthelweard, with the hiatus from 998-1002 reflecting his death.

³⁰⁷ Potentially another of Eadric's brothers, or the ealdorman Æthelmær from whom an Æthelsige stole swine, outlined in S 886. A series of subscriptions for the name of Æthelwine seems to commence in 996 with a concentration between 1004 and 1013: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 212.

³⁰⁸ Father of one of the Æthelmærs who attested from the 990s on: Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 209, 212. See also note above for Æthelmær 2/3 in the present table.

³⁰⁹ Brihtwold may have been a kinsman of the king, based on the commemoration in the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, Winchester of a certain Eadgifu, called wife of Brihtwold *propinqui regis* (Keynes, *LV*, 95). Keynes has also highlighted the frequent association of Brihtwold's name with that of Æthelmær and Ordulf who were Æthelred's kinsmen (Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 188).

³¹⁰ According to John of Worcester, Eadric was the son of Æthelric and brother of Brihtric, Ælfric, Goda, Æthelwine, Æthelweard and Æthelmaer (*Chronicon*, a. 1008, pp. 460-1). Keynes accepts this as probably based in fact as all of these names do occur at some point in the lists for Æthelred's charters, and often in groups of two or three, which is how brothers and kinsmen tended to attest: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 212. Eadric was the future ealdorman of Mercia who, according to the Æthelredian chronicler, precipitated unmitigated military disaster upon the English armies.

³¹¹ This could be the individual 'Frena' who attested some of Edgar's final charters in a low position. The Fræna of Æthelred's reign was a prominent Danelaw thegn who acted as surety for purchase of estates for Peterborough abbey and witnessed two wills of the eastern shires: Hart, *ECNE*, p. 335. He could be the Fræna who deserted the English cause in 993. However, if so, it is remarkable that he faced no sanction as his name continues in a prominent position until 1004: see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 205-6.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns ²⁹⁷	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Godwine 2 ³¹²	15	996 (S 878)		other	S 902 (Little Haseley, Oxon, 10, in return for 30 mancuses of gold)
Leofric 1 ³¹³ (<i>hraeglthegn</i> S 914)	35?	Unknown		1	S 840 (Longstock, Hants, 3), 927 (Whitchurch, Oxon, 10)
Leofwine 1 ³¹⁴	32?	Unknown		1	
Ordulf ³¹⁵	52	See Edgar's non-royal thegns?	1005 (S 911), retired to Tavistock	2	

³¹² A Godwine attested some of Æthelred's early charters in a low position (Godwine 1). There was then a hiatus in this name's subscriptions for about ten years until 996, and from then until 1016 the name appeared in spurts, with another Godwine (Godwine 3) attesting S 902 and S 922. The attestations under 'Godwine 2' could have been that of one man, potentially a Danelaw thegn who received land in Oxfordshire (S 902), who was only at court for short periods, but who from 1009-1016 became quite prominent. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 131, notes there is a chance this Godwine was the son of Ealdorman Ælfheah (see also Williams, '*Princeps*', at pp. 171-2), who had owned property at Yarnton in Oxfordshire, which he exchanged before 1005 for land near Bicester and at Studley in Warwicks (S 911). On Godwine's family and their landed wealth see Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. clxxxv-xcii.

³¹³ The case of thegns named Leofric is another difficult one to untangle. The attestations listed under the heading 'Leofric 1' were probably not all from the same man, as the position of the name fluctuates in a way which would have been quite unnatural were it to represent a single individual. S 927 grants land to a Leofric which had been forfeited by another Leofric for fomenting rebellion amongst the king's soldiers on campaign. A thegn named Leofric of Whitchurch was killed in 1001 fighting with the Hampshire *fyrð* against the vikings – perhaps this was the same man: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 136. A Leofric attesting S 914 in 6th position held the office of *hraeglthegn*.

³¹⁴ The differentiation between Leofwines is particularly difficult. Edgar's royal thegn named Leofwine, whose career began in 965, was attesting around the 5th-7th position at the end of his reign. This is roughly the same position in which the prominent Leofwine of Æthelred's reign began in 980. A Leofwine (or more than one) continued to attest Æthelred's charters regularly however until the end of his reign, which rules out the possibility that the top Leofwine to appear in Æthelred's lists and Edgar's lists was one man. There is also ealdorman Leofwine to consider, who was promoted to that position in 994 (d. 1026) but who would probably have been a royal thegn beforehand. Some or all of the attestations by a Leofwine during Æthelred's reign must have been those of this future ealdorman, but it is impossible to establish where the attestations of one Leofwine end and those of another begin. A possible scenario might be that the career of Edgar's Leofwine ended in Edward the Martyr's reign, with a new prominent Leofwine beginning under Æthelred in 980 who was promoted to the position of ealdorman in 994. To complicate matters, two of the thegns named Leofwine who attest S 878 and 904, and the single Leofwine who attests S 899 and 905, may have been part of a group of Kentish thegns who attested when charters were drawn up in Canterbury (Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 132-4). It is impossible to know which Leofwine received S 858, though Kelly has posited that it may be the same man who was involved in a dispute over land at Hagourne, Berkshire (S 1454; Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 123). As will be shown in the analysis section below, S 858 was granted within what appears to have been a spurt of granting to non-leading men (c.983-986; see Table IX in appendix). This suggests that S 858 actually went to Leofwine 2, not the Leofwine whose first appearance was in 6th position in S 837.

³¹⁵ Æthelred's uncle who retired to Tavistock c. 1005 (see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 192, 109-10 and Hart, *ECNE*, p. 352). He may have been the Ordulf who attested Edgar's last surviving charter in third position, as his only attestation for that reign.

Name and any other titles apart from <i>minister</i>	Number of attestations in present reign	Year and charter marking start of attestations	Year and charter marking end of attestations (if in present reign)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns ²⁹⁷	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Sigeferth ³¹⁶	5	1005 (S 911)	1014 (S 933)	other	
Sigered ³¹⁷	9	995 (S 885)	1005 (S 911)	other	S 875 (Sibertswold, Kent, 2), 931a (Hatfield, Essex, 20), 931b (Horndon, Essex, 5)
Sigeward ³¹⁸	11	989 (S 877)	1005 (S 911)	other	
Ulfkytel ³¹⁹	17	1002 (S 900)	1016 (S 935)	other	
Wulfgeat 1 ³²⁰	35	986 (S 862)	1005 (S 912), deprived of property	2	
Wulfheah ³²¹	32	986 (S 862)	1005 (S 912), blinded	2	
Wulfric 1 (Spot) ³²²	43	980 (S 837)	1002 (S 905)	2	S 886 (Dumbleton, Gloucs, 2.5), 878 (Abbots Bromley, Staffs, 3)
Wulfsgie 1	24	980 (S 837)	988 (S 872)	1	

Table 33: Æthelred's royal thegns

³¹⁶ Brother of Morcar, both murdered in 1015, see *ASC* a.1015. He did not attest often, but when he did he was always in a prominent position. On him see Hart, *ECNE*, p. 357.

³¹⁷ Brother of royal thegn Sigeward, see relevant note in this table. Kelly, *St Augustine's Canterbury*, no. 30.

³¹⁸ Brother of Sigered, who almost always attests next to him. The note 'Siward and Sired his brother' occurs in S 1454 and 1456. These two thegns may be identified as Kentish: '*Sigeward in Cent*' occurs in the list of those present at the synod of London c.990 (S 877), where the forfeiture of Kentish estates was discussed. S 875 is a diploma granting land in Kent to the king's thegn Sigered. They also occur in a number of Kentish diplomas: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p.132-3. See also Hart, *ECNE*, pp. 358-9.

³¹⁹ An East-Anglian thegn who gave stout resistance to the Danes in 1004 and 1010, and was killed in 1016. He rose to lead the witness lists in 1014. John of Worcester called him ealdorman of East-Anglia (*Chronicon*, a. 1004, pp. 454-5) and the Danes reportedly called East-Anglia 'Ulfketelsland', suggesting he held effective power there without officially being ealdorman: Hart, *ECNE*, p. 363.

³²⁰ Named *dilectus minister* of the king in S 876. John claimed that Æthelred had loved Wulfgeat, Leofeca's son, almost more than anyone (*Chronicon*, a. 1006, p. 456-7). He probably had developed some sort of association with Wulfric Spot and Wulfheah, Wulfric's nephew (Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 188-9, 210-11).

³²¹ Son of ealdorman Ælfhelm, blinded in 1005: Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 189, 210-11.

³²² The prominent Mercian thegn and founder of Burton abbey. Hart, *ECNE*, p. 373; Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey', *passim*; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 189, 193; Insley, 'The family of Wulfric Spott'. S 879 was a fabricated charter with Wulfric as its beneficiary.

Non-royal thegns

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Ælfgar 4	3	
Ælfheah 1	1	S 852 (Osanlea, ?, 2)
Ælfheah 2	1	
Ælfhelm 2	4	S 900 (Codicote, Herts, in return for 152 mancuses of gold)
Ælfmaer	7	
Ælfnoth	2	S 844 (Westwuda, Wilts?, 2.5)
Ælfred (<i>amicus</i> , S 857)	-	S 857 (Michelmersh, Hants, 11)
Ælfsige 2	2	
Ælfsige 3	1	
Ælfweard 2	4	
Ælfwig	6	
Ælfwold	2	
Æthelgar	1	
Æthelmund	1	
Æthelred (<i>homo</i> , S 905)	-	S 905 (Canterbury, Kent, land and 6 agri outside the city, lease for beneficiary's life and in return for 7 pounds, reversion to Christ Church)
Æthelric 2	1	
Æthelsige 2	4	
Æthelstan	4	
Æthelweard 2	4	
Æthelwig (<i>miles</i> , S 883) ³²³	3	S 883 (Ardley, Oxon, 5)
Æthelwine 2	2	
Æthelwine 2	1	
Æthelwold 2	2	
Ascytel	1	
Ascytel 2	1	
Bondi	1	
Brihtthere	2	
Brihtmaer	4	
Brihtnoth	1	
Brihtric 2	2	S 855 (Leverton, Berks, 8)
Brihtric 3	1	
Brihtsige	4	
Ceolmund	1	
Ceolred	1	
Ceolric	1	
Clofig	-	S 898 (Arley, Warwicks, 25)
Eadmaer	1	
Eadric 2	3	

³²³ S 883 is for Æthelwig *miles*, but we know from the text of this charter, which granted him land forfeited by three brothers, that he was the reeve of Buckingham.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Eadric, Eadwig, Ealdred (brothers)	1	S 887 (Benson?, Oxon, 2)
Eadsige (<i>gerefa</i> in rubric of S 910)	-	S 910 (Seaton, Devon, 1, in return for 100 mancuses of gold)
Eadwold	1	
Elemod	-	S 923 (Hallam, Derbys, 21, in return for 21 pounds of gold)
Frythegist	2	
God	1	
Godwine	7	
Godwine 3	2	
Guthmund	1	
Kata	1	
Leofnoth	2	
Leofric 3	1	
Leofsig	5	
Leofstan 2	2	S 872 (Oving, Sussex 4 and 1 message in Chichester)
Leofsunu	1	
Leofwine 3	1	
Leofwine 4 (<i>venator</i> , S 867)	-	S 867 (Westwood, Wilts, 3 and 3 perticae in Farleigh, Somerset)
Lyfing	3	
Nafena	1	
Northman (<i>miles</i> , S 931) ³²⁴	2	S 873 (Myton, Warwicks, 3), 931 (Twywell, Northants, 3.5)
Odda	3	
Ordhelm	1	
Ordlaf	1	
Ordmaer	3	
Ordnoth	1	
Ordric	3	
Ordric 2	1	
Osulf	3	
Oswig	2	
Sigebriht	1	
Sigeric	1	
Sigeward	1	
Styrr	3	
Theodulf	1	
Theodulf ³²⁵ (<i>homo</i> , S 929)	-	S 929 (Burton Hastings?, Warwicks, 5)
Thurbrand	1	
Thurecytel	1	
Thureferth	4	

³²⁴ S 873 is spurious, its witness list providing the dating limits of 996x1002: Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 247-8.

³²⁵ Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 36, notes that the beneficiary's name was rare in England before the Conquest and that he does not attest any charters.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)
Toti	-	S 943 (Beckley, 1 and Horton, 5, both in Oxon, in return for a pound of silver)
Ulf	1	
Ulfcytel 2	1	
Wada	2	
Wenoth	-	S 862 (Littleton on Severn, Gloucs, 5)
Wihtsige	2	
Wither	2	
Wulfgar (S 897 (spurious) reveals Wulfgar as the king's <i>pincerna</i> ; homo, S 851)	7	S 851 (Drayton, 3 and Sutton, 1.5, both in Berks)
Wulfgeat 2	1	
Wulfmaer	5	
Wulfnoth	4	
Wulfric 2	3	
Wulfsige 2	6	
Wulfstan 1	4	
Wulfstan 2	3	
Wulfweard	4	
Wynnelm	3	

Table 34: Æthelred's non-royal thegns

Uncertain cases

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Ælfgar 3 ³²⁶ (<i>praepositus</i> , S 915)	6	S 915? (Waltham St Lawrence, Berks, 8, in return for 300 mancuses of gold)	other	Attested semi-regularly from 1002-1008
Ælfwine 1 ³²⁷ (<i>scriptor</i> , S 853)	11	S 853 (Brighthampton,	other	If the attestations of Ælfwine 1 all belonged to the

³²⁶ It is difficult to distinguish between Ælfgars in Æthelred's reign (see note accompanying Ælfgar in the royal thegns table (Table 33)). It seems likely to me however that this Ælfgar was not Ælfgar Meaw, and was distinct from the Ælfgar who witnessed S 915 in 15th place (Ælfgar 4), whilst also being distinct from the Ælfgar who was a prominent attester in the first third of Æthelred's reign and blinded in 993. Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 134, arrives at the same conclusion and Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 183-4, notes that there may have been two Ælfgar reeves at this time, for another Ælfgar reeve witnessed the settlement of a dispute over Berks lands which took place in 990x992 (S 1454). See also Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 135.

³²⁷ The importance of this charter as evidence for a royal *scriptor* was first emphasised by Stenton, *ASE*, p. 353. See also Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 135-138 on the role of *scriptor*.

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns	Reason(s) for uncertainty
		Aston Bampton, Lew, Oxon, 6)		same man, who may have perhaps also been the king's scribe, then he attests for the whole reign but often in relatively prominent positions.
Brihtric 1 ³²⁸	11		3	Attests semi-regularly from 997-1009
Goda ³²⁹	5		3	He attests very sporadically in the latter years of the reign but when he does, he is usually in the top 8.
Godric	8		other	Attested semi-regularly from 1002 to the end of the reign, and was clearly on an upward trajectory through the witness lists.
Leofric 2	8		1	Attests semi-regularly from 982-990
Leofstan	9		1	Attests semi-regularly from 983-990
Leofwine 2 ³³⁰	12	S 858 (Wootton, Berks, 10)	other	The instability of the subscriptions of Leofwine 1 creates a lack of confidence in identifying the subscriptions of Leofwine 2 as those of one individual

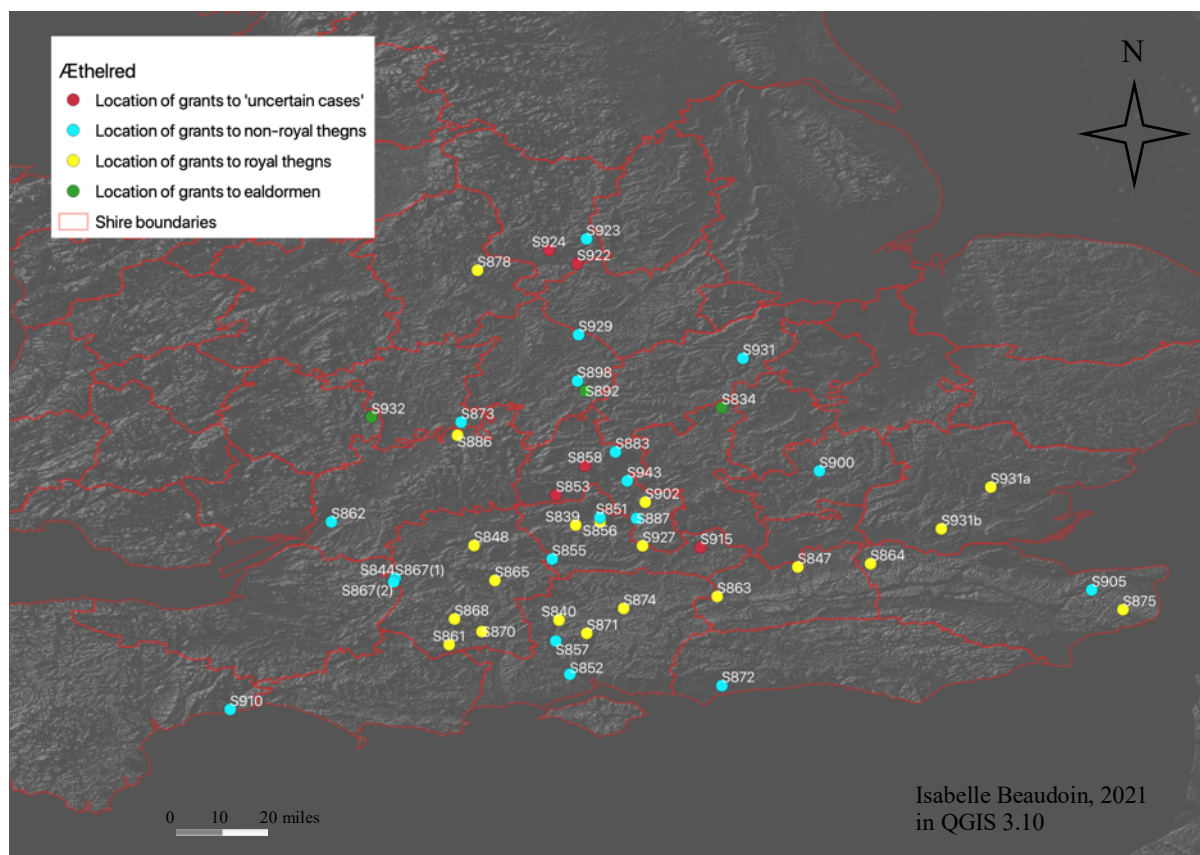
³²⁸ Potentially one of the brothers of Eadric Streona, and the individual who contributed to the ruination of the English fleet in 1009: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 216.

³²⁹ Potentially one of the brothers of Eadric Streona, see note above.

³³⁰ For the difficulties in distinguishing between Leofwines and an explanation as to why S 858 has been placed with this Leofwine, see the note for Leofwine 1 in Æthelred's table of royal thegns (Table 33).

Name	Number of attestations in present reign	Estate(s) received, location and size (hides)	Belongs to which 'group' of thegns	Reason(s) for uncertainty
Morcar ³³¹	5	S 922 (Various locations in Derbys, 12), 924 (Mickleover?, Derbys, 5), 928 (Eckington, Derbys, 2)	other	He did not attest often but seems to have been prominent, receiving three grants and attesting second in S 931 (1013).
Oswearð	7		1	Attests regularly 986-988

Table 35: Æthelred's uncertain cases



Map 6: Location of Æthelred's grants to thegns and ealdormen

³³¹ Morcar was brother to Sigferth, and closely related to Wulfric Spot, who left him a large territory in the north-east of Derbyshire and adjacent parts of Yorkshire. The Chronicle called them 'the chief thegns belonging to the Seven Boroughs', a. 1015 (see on them also Hart, *ECNE*, p. 347) and he was murdered along with his brother by Eadric Streona in 1015. The witness lists to S 922 and 924 seem to record very large assemblies, which may have been convened to deal with the crises of these years.

Patterns of attestation and promotion

The key analysis of the patterns of attestation in Æthelred's charters remains that of Simon Keynes, who identified the existence of several groups of thegns who were prominent in successive periods during the reign.³³² Compared to the patterns of thegns' attestations under previous kings, where the selection of royal thegns in the witness lists changed on a rolling, organic basis, the situation under Æthelred where *groups of ministri* made phased entrances and exits, was not normal. These were important observations which led Keynes to conclude, via their synchronisation with developments in the other categories of witnesses and the background of narrative sources, that it was Æthelred himself who was periodically manipulating the membership of the secular *witan* in order to reflect changes in who he favoured at given times.³³³ Yet it is possible to further strengthen the argument for the singularity of Æthelred's approach to the management of the secular membership of the *witan* by contextualising it within the career trajectories of Anglo-Saxon royal thegns more widely, which this chapter collects for the first time in one place.

For a reign of thirty-seven years one might expect, based on preceding trends, to see several thegns spending almost, if not their entire, career at Æthelred's court, particularly those who had been promoted in the last years of Edgar's reign and anytime during Æthelred's. For if one traces the careers of many of the most prominent royal thegns of the tenth century, it becomes clear not only that this position was normally achieved after extended service at court, regularly lasting over twenty years, but also that once attained it was usually maintained by that individual for a long time. Looking at the attestation patterns of royal thegns under

³³² Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 162-231

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

previous kings,³³⁴ and their entries in Tables 3 (Edward’s royal thegns), 8 (Æthelstan’s royal thegns), 12 (Edmund’s royal thegns), 17 (Eadred’s royal thegns), 22 (Eadwig’s royal thegns) and 27 (Edgar’s royal thegns), we may put together a selection ‘top thegns’ and the timespans of their careers:

Name	Floruit	Years spent in top three positions amongst lists of <i>ministri</i>	Total years active as thegn
Odda (beginning under Edward, Table 3)	a. 904-943	c. 909-942 in top three positions (17 years); 925-943 in top position (18 years)	39 years
Ælfsige 1 (beginning under Æthelstan, Table 8)	a. 931-956	c. 944-957 (13 years)	25 years
Æthelgeard (beginning under Æthelstan, Table 8)	a. 934-957	c. 951-7 (6 years)	23 years
Eadmund (beginning under Æthelstan, Table 8)	a. 929-949	c.939-949 (10 years) with 949-963 as ealdorman	20 years
Wulfric Cufing (beginning under Æthelstan, Table 8)	a. 931-960	c. 944-956 (12 years)	29 years
Byrhtferth (beginning under Eadred, Table 17)	a. 949-970	c. 950-970 (20 years)	21 years
Ælfsige 1 (beginning under Edgar, Table 27)	a. 958-995	c. 971-995 (24 years)	37 years
Ælfweard (beginning under Edgar, Table 27)	a. 956-986	c. 972-986 (14 years)	30 years
Æthelweard (beginning under Edgar, Table 27)	a. 957-975	c. 964-975 (11 years) with 975-998 as ealdorman	18 years

Table 36: Selection of royal tenth-century thegns and the timespans of their careers

³³⁴ See tables III-VII in the appendix.

Based on this sample, the average amount of time a thegn could expect to maintain his ascendancy at the head of witness lists under tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings was about thirteen years. The situation under Æthelred appears in stark contrast to these long and stable careers. Ælfgar began attesting under Edward the Martyr, but by 993 he had been blinded, spending only five years as a prominent thegn.³³⁵ Æthelsige, who began in 979 but was only regular in witness lists from 983, spent 988-994 in the top positions before being potentially disgraced, spending six years as a prominent thegn.³³⁶ Wulfsige started in 980 and ended in 998, spending only three years at the top.³³⁷ Of the second group of thegns preeminent at court, Æthelmaer and Ordulf were the only ones whose careers approached respectable lengths by earlier tenth-century standards.³³⁸ Æthelmær spent 993-1005 in the top positions, after having risen quite quickly, with Ordulf being in a similar position. Brihtwold, Wulfheah and Wulfgeat however, spent only three, eight and three years respectively in the top three positions before disappearing, being blinded or being disgraced.³³⁹ In the last third of his reign Æthelred promoted Eadric Streona very rapidly: he appeared in the lists in 1001 and by 1005 was in top position, being made ealdorman in 1007.³⁴⁰ Æthelweard, Ælfgar Mæw and Godwine 2 all rose to top positions within the last ten years of the reign. In no other reign were so many short careers concentrated. Moreover Æthelred's 'palace revolutions', which occurred most dramatically in the 990s and 1005,³⁴¹ meant that the careers of thegns which had begun in his reign were suddenly and unnaturally truncated, arguably many years earlier than they would have been under normal circumstances. Thus, not only is Æthelred's reign interesting for, as

³³⁵ *ASC* a. 993.

³³⁶ Æthelsige was one of the thegns accused by Æthelred of giving him bad counsel. See Stafford, 'Political ideas', at p. 75 and Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 179, 184-6.

³³⁷ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 184.

³³⁸ On the attestations of these two see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 188-93.

³³⁹ On Brihtwold see Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 188. For further discussion of the blinding of Wulfheah and Ufegeat see below, pp. 345-8.

³⁴⁰ On the rapid ascent of Eadric see Baxter, *Earls*, pp. 21-3 and Stafford, 'Reign of Æthelred', at p. 33; and Insley, 'Politics, conflict', at pp. 31-2.

³⁴¹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 183-4, 209-13; Roach, *Æthelred the Unready*, pp. 200-212.

Keynes noted, the successive way in which groups of thegns enjoyed pre-eminence, but also for what these changeovers imply about the artificial ways in which the king was manipulating the membership of the *witan* as compared to the examples set by his predecessors. Not even Eadwig, traditionally accused of irresponsible rule, can be seen to so boldly upset the status quo of *witan* membership and dynamics.³⁴²

The careers of ealdormen under Æthelred were, by contrast, for the most part long and stable, with the banishments of Ælfric of Mercia and Leofsig of Essex constituting the only evidence of royal termination of the office of ealdorman.³⁴³ Even considering this, there is not nearly as much evidence for Æthelred punishing ealdormen or otherwise manipulating the membership of this group as there is for his royal thegns.³⁴⁴ Æthelred promoted seven new ealdormen over the years (Eadwine, Æthelmær, Ælfric Cild, Ælfhelm, Leofwine, Eadric Streona and Æthelmær (son of Æthelweard)), all of whom can be seen attesting as royal thegns either under him, Edward or Edgar with varying degrees of regularity and prominence. Yet of these individuals only Ælfric Cild, Eadric and Æthelmaer son of Æthelweard were among the top three thegns at court before they were appointed ealdormen.³⁴⁵

Land-granting patterns

Æthelred seems to have been comparatively parsimonious with land, even more so than Edgar. Proportionally fewer royal thegns received grants from him than from any of his predecessors,

³⁴² Æthelred's management of the secular membership of his *witan* will be discussed in Chapter Three below. For comments on Eadwig's rule see Section F above.

³⁴³ *ASC* a. 985, 1002.

³⁴⁴ This will be discussed in detail below in Section E of Chapter 3.

³⁴⁵ Æthelred does however seem to have been somewhat reluctant to appoint new ealdormen when those holding office died. Eadwine, Æthelwine and Leofsig were appointed no successors, whilst several years stood between the appointment of successors to Ælfric (banished 985, succeeded by Eadric in 1007) and Æthelweard (d. c.998, succeeded by Æthelmær c.1012). This policy has received comment from Keynes (*Diplomas*, p. 197, n.163), Stafford, 'The reign', at p. 29; and Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 182, 190.

particularly in the case of those individuals who enjoyed pre-eminence in the first seven or so years of the reign. There is no evidence for Ælfweard, Ælfric, Wulfsige, Ælfsige, Brihtwold, Wulfric, Ælfric 2, and Ælfhelm, all very active in these years, receiving grants from the king. In the context of the situation under Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig and to a lesser but still relevant extent Edgar, this is unusual. Of the group of thegns who were active in the middle of Æthelred's reign, the same may be said for Ordulf, Wulfgeat, and Wulfheah.

Concerning the years of Æthelred's 'youthful indiscretions', i.e. c.984-993, Keynes has remarked that 'it seems likely that laymen would have been primarily responsible for leading the king astray, since they appear to have been the principle beneficiaries of his indiscretions',³⁴⁶ citing both Æthelred's claims against individuals and the pronounced emphasis on laymen as beneficiaries of royal diplomas between 984-990.³⁴⁷ Whilst both of these points are valid, it is important to acknowledge that there exists evidence for only a very few grants of land to royal thegns in this period.³⁴⁸ By the parameters of Keynes' argument, those who were most active at court would have had the most influence on the king and on his appropriation of church lands,³⁴⁹ but it does not seem to have been these men – apart from Ælfgar, Æthelsige 2 and Æthelmaer – who benefitted in the form of bookland. The majority of bookland granted by the king in these years went to thegns who probably were not prominent members of the king's *witan* – or at least were not yet so, such as Ælfwine *scriptor*, who was probably a member of the royal household but seems to attest barely any charters; Brihtric 2, Ælfheah 1, Ælfred, Æthelric, Wenoþ and Northman.³⁵⁰ This suggests that whilst laymen might indeed have benefitted from Æthelred's 'youthful indiscretions' in the 980s to early 990s, that these individuals were not necessarily or even predominantly royal thegns. This potentially

³⁴⁶ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 192.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-181.

³⁴⁸ S 871 to Æthelmaer, S 864 and 863 to Æthelsige, S 861 and 868 to Ælfgar.

³⁴⁹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 192.

³⁵⁰ See these entries in Table 34.

qualifies our understanding of Æthelred's objectives in appropriating church lands during these years, and of his relationship with the royal thegns whom he blames for counselling him to do so. It was probably not as simple as Æthelred having been influenced by the 'abhorrent greed' of his leading secular advisors to appropriate lands for their benefit.³⁵¹ It may be that this policy originated with Æthelred as an effort to enrich himself whilst breaking away from the influence of his mother and the legacy of Æthelwold.³⁵² Whilst some of the royal thegns may have benefited, such as Ælfric, Ælfgar and Æthelsige, most of the lands stayed in the king's possession³⁵³ or may have been distributed to thegns fulfilling services for the king in localities such as reeves, or members of his household who were not habitually witnesses to charters.³⁵⁴

Whether these church lands were actually redistributed to Æthelred's leading advisors or retained by the king, it seems that by the time of the grand assembly in Winchester in 993 (recorded in S 876) the king's advisors were being blamed for what had happened in the 980s, with Æthelred and the church becoming a united front on this issue.³⁵⁵ Over the next decade or so, there was a marked decrease in the number of diplomas granted in favour of laymen and a no less marked increase in the number granted to religious houses.³⁵⁶ Yet an important aspect of Æthelred's diplomas in these years has gone unremarked. From about 996 to 1006, a period overlapping almost perfectly with the years in which Æthelred sought to mend his relationship with the church, the few grants that were made to laymen were not at any point offered to individuals who might be considered royal thegns. In 996, S 878 was issued to Wulfric Spot,

³⁵¹ As claimed by the king in S 876.

³⁵² On the influence of Ælfthryth and Æthelwold over the young Æthelred see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 174-5. On Æthelred's potential motivations to free himself from this influence c. 984, see Roach, 'A tale of two charters', at p. 235.

³⁵³ A similar, possible explanation was put forward by Keynes relative to the lack of surviving charters for the last fifteen years of Edward the Elder's reign: Keynes, 'Edward, king of the Anglo-Saxons', at p. 56.

³⁵⁴ S 910 (1005), S 918 (1007), S 883 (995) were all in favour of reeves; Wulfgar *pincerna* received S 851 in 983; Ælfwine *scriptor* in 984.

³⁵⁵ On the accusations against Æthelred's councillors in previous years see Stafford, 'Political ideas', at pp. 75-6. On the penitential nature of this and other charters in the 990s see Stafford, 'The reign of Æthelred' and Roach, 'A tale of two charters'.

³⁵⁶ Keynes *Diplomas*, pp. 98, 198-9.

and was the last estate to go to an individual with a prominent presence at court until the issue of S 922 in 1009 to Morcar, who attested very sporadically in these years but in a prominent position.³⁵⁷ From 996 to 1006, evidence survives for the following grants to laymen: S 887, 898, 900, 905, 902, 910, 943, and 915.³⁵⁸ Each one of these beneficiaries had little to no presence at court. The change in emphasis is striking compared to the period from 979 to 996, which saw a more normal distribution of grants amongst royal and non-royal thegns as compared to previous reigns. Furthermore, from 1002 to 1011 almost all thegns who received land seemed to have paid for it.³⁵⁹ S 902 (1002) for Godwine 2 *minister*, S 900 (1002) for Ælfred 2 *minister*, S 905 (1002) for Æthelred *homo*, S 910 (1005) for Eadsige *gerefa*, S 915 (1007) for Ælfgar *praepositus*, S 923 (1011) for Elemod *minister*, and S 943 (unknown date, but probably 1005x1007) for Toti *minister*, are all the diplomas from Æthelred's reign to laymen which specify that the land was granted in exchange for payment, and they are all in favour of non-royal thegns.

This implies the following scenario. From c. 993, Æthelred sought to distance himself from his legacy of church spoliation, reflected in the sharp increase in the number of grants he made to religious houses in the mid to late 990s, and a sharp decrease in those made to laymen. When the king did grant land to laymen in these years however it was exclusively to individuals who were not royal thegns and who probably did not have much presence in the *witan*. Then, from 1002 to 1011, perhaps reflecting the crown's need for money in the face of the enormous tribute payments to the Danes in these years,³⁶⁰ Æthelred began requiring these men to pay for

³⁵⁷ The final decade of Æthelred's reign saw shorter witness lists and much more sporadic attestations than had been the norm for the rest of his reign and for the reigns of his predecessors. The individuals who were 'royal thegns' at this point must be decided based upon how prominent their attestations are even if they only attest a few times.

³⁵⁸ S 902 in 1002 went to Godwine 2, who went on to become a semi-regular attester in prominent positions after 1006, but was in 1002 still quite low down in the witness lists. Keynes' *Atlas* has S 915 going to Ælfgar Meaw, but it probably went to another Ælfgar, perhaps Ælfgar *praepositus*, instead – see the relevant note for Ælfgar Meaw in Æthelred's table of royal thegns (Table 33) and for Ælfgar 3 *praepositus* in Æthelred's table of 'uncertain cases' (Table 35).

³⁵⁹ On the sale of land in this period more broadly see Campbell, 'The sale of land'.

³⁶⁰ Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 109 n.73 and pp. 202-3.

their lands. The period in which no lands were granted to royal thegns overlaps again almost perfectly with the years in which Æthelred had at court his ‘second group’ of thegns, namely Æthelmaer, Ordulf, Brihtwold, Wulfgeat, Wulfheah and Wulfric.³⁶¹ None of these thegns received lands from 996 to 1006, and the only ones to receive land at all from Æthelred even outside this timeframe were Æthelmaer and Wulfric, but this was pre-996. It is extremely irregular for no evidence to survive for the receipt of land from the king by royal thegns for such a long period.

In 1007 however, Æthelred conducted a volte-face and began treating preferentially the thegns who were prominent participators at court over those who were not. Of the surviving nine grants to laymen made in these final nine years, three were to individuals who were not active at court (S 915, 923, 929), two of which are recorded as being paid for by these men (S 915 and 923). The other six were to men who had at that time or some time previously been prominent at court: S 922, 924 and 928 to Morcar; S 927 potentially to the Leofric who had been prominent earlier in the reign; S 931a and 931b to Sigereð, who had also been prominent previously; and S 931 to Northman who attested third in the lists in one of Æthelred’s final charters.³⁶² None of the beneficiaries of these six charters were recorded as paying for their lands. Whilst this period saw no further (surviving) mentions of payments to the Danes, it also coincided with the period in which Æthelred’s senior advisors had retired or had been exiled or blinded, and which was governed by the ascendancy of Eadric Streona. Moreover, the only individuals for whom payment for land was recorded in Æthelred’s reign were non-royal thegns, but the significance of this is muddled by the fact that the string of grants to non-royal thegns which were made in exchange for payment occur over a period of time in which no grants were issued to royal thegns, making it difficult to establish what intent lay behind this

³⁶¹ This shift outlined by Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 186-8.

³⁶² S 935. This charter ought however to be treated with caution as elements of the witness list might not be compatible with 1016 exactly, but still are compatible with the closing years of the reign: see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 267-8.

policy. It does however seem clear that Æthelred made some serious and quite abrupt changes to the reward schemes available to his followers, with discrimination against royal thegns in particular happening from the mid 990s to 1006.

In terms of where Æthelred granted land to royal thegns and non-royal thegns, a familiar pattern emerges. There was a much greater proportion of land being given out in the West-Saxon heartlands to royal thegns than to non-royal thegns. These grants were also often larger than those received by individuals who were not regulars at court.³⁶³ The great majority of lands granted to thegns with little or no presence at court were for estates in peripheral shires, or in the midlands.³⁶⁴ As under previous kings, a large number of the non-royal thegns who received land from Æthelred were individuals for whom no evidence exists of any participation at court other than as beneficiaries.³⁶⁵ This leads once again to the conclusion, expounded previously, that such grants were made in order to reward and reflect the service of individuals who were of local importance and probably engaged in some type of service to the king in that capacity.

Æthelred's land granting practices to ealdormen seem to have been governed by the same trend which was present in the reigns of his predecessors. Over his thirty-seven years of rule, we have evidence for only three grants to ealdormen, all of which went to ealdormen in Mercia (Ælfhere and Leofwine),³⁶⁶ but none of which were demonstrably within the jurisdictions of these ealdormen. Ælfhere received land in Buckinghamshire (S 834), which was a disputed area between himself and Æthelwine, ealdorman of East-Anglia, whose sphere of authority had traditionally included the shires of the south-eastern Midlands (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire).³⁶⁷ Leofwine, ealdorman of the Hwicce region received his grants in

³⁶³ Compare the size of estates generally granted to royal and non-royal thegns in Tables 33 and 34.

³⁶⁴ See for example the grants made to thegns such as Ælfhelm 2, Æthelred, Æthelwig, etc in Table 34 and the locations of grants made to non-royal thegns versus royal thegns in Map 6.

³⁶⁵ Thegns such as Ælfred, Æthelred, Eadsige, Elemod, Leofwine 4, etc in Table 34.

³⁶⁶ S 834, 892, 932.

³⁶⁷ Williams, *Princeps*, at pp. 161-6.

Warwickshire and Herefordshire, areas potentially under Ælfhere's jurisdiction³⁶⁸ – though it should be noted that this may equally indicate that Leofwine's ealdordom included these shires.³⁶⁹

The use and meaning of titles in Æthelred's charters

As argued in the previous analysis sections, the titles used in grants to designate their lay beneficiaries ought to be seen as reflecting the particular ways in which the beneficiary executed the role of royal official at that time. In Æthelred's reign, like in Edgar's, royal thegns were rewarded mostly in this specific capacity (i.e. as *minister*) and do not seem to have been rewarded for qualifying their roles in the capacities of *vassalli*, *homini*, or other designations.³⁷⁰ As was the case under Edgar, designations other than *minister* (*amicus*, *homo*, *miles*, *venator*, *praepositus*, *scriptor*) were applied primarily to non-royal thegns. This once more gives the impression that these terms were normally used to connote the type of service undertaken by individuals who did not have a significant political presence, and that when these men (i.e. non-royal thegns) were rewarded, it was often in these capacities, with smaller estates in more peripheral areas.

As for the matter of reward for individuals of the royal household, there is once more evidence to point to the reward of this role if undertaken by an individual who was not a prominent thegn. The individuals for whom evidence exists of holding positions in the royal household under Æthelred are the following: Æthelmaer I (attests as *discifer* in S 914); Leofric (attests as *hraeglthegn* in S 914); Leofwine (beneficiary of S 867 as *venator*); Wulfgar (who is

³⁶⁸ S 892, 932. *Ibid.*, at p. 165.

³⁶⁹ See further Keynes, *Diplomas*, 196-7, 255; Baxter, *Earls*, 17-28.

³⁷⁰ Though there is an example of the royal thegn Æthelmaer, most prominent of Æthelred's thegns from 994 to 1005, being rewarded in the capacity of *miles* in 988 (S 914).

mentioned as the king's *pincerna* in S 897);³⁷¹ and Ælfwine 1 (beneficiary of S 853 as *scriptor*).³⁷² The two individuals who held these positions whilst probably being royal thegns, Æthelmaer and Leofric, did not receive land in this capacity; but Leofwine and Ælfwine, who based upon records of attestation do not seem to have been royal thegns, received their grants in their capacities as members of the royal household. Wulfgar received S 851 as the king's *homo*, but we learn later from S 897 that he may have in fact been the king's *pincerna* at this time,³⁷³ which suggests that the term *homo* may sometimes have concealed the beneficiary's role as a member of the royal household who did not participate in court in the capacity of a witness to charters.

In other words, the position, and thus type of service, to which attention was being drawn when royal thegns received land was normally that of a politically active thegn in constant attendance of the king's council, and it was normally for service in this capacity that they were being rewarded. A member of the king's household was not always active in the *witan*, as we saw in the case of Titstan, Winstan and potentially Sigestan under Edgar, and Ælfwine, Leofwine and Wulfgar under Æthelred, and normally when they were rewarded it was with smaller grants. This suggests that they were being rewarded for their service in their capacity as members of the royal household, but not as leading royal thegns. Such observations of patterns in the deployment of these titles, both within Æthelred's reign and across the tenth-century, and when attached to the names of witnesses *and* beneficiaries, suggest that their presence in charters was deliberate and significant. This qualifies Keynes' assertion that 'the use of these titles would thus have depended on particular draftsmen deciding at random to be

³⁷¹ Though this diploma should be treated with caution: Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 130.

³⁷² The draftsman of S 853 recorded that four *disciferi* and four *pincernae* attested, though their names were not given.

³⁷³ S 897 contains the statement about the estate being granted, '*sicut Wulfgarus meus uidelicet pincerna obtinuit*', referring to when it was granted to Wulfgar in 983 (S 851). Both Kelly and Keynes however note this charter as spurious (Kelly, *Abingdon*, no. 130; Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 114, n. 99).

more specific', and that the *ministri* who headed the lists of thegns in diplomas of the tenth and eleventh centuries were necessarily commensurate with members of the royal household.³⁷⁴

Evidence for two charters of Edmund Ironside remain (S 948 (as ætheling) and 947 (as king)), but neither of these recorded any witnesses, and neither were to laymen. It is thus not possible to comment upon Edmund's land granting practices to laymen, and indeed one wonders at how he had the time to issue any charters at all.

³⁷⁴ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 160. It is salutary to note another instance where an implicit challenge to Keynes' position has been articulated. Pauline Stafford, when discussing the witness list of S 891 in which the jurisdictions of attesting ealdormen were quoted beside them, interpreted this as stressing how far these ealdormen spoke relative to the subject of the meeting ('Political ideas', at p. 75). The assumption implicit in this idea is that the style attached to individuals participating in charters was an indicator that there was some aspect of these individuals' identity, status or position which was tied to the particular context of the charter in which their names appeared, whether the tone or ambition of the meeting at which it was issued, the land it granted, etc. This is the concept that has been developed over the analysis sections of this chapter, but in the context of the groups of thegns attesting royal charters.

Conclusions

This chapter began by identifying a royal behaviour which is closely tied to the concept of loyalty to the king: the granting of bookland via charter to lay followers. As noted in the introduction, historians frequently treat this link as directly causal, stating that late Anglo-Saxon kings gave lands to their followers in order to secure their loyalty. Yet in the context of the lack of research into how land was used by kings relative to the issue of loyalty, the ultimate effect of this assertion, although it may be true in general sense, is to obscure the matter. The implications behind it are that kings granted land essentially randomly to their men, that this was a static practice over time and context, and that both land and loyalty were assigned universal values in this equation. Thus, pointing out that kings alienated land to these men does not on its own go very far in answering our overarching questions of how kings approached the issue of the loyalty of their lay *witan* and what their surviving actions, policies and behaviours might represent relative to this issue. Even a cursory glance at royal diplomas against their witness lists reveals that land was not granted evenly or equally amongst the ranks of even kings' most powerful lay advisors, let alone amongst all of the men for whom records exist of having been in the service of kings. If it were as simple as kings strategizing that gifts of land got them loyalty, why did all the individuals upon whom the king most relied not receive the most land? Assuming that kings granted land in ways that optimised the loyalty of beneficiaries and the other laymen in the *witan* whilst still retaining enough landed wealth to sustain themselves and their royal interests, it is the strategy and principles behind how the land was granted, rather than the fact of the land being granted in and of itself, that really answers the overarching question. Only through this more precise handling of the topic, and the parallel opportunities it presents for the analysis of kings' management of the dynamics of their secular *witan*, can we arrive at meaningful conclusions about how loyalty was incentivised by kings.

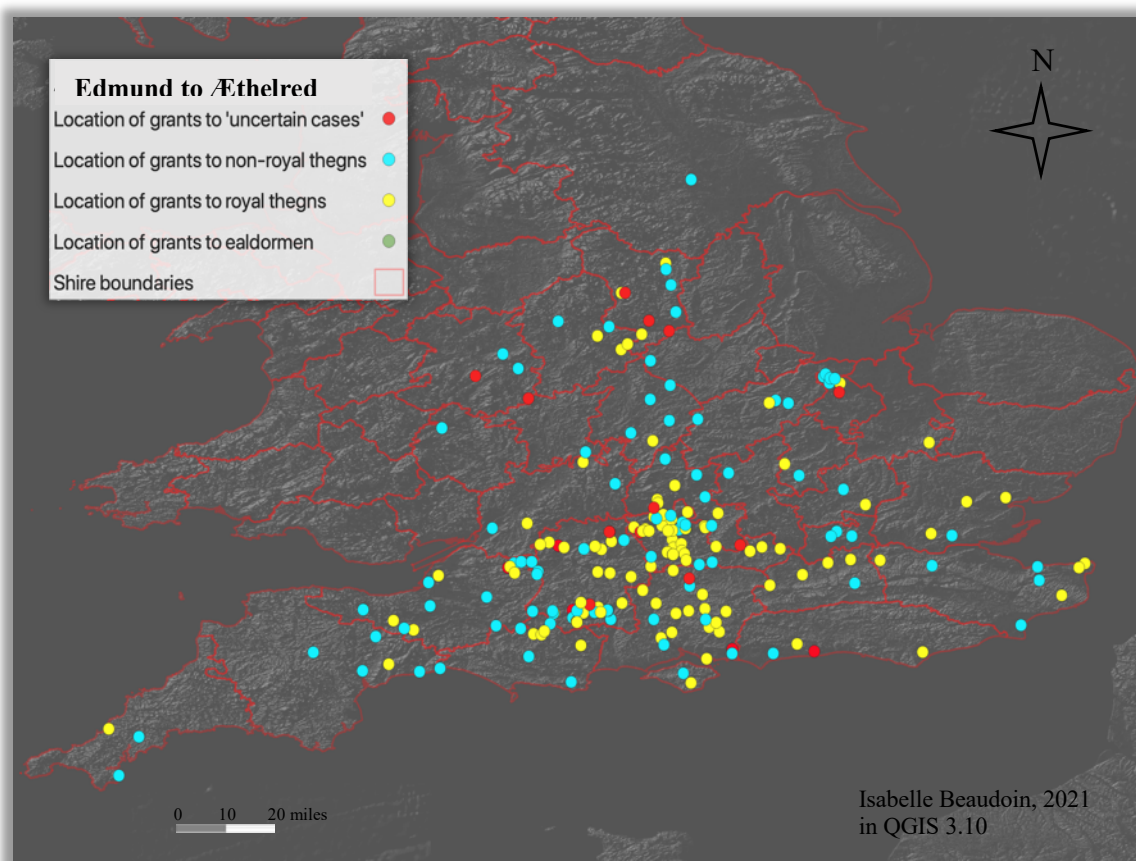
The above tables, maps and discussions for the ten kings who ruled from 871 to 1016, together with the tables of attestations for each king in the appendices, demonstrate that there were systems and conventions in place which dictated how kings rewarded their lay followers, and help us to understand how members of the king's *witan* in particular were rewarded. The pairing of certain estates with certain laymen was not random, nor were the considerations behind them so individualised or turbid that it is rendered futile to search for the overarching principles guiding this custom. Although the categorisation of thegns into royal and non-royal groups devised in this chapter is not perfect, and the corpus of charters from which it stems is not complete, this methodology and its application over so many reigns still allows us to arrive at some important conclusions.

The 'preferential convention'

The first conclusion is that kings Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig, Edgar and Æthelred conformed, with some level of individualisation, to what will be termed a 'preferential convention' with respect to lands in the West-Saxon heartlands, and with respect to the number of grants in favour of a given individual. According to the categorisation of thegns above, those who have been deemed 'royal thegns', (i.e. thegns who were regular participants as witnesses to charters and therefore probably also assemblies, and thus had a demonstrable role in the *witan* and as political agents of the kingdom), have an overwhelmingly higher instance of grants for lands in certain areas of north-Wiltshire, west-Berkshire or Hampshire than do 'non-royal thegns' (i.e. those who had little to no detectable presence in the administrative and political operations of the kingdom).

Royal thegns also received on average much larger grants in these areas than did the non-royal thegns in other areas. Though rare, there were cases of non-royal thegns who

received lands in the heartlands of Berkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire, but in the majority of cases these were conspicuously smaller than those received by royal thegns in these areas. Even as far back as in Alfred's reign, we may be able to see some preferential conventions at play, for the only laymen to receive land apparently without either having to pay for it or hold it on lease were the those holding the office of ealdorman. Not only were lands granted preferentially in a geographic sense, but royal thegns were also much more likely to receive repeated grants than non-royal thegns. Their basis of reward was continuous, whereas that for non-royal thegns seems to have been more discrete. For an idea of the cumulative effect of this preferential granting over the reigns of Edmund to Æthelred, see Map 7.



Map 7: Location royal grants to thegns and ealdormen in the reigns of kings Edmund to Æthelred

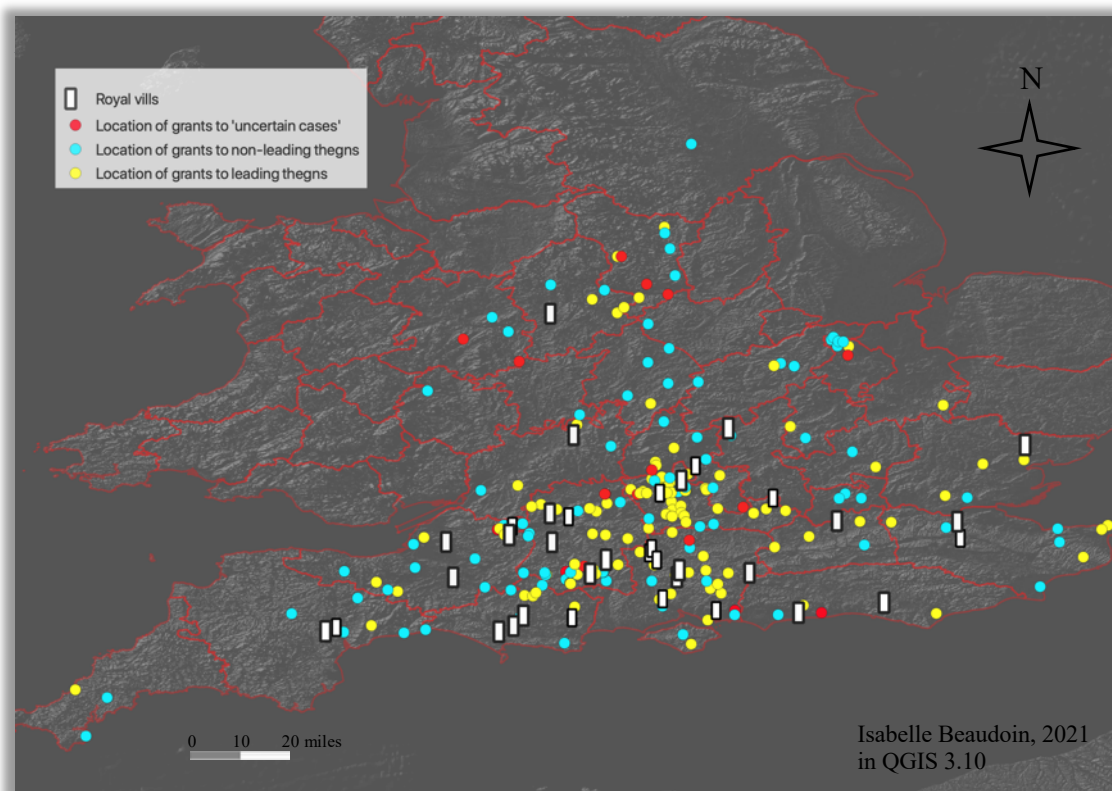
This implies the existence of a system whereby some aspect of the granting of land, whether the price, size, location, or frequency of the gift, was a function of the type and extent of the beneficiary's participation at court and/or service to the king. This could reflect one of two possible scenarios. The first, that royal thegns tended to originate from these areas, and that the distribution of their estates from kings over time reflected their actual origins. According to this scenario, the preferential convention would not really be preferential at all, simply expedient based upon existing conditions. There are some obvious objections to be made against this interpretation. Of course, it is likely that some of the beneficiaries of kings' grants over the years in the heartlands had their origins there, but this seems unlikely to have applied to all of them. Additionally, there is the matter of the multiple individuals who received several estates in different areas, properties which were sometimes at quite a remove from one another. An individual thegn could not originate from two places at once, and thus one or more of the estates in his favour would have been granted on account of his interest in lands in that area, whether or not he already lived nearby or had other estates in the vicinity. Examples of thegns in this situation include but are not limited to Ælfheah 1 under Edmund, who had an estate in Somerset (S 475) and Berkshire (S 494), and Eadric 1 for land in Gloucestershire (S 467), Wiltshire (S 478), and Berkshire (S 491); Wulfric Cufing, who over the reigns of Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig was granted lands in Cornwall, Berkshire, Hampshire and Wilthire; Wulfsige Maur, granted land in Staffordshire (S 479) and in Derbyshire (S 484 or 1606) by Edmund; Æthelgeard, who over the reigns of Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig amassed estates ranging over Hampshire (S 417, 463, 488, 598) and Berkshire (S 523, 641); Ælfstan, who received two estates in Kent from Edmund (S 512, 497) and one in Essex from Eadred (S 522a); Wulfric brother of Dunstan, who held a great number of estates across Wiltshire, Surrey, Dorset and Berkshire; Ælfsige 1 under Eadwig, from whom he received an estate in Berkshire (S 591) and in Northamptonshire (S 592); Ælfhelm under Edgar, from whom he received lands

in Derbyshire (S 739), Oxforshire (S 771), Cambridgeshire (S 794) and Hertfordshire (S 794a); and so on.

The fact that so many royal thegns received estates from the king in the heartlands was no coincidence, nor could it have reflected a situation whereby thegns simply received the royal lands to which they were naturally most proximate. This brings us to the second possible explanation for these trends: that diplomas for land in these areas were being issued preferentially and strategically on the basis of a consideration which was common to most of their beneficiaries. The consideration that I chose to explore in this chapter was that of participation at court and therefore by extention probably of status, because that was the consideration which was most accessible based upon surviving evidence (i.e. charters and witness lists). There is sufficient evidence in the investigations above to prove beyond doubt that participation at court as a prominent thegn (what I have deemed as constituting being a ‘royal thegn’) was the common denominator uniting the vast majority of individuals who received lands particularly in west-Berkshire, but also in central Hampshire and north-Wiltshire, and thus that these individuals were being rewarded for their service to the king in a special way. To put it simply, thegns who were prominent members of the *witan* had a different reward scheme available to them, and kings used that system deliberately. It was thus this system behind the institution of land granting, rather than strictly the land granting itself, which was utilised by kings to incentivise service to themselves. These special rewards made service more attractive to the king by fulfilling symbolic and perhaps practical functions. By setting aside rewards which were probably more or less ‘intended’, so to speak, for royal thegns, the king was making this particular type of service exclusive, and was encouraging further dedicated and long-term service from his thegns by making them feel adequately remunerated. By creating somewhat permeable but still overall very recognisable geographic segregation, kings created and propagated a system whereby the receipt of land in the West-Saxon

heartlands could be used as social capital by the beneficiary, as a way of broadcasting and securing their status and prestige relative to their peers.

Finally, by granting lands in the heartlands to the most active political thegns, kings may have aimed to incentivise their continued service in a practical sense. These estates would often be proximate to the location of the majority of royal villis, reducing the distance royal thegns would have to travel to get to the meetings of the *witan* and reducing the amount of time and trouble it would take to respond to the king's summons. These estates would moreover have been coveted also because due to their proximity to the royal perambulations, they gave settings for official contact with rulers.³⁷⁵ Map 8 shows the distribution of royal villis relative to the distribution of estates c.924x1016 granted to royal and non-royal thegns.



Map 8: The distribution of royal villis relative to the distribution of estates c.924x1016 granted to royal and non-royal thegns.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Airlie discusses this in the context of patronage under Louis the Pious: *Making*, p. 142.

³⁷⁶ Data from Sawyer, 'The royal *tun*'.

The preferential convention was not absolute, and in each reign there exist exceptions, namely royal thegns who received estates for lands in more peripheral shires such as Somerset, Dorset, Cornwall, Kent, Essex, the midlands, etc, and non-royal thegns who received lands in the heartlands, i.e. north-Wiltshire, west-Berkshire and Hampshire. These can be explained loosely through the potential existence of a few secondary conventions. Perhaps due to the special nature of their service, royal thegns were given more of a choice about the areas in which they wished their estates to lie. The option was open to them to receive a grant for land in the heartlands, or perhaps in an area more proximate to their original powerbase or kin group, which might account for the times when royal thegns received lands in peripheral southern shires or when Mercian thegns received lands in the midlands. As for the non-royal thegns who received lands in the heartlands, possibly these individuals can be identified as members of the royal household, ones who were not politically prominent and whose specific titles were not mentioned. We saw above in the case of Wulfgar *pincerna* under Æthelred that this individual was referred to only as *homo* in the grant he received (S 851 for small estates in Berkshire), which raises the possibility that some of the grants to ‘non-royal thegns’ for estates in the heartlands were in fact grants to members of the royal household who were not political entities but still deserved rewarding.

Corroborating this theory is that in almost all the cases where individuals who were styled as members of the royal household can be seen to not have a significant political presence as witnesses to charters, they were the beneficiaries of very small estates in the heartlands. Ælfsige the king’s goldsmith, referred to as *homo* in S 522 and 543 for small estates in Wiltshire, for whom no evidence of attestation exists; Æthelsige 1 *pincerna* under Eadwig who received S 604 in Hampshire for five hides, for whom only four attestations exist; Wulfric *venator* who received S 637 for one and a half hides in Wiltshire, for whom one attestation exists; Cyneric *propincernarius* who was granted S 651 for two hides in Berkshire, for whom

evidence of only three attestations exists; and the (probable) brothers Titstan and Winstan, *cubicularii* and *camerarii* under Edgar, who received estates between three and five hides in Wiltshire (S 706, 719, 789) and neither of whom leave behind evidence of attestation.

The 'earning convention'

The second important conclusion is one that has not been touched upon in the discussions above since it is best broached when one can view the careers of individual thegns (and all the estates they received) in their full spans, which often encompassed the death and accession of more than one king. This conclusion will be termed the 'earning convention'. When it came to royal thegns, land was almost never granted in anticipation of service, instead being granted after the individual had executed this role for at least a few years. By looking at the tables in the appendices which record the attestations of individual thegns in royal charters from 871 to 1016, one is able to deduce the career arcs of royal thegns.³⁷⁷ In the vast majority of cases royal thegns never began their time at court with a grant of land. In all the tables of attestation, royal grants (marked by green boxes) were in the majority of cases only made to laymen who had already for several years been prominent participants as charter witnesses. Men such as Ælfheah 1, Wulfgar 1, Ælfric 1 and Wihtgar under Æthelstan; Wulfric 1 (Cufing), Ælfsige 1, Ælfheah 1 and Ælfstan 1 under Edmund; Eadmund and Wulfric 2 (brother of Dunstan) under Eadred; Ælfred 1, Æthelwold, and Wulfstan under Eadwig; Ælfwine, Wulfhelm, Æthelsige, Eadric 1, and Ælfsige 1 under Edgar; and Ælfgar, Leofwine, Ælfwine *scriptor*, Æthelmaer, Æthelwold and Godwine 2 under Æthelred to name a few. All of these individuals had at the

³⁷⁷ A lot of information key to ascertaining where the careers of individuals with the same name start and finish is also contained in the footnotes to the individual entries for these thegns in the successive tables of royal thegns found above.

very least two, and often many more, attestations to show before evidence exists of their receipt of lands from any king.

By contrast, those thegns whose first (surviving) appearance at court was as the beneficiary of a grant almost never went on to become prominent members of the court. This has ramifications for our understanding of how the reward system operated, for gifts of land were clearly not made by kings to royal thegns in anticipation of service in this capacity. Not even Eadwig used land to inaugurate relationships with royal thegns. He did indeed sometimes accelerate the rate at which royal thegns received land under him,³⁷⁸ with individuals such as Ælfwine, Eadric and Æthelwold attesting very little before they received land(s), but he still broadly conformed to the earning convention. All of this suggests that at the time of their introduction to court, i.e. their first recorded attestation, royal thegns were perhaps already on some sort of career trajectory in which it was understood that their role was to attend upon the king regularly, and after having done this for some time, they would be rewarded; but men whose introduction to court was as beneficiary to a grant were executing a role (or occupying a social station) which meant that they had not been, nor would they be in the future, required to be politically active. There was therefore a transparent and consistent system to which all kings in this period conformed whereby royal thegns knew they could expect to receive land for their service, that this land would be of a special type reserved for their type of service, and that they would likely continue to be rewarded the longer they served.

The 'capacity convention'

The third conclusion will be termed the 'capacity convention', referring to the impressions given by the usage of styles for lay beneficiaries in the period's charters. As seen above in the

³⁷⁸ Discussed above in the notes to Eadwig's thegns.

tables, more specific styles than *minister* such as *vassallus*, *homo*, *miles*, *amicus*, *karus* etc could be attached to both royal and non-royal thegns as well as to uncertain cases, but were used most of the time to describe individuals who had little to no recorded political presence, i.e. non-royal thegns. However, the application of the same designation to multiple individuals was not accompanied by a common size or location of grant. Additionally, individuals could be styled in more than one way in different charters or even in the same charter. This leads to the conclusion that styles were used to designate the capacity in which the individual was receiving the grant at hand, but that the extent and type of reward was fundamentally a function of whether the individual was fulfilling the role of royal thegn in the capacity of a *vassallus*, *homo*, *miles*, etc, or whether they were not a royal thegn whilst acting in this capacity. Moreover, when a style was used to designate the lay beneficiary of a grant, it was probably intended to signal the manner in which the individual had carried out their service to the king. Whilst it happened that royal thegns executed their service to the king in the manner of a *vassallus*, *homo*, *miles* etc, this designation was most often reserved for individuals who did not have a political presence. This in turn suggests that if the beneficiary was not a royal thegn, it may have been required to specify what the individual had done in order to receive something so valuable.

Conversely, across the period, kings' relationships with their ealdormen were not infused by gifts or confirmation of bookland in the same way as were their relationships with their royal thegns. The natural assumption following from this is that bookland was not granted as often in reality, with land instead being primarily loaned to ealdormen, which in turn leads one to suspect that the king sought to control the further enrichment of individuals who were already quite powerful, both in terms of social prestige and in terms of resources at their disposal. The key here is to recognise that loyalty was incentivised differently by kings across different functional and social positions, and that royal grants of land in particular did not

always have a common significance in kings' strategies to generate loyalty to themselves, and loyal service.

Promotion and stability in the witan

The fourth and final conclusion is that the prospect of promotion was probably held out to thegns as a soft-factor reward incentive by all the kings examined above. The final objectives of such promotion were at most the potential elevation to an ealdormanry, or at least to occupy the position at the head of the group of thegns attesting charters, a position which once attained was normally held for the rest of the individual's life. As noted by David Pratt, it has long been recognised that many West-Saxon ealdormen might be detected in charters previously as thegns, 'yet the implications of this career route remain largely unexplored'.³⁷⁹ The findings of this chapter help to bridge this gap in our understanding. The position of ealdorman was certainly not always achieved by merit or longstanding service alone. A great many thegns who spent decades in the service of Anglo-Saxon kings did not become ealdormen, and this is of course partly due to the fact that one could only become ealdorman when the man already in that position had died (or been banished), and indeed even when such a thing happened there was no guarantee that the ruling king would replace the ealdorman right away.³⁸⁰ But even when these positions became vacant, they often did not go to the thegns who were heading the groups of *ministri* at the time. Of the men promoted to the position of ealdorman by kings from Alfred to Æthelred, only a small number were demonstrably attesting in the top two or three positions amongst thegns beforehald (Eadmund, Wulfgar, Ælfheah, Æthelweard, Ælfric Cild,

³⁷⁹ Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 32. For commentary on this career route see Chadwick, *Studies*, pp. 295-6; Loyn, *Governance*, pp. 47-8; and Abels, *Alfred*, pp. 270-2.

³⁸⁰ See for example Æthelred's apparent reluctance to appoint ealdormen: Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', at p. 84 and Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 197 n.163.

and Eadric Streona). The others are all either men who did not have a presence in witness lists before their first appearance as ealdormen (without exception, these are all ealdormen of Mercia or the Danelaw) or men who do appear amongst the lists of thegns but who were drawn from the lower ranks of these lists up to the position of ealdorman. This might indicate that those who were promoted from lower positions were either in prominent kin groups, or were potentially from more far-flung places like Mercia and thus did not appear as very prominent on paper (i.e. based on their patterns of attestation) whilst in fact being quite powerful in their own right. Sigferth and Morcar are examples of how the attestation patterns of individuals who attest rarely but in relatively prominent positions, or relatively often but in lower positions, can be explained. The Chronicle tells us that the brothers were ‘the chief thegns of the seven boroughs’,³⁸¹ and so as powerful thegns who were from distant lands they may not have been able to attest charters as frequently, but when they did, their status was respected.

Whilst it appears that steady service got one into the high positions amongst thegns, it did not necessarily get one an ealdormanry. This would further support the notion that parallel arrangements, or parallel reward schemes, existed for ealdormen compared to thegns, because there seem to have been parallel arrangements amongst *ministri* between those to whom the position of ealdorman was available for whatever reason, and those to whom it was not. The prospect of advancement to the position of ealdorman even from a lacklustre pedigree was still probably present, though slight, and Eadmund, Wulfgar and Eadric Streona may constitute examples of ealdormen who did not belong to particularly illustrious families, as any kinship ties to previous or contemporary ealdormen are unknown, yet each worked their way up to the top of witness lists before being promoted to ealdorman.

Generalisations are sometimes made by historians about royal favour. Ann Williams, for example, with reference to Æthelred’s potential sanction of Sigferth and Morcar’s murder,

³⁸¹ *ASC* a. 1015.

stated that ‘access to the king’s court could bring wealth and power, but loss of his favour could spell disaster’.³⁸² Such statements reaffirm the need for research such as that in the present chapter in several ways. First, Æthelred’s reign was an aberration in terms of the king’s manner of relating to his secular nobles, and cannot be taken as a starting point for sweeping statements about the nature of court dynamics over the period. Second, as has been demonstrated above, thegns under Kings Alfred through to Edgar did not often ‘lose favour’. They were almost always on a relatively linear upward trajectory, with room being made at the top periodically by the natural endings of careers through death, and these deaths were not normally caused by kings. This probably means that late Anglo-Saxon kings had close bonds with their secular subordinates which were, until Æthelred’s reign, rarely violated, and that a culture of predictability and trust was cultivated at their courts. The promise of enduring royal favour and prestige relative to one’s fellow thegns was probably held out by kings as a reward incentive in its own right.

The potential influence of monastic landholding on the preferential convention

Any conclusions based upon the analysis of the distribution of landbooks must be cautious due to the huge influence of the major monastic houses, and the areas over which their interests extended, on the survival rate of charters.³⁸³ We are only seeing part of the picture, and it is possible for example that the patterns observed above do not in fact reflect strategic granting by kings, and instead simply the estates in which monastic houses had the greatest interest, thus allowing the charters granting them to survive. Yet if this were the case one would expect predominantly large estates, or for example perhaps only estates appurtenant to manors owned

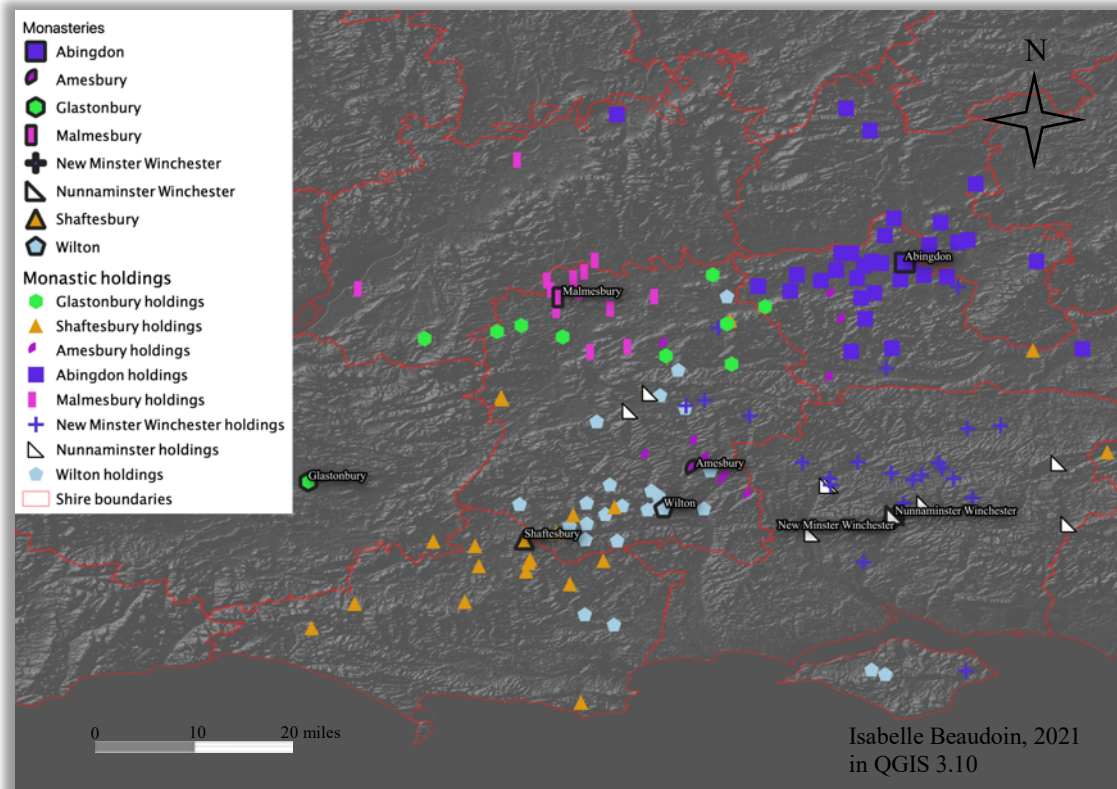
³⁸² Williams, *The World Before Domesday*, p. 10.

³⁸³ For a recent discussion of this issue with useful references see Insley, ‘Looking for charters that aren’t there’.

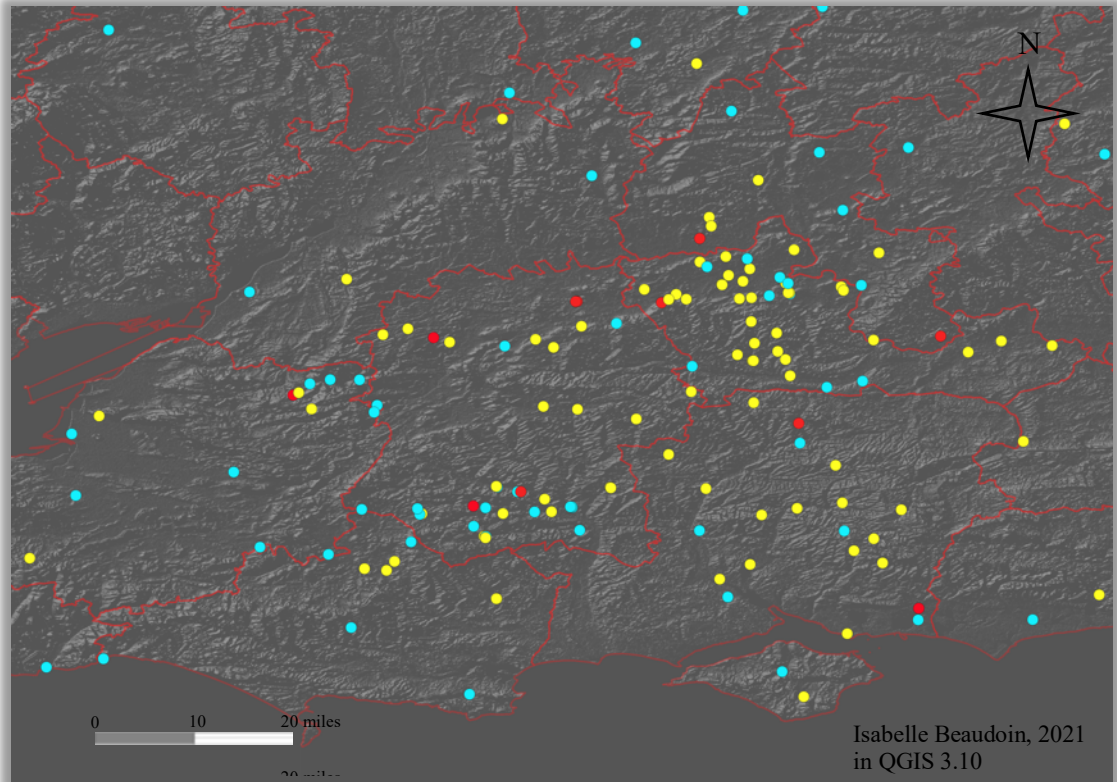
by monastic houses, to survive. Equally, if the distribution of estates to ealdormen, royal thegns and non-royal thegns was originally much more even than the picture which survives today, then one would expect that evenness to still be visible in those areas in which monastic houses had interest. I.e., one would expect the swathe of surviving grants to laymen in west-Berkshire and parts of Oxfordshire, which overlapped with Abingdon's area of interest, or the band of surviving grants to laymen across the south of Wiltshire, overlapping with Shaftesbury's area of interest, to include an even distribution of grants to ealdormen, royal and non-royal thegns proportional to the relative number of grants made by kings to those groups.³⁸⁴ Yet we do not. There were some areas where records survive of land being predominantly, over the years, granted to some types of men over others, and vice versa in others. If one adopts the maximalist view of the influence of monastic houses over the patterns of charter survival, this would have needed to mean that some religious houses were only interested in preserving small grants to non-royal thegns and ealdormen (e.g., Shaftesbury and Glastonbury), and others grants to royal thegns (e.g., Abingdon and Winchester).³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴ See Maps 9 and 10.

³⁸⁵ See maps 9 and 10 for comparison of the landholdings of major monastic houses in 1086 and the patterns of lay landholding over the period. Map 9's data comes from the Open Domesday project, <https://opendomesday.org/>, accessed June 1 and 2 2020. The only moment at which we can be sure about what monasteries owned is in 1066. Manifestly this is much later than much of the period under discussion. I am not assuming that all these lands were in hands of monasteries in the 930s through to the early eleventh century, but the picture rendered by Domesday holdings at least does us the service of showing which general areas contained clusters of ecclesiastic landholding. On the pitfalls of projecting post-conquest evidence of ecclesiastical landholding onto earlier periods see Dumville, 'Ecclesiastical lands'. NB not all of Glastonbury's estates are shown in this figure, only those relevant to the general areas in question, i.e., around the densest areas of lay landholding.



Map 9: Monastic landholdings in the royal heartlands



Map 10: Lay landholdings in the royal heartlands

This seems unlikely, which suggests that the preferential, earning and capacity conventions observed above do, to a significant though not undiluted extent, represent the reality of royal disposition of estates to laymen in those areas. There is of course also the possibility that the areas of north-Wiltshire, West-Berkshire and Hampshire which contained a high concentration of grants to royal thegns were not the only areas in which this was the case, but that due to the patterns of survival of charters, this wider picture is now invisible to us. It is thus important to qualify the above findings with the statement that, in the context of the surviving evidence, the exceptionalism of these regions with respect to concentrations of royal thegns' landholdings is suggested, but not certain. The theory that some areas were primarily characterised by landholdings of individuals of a certain type of relationship to the king, however, still stands.

Where does all of this leave us with respect to the aim of the thesis? Fundamentally, we want to establish the roles played by kings relative to creation of the loyalty of the lay elite, and what strategies were devised to that end, and what fundamental principles lay behind these. Through the analysis of charter evidence, this chapter has demonstrated how kings granted land and dispensed social capital to laymen, and by extension how they probably incentivised loyalty to themselves. The patterns driving the dispensation of these rewards suggests that they were dictated specifically by considerations for the capture of behavioural elements (not just related to warfare³⁸⁶) of the loyal mentality which was so lauded and sought after in this period. These conventions included the personalisation of reward, the consistency of such rewards to the thegns (who were not ealdormen) who engaged in the most politically and administratively valuable roles, the granting of land with particular social capital to these men, and the consistency in thegns' and ealdormen's holding of favour and eminence at court. Together,

³⁸⁶ The thegn's receipt of land for executing military service for the king is often focused on by historians when discussing the status of thegns: see for example Stenton, *English Feudalism*, pp. 118-22; *idem*, *ASE*, p. 853; Abels, 'Bookland and *fyrð* service', at p. 2.

these would have encouraged a constancy of service, a personal dedication to the king, and trust. Moreover the heightened responsibilities of service as a royal thegn were rewarded proportionately, but it was not just these men to whom bookland was available as a reward. Social hierarchies were respected and reinforced, and the opportunity was available to move up the ranks of thegns over careers whose trajectories and histories were by-and-large respected by succeeding kings, and to perhaps attain an ealdormanry.

As a valuable commodity, land would have been desired by everyone, but the fact that kings did not seem to rely upon it leaves us with questions about how royal strategies of incentivisation were supplemented. Moreover, kings dispensed incentives in ways that suggest these had to be earned. Not everyone received bookland. Ealdormen almost never did. Even royal thegns normally needed to have demonstrated their loyalty through consistency of service for several years before they were rewarded in this way. Non-royal thegns did not often receive land, and when they did it seems to have been because they were engaged in a particular type of service for the king for which they were rewarded once. This high demand to low supply would probably have encouraged these less prominent thegns to constantly seek to better perform their roles, or to find new ways of serving the king.

In an influential article, Pauline Stafford claimed that the ‘spate’ of Æthelred’s grants to laymen in the 980s could be explained as symptomatic of kings ‘laying the foundations of their rule by securing loyal followers’, with reference specifically to this alleged pattern in the early charters of Eadred, Eadwig and Edgar.³⁸⁷ But such statements reinforce the need for research that allows for the contextualisation, at a high resolution, of observed trends within the entire breadth of royal land-granting practices to laymen in this period. For as this chapter demonstrates, land was by and large not a bribe given by kings to their men so that they would be loyal, and there is no evidence that more land was, as a rule, granted to laymen at the start

³⁸⁷ Stafford, ‘The reign’, at p. 26.

of reigns than at the end of them. In order to make meaningful observations about the policies by which kings granted land, and thus the significance of land in relation to the issue of loyalty, one cannot, as did Stafford, rely upon simple comparisons between how much land was granted to laymen and monastic houses at a given time. The whole picture of land granting policies to laymen must be taken into account – across time, historical context, and beneficiaries' individual situations. Bookland was granted strategically and along time-honoured conventions to men who behaved in certain ways and occupied certain positions, which meant that royal thegns entered into the service of kings trusting they would eventually be granted their reward(s), non-royal thegns executed their duties in the hopes they might, and all were aware of what opportunities were available to them. If kings did not rely upon incentive in order to achieve loyalty, if it was a finite resource, and if many laymen, and particularly members of the *witan*, actually spent so much of their careers *not* receiving land but still interacting with and serving the king, we are left with a missing link between the existence of loyalty and how the king worked to achieve it. This link must surely be found in the analysis of kings' actions towards, and management of their relationships with, these men.

3. Action: Cultivating Loyalty

Introduction

Two main conclusions have by this point been established. In Chapter One, I showed that most English kings in this period did not believe their royalty entitled them to the personal dedication of their leading secular men. In Chapter Two, it was demonstrated that – whilst there is significant evidence that kings granted land to laymen strategically, in ways reflective of the role performed by the beneficiary and their status, in order to incentivise a loyal mentality and reinforce socio-political hierarchies – the prospect of material reward could not have formed the cornerstone of kings' approaches to the issue of the lay elite's loyalty. Thus, at each turn, when asking the thesis' overarching questions about the king's role in the creation of the secular elite's loyalty, we are pushed in the direction of the king's behaviour towards his men as the key to the matter. What strategies did kings develop and employ in ruling these men? How did they manage these relationships? What were kings expected to contribute? What general principles lay behind these approaches, if any?

The aim of this chapter is thus to establish what extant evidence of kings' management of their relationships with their leading men (other than the granting of bookland) implies about royal approaches to maintaining the loyalty of this group. It thus also seeks to establish the significance of surviving evidence of kings' actions and behaviours to the issue of loyalty, and to demonstrate the extent to which the matter of the leading men's loyalty can be seen to have influenced the king's actions. What space did it take up in royal policy? As outlined in the introduction, one of the main problems in ascertaining this is the lack of statements, either from kings themselves or by the authors or compilers of relevant sources describing royal behaviour, explicitly linking royal action to the intent to affect loyalty. This chapter is thus centred around identifying and discussing royal behaviours or policies which have the strong *potential* to have

been undertaken by kings with the concept of loyalty at least partially in mind. In order for a behaviour to be considered, it needs to be at least one of the following: an action directed by the king at leading men or a leading man; or an action whose consequence can be conceived or seen to have had an effect upon the leading men or upon the king's relationship with them. Essentially, the question will be approached from the oblique angles of identifying potential actions which would have consisted efforts to strengthen the king's authority over his magnates, whether benignly or through the application of pressure. What, moreover, characterises the policies that would have had the effect of increasing laymen's loyalty to the king, or conversely his authority over them?

As in Chapter Two, the ten kings who reigned in this period are examined chronologically, but separated into subsections based upon commonalities either in their strategies or in their circumstances (or both, as these are frequently connected). This chapter offers completely new interpretations of the significance of surviving material for each king. Based upon these discrete, reign-based observations, the chapter further makes inferences about the presence, development and application of certain overarching principles when it came to kings' treatment of their leading men, such as leadership of the *fyrd*, the development of personal relationships, the establishment of communities of interest, and the persuasion of this group of the value in offering the king their active loyalty.

Discussion of royal policy, 871-1016

a. Alfred: Two Old English translations and the creation of a community of interest

Over the latter part of his reign Alfred instigated a programme of literacy aimed at the re-education of the West-Saxon elite which took most tangible form in the translation of several Latin classics into Old English, now known as the ‘Alfredian Canon’. The constitution of this group has been a matter of debate, but is now understood to consist of the Old English translations of Gregory the Great’s *Regula Pastoralis*, Boethius’ *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, and Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, whilst Alfred’s ‘unfinished’ psalm translation has been identified with the fifty prose psalms of the Paris Psalter.¹ Here we are concerned primarily with the Old English Boethius and the *Soliloquies*, since their often substantial interpolations to the original texts contain extensive treatment of kingship, lordship and their concomitant themes. The *Pastoral Care*, a much more faithful translation, contains far less discussion of these topics and thus only features briefly.² The debate about the authorship of

¹ The canon has included variously Orosius’ *Historiarum Adversum Paganos*, Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and an *Enchiridion*. Some of the problems in identifying the texts involved come from conflicting contemporary, near-contemporary and post-Conquest information. Asser, for example, mentioned the king’s avid interest in reading and his programme of literacy (*VA*, e.g. chapters 76, 78, 88, 89) but did not mention the translations. Ælfric wrote in general terms of the books translated by Alfred, but specified only the Old-English Bede (*CH I*, p. 174 and *CH II*, p. 72). Æthelweard claimed Alfred translated ‘unknown numbers of books’ from Latin, but mentioned only Boethius’ *Consolatione* specifically (*Chronicon*, p. 51). See also *GR*, II, p. 122. The authorship of the Old English Bede was discussed by Whitelock, ‘The Old English Bede’. The Old-English Orosius was removed from the canon on the basis of a series of linguistic analyses by Bately: ‘King Alfred and the Old English Orosius’; *The Old English Orosius*, pp. xcii-iii. Bately has also been a proponent of the inclusion of the fifty psalms on the basis of linguistic analyses: ‘Lexical evidence’.

² I am following general consensus in accepting a common translator for the *Soliloquies*, the Boethius and the *Pastoral Care*. On the linguistic evidence linking these see Bately, ‘Alfred as author and translator’; *idem*, ‘Lexical evidence’. See also *Soliloquies*, pp. 29-39; Clement, ‘The production’; Treschow, Gill and Swartz, ‘King Alfred’s scholarly writings’; Szarmach, ‘Augustine’s *Soliloquia*’, at pp. 232-233; and *OE Boethius*, I, pp. 135-136.

Alfred himself is ultimately unresolvable and of little consequence to this enquiry, but the issue of Alfred's supervision and direction of the translations' content is of central importance.³ The following discussion is a demonstration of the translations' relevance to royal conceptions of loyalty: the significance attached by the translator to the dynamic joining kings to their leading men is unmistakable in its royal perspective. It also demonstrates the extent to which concerns over loyalty may have governed the shape taken by wider royal policies, and provides one of the more unequivocal examples of the methods employed by a king to encourage loyalty, and of the principles upon which he based these.

A significant number of the interpolations in the Old-English Boethius and *Soliloquies* are preoccupied with the interactions of lords with their men, a conspectus of which is contained in this discussion. It is striking that a great many of these interpolations are concerned with the dynamic of this relationship, and its modulation by the concept of reward. A scene is for example inserted by the translator in the *Soliloquies* where an administrative reality of a thegn's position is recast for metaphorical purposes as symbolic of the bond between a lord and subject. After Augustine has told Reason that he is more likely to believe in something he can see than in God, who is unfamiliar to him except by hearsay, Reason responds with:

‘Consider how, if your lord’s letter and seal came to you, whether you could say that you could not recognise him by this means, and you could not thereby know his intention. If then you say that you can recognise his intention, say next which seems better to you: that you follow his intention, or that you follow the wealth which he previously gave you in addition to his friendship.’⁴

³ The most vocal challenge to the authenticity of the canon and to the notion even of Alfred's involvement has come from Malcolm Godden. See for example ‘The player-king’; ‘Did King Alfred write anything?’; ‘King and counsellor in the Alfredian Boethius’; and ‘Stories from Alfred's court’. Arguing against him are primarily David Pratt and Janet Bately: Pratt, ‘Persuasion and invention’; *idem*, ‘Problems of authorship’; Bately, ‘The Alfredian canon revisited’; and *idem*, ‘Did King Alfred actually translate anything?’.

⁴ *Soliloquies*, p. 62; Trans. *KL*, p. 141.

In this way, the letter and seal are focused on by the Old-English translator as representative of the intangible aspects of the lord's will and friendship, which ought to be trusted and followed in and of itself irrespective of whether it is accompanied by visible evidence, i.e. material reward.

This theme continues in an expanded form in the Old-English Boethius, where the text contains several interpolations which show the translator as particularly interested in distinguishing between different types of loyalty, and motivations for loyalty, via the theme of 'friendship' [*freondscype*]. True 'friendship' is, for instance, described as that which involves no wish for self-advancement:

'[...] Now loyal friends, I say, are the most precious of all these worldly felicities [...] for every other thing in this world is sought because one can come to power through it [...] apart from the true friend. He is loved sometimes for love and for loyalty, though no other rewards may be expected from him. Nature joins and unites friends together with strong inseparable love, but with these worldly felicities and with his present wealth one more often makes an enemy than a friend.'⁵

The value of a relationship in which a 'friend' is loved for the sake of his love and his loyalty, and no other reward, is thus established, involving a clear contrast with those who simply flatter, and with 'enemies' who, it is implied, are acquired through wealth. The relationship between enemies and wealth is further clarified in another passage of the Old English text, where Boethius is made to alter the sense of the original Latin passage's focus on the dangers of friends made via good fortune to the following:

'What good does a multitude of friends do to any man? The friends who love him previously for prosperity depart again with prosperity and become enemies, apart from the few who loved

⁵ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 24, p. 291, trans. II, p. 35. This attention to 'worldly felicities' is part of the wider theme in the *Consolatione* condemning the instability of 'worldly blessings'; for discussion of this theme in the Alfredian translation see Pratt, *Political Thought*, pp. 280-7.

him before out of love and loyalty. Those would love him though he were poor; those remain with him.⁶

This passage outlines a preference for relationships entered into ‘out of love and loyalty’. The alternative bond, driven by ambition and specifically by material desire, brings enemies, presumably because they will leave their ‘friend’ when his prosperity runs its course. This is clarified when Wisdom expounds on the value of adversity, since although it robs one of ‘precious treasure’, it allows one to distinguish between false and loyal friends, which is ‘the most precious treasure of all’.⁷ The translator was someone who had cause to worry about the unstable nature of a relationship built upon the draw of reward.

There are several factors which encourage us to consider the Old-English Boethian ‘friendship’ as in fact denoting hierarchical bonds between the king and his followers. The terms used by Boethius in the *De Consolatione* to denote this, *amicitia* and *amicus*, in the classical tradition defined men of equal social status who chose to enter into a friendship based on common virtues or aims.⁸ Under the Carolingians however, it had come to gain political connotations implying patronage and difference in status, for *amicitia* was often desired for the purpose of winning the protection of more powerful individuals in dispute settlements.⁹ It could also be used by kings to forge cooperative bonds with their nobles to stabilise their rule, such as when Charles the Bald in 843 entered into a relationship of *amicitia* with his nobles.¹⁰ Julia Barrow has highlighted similar uses of the word between kings and the archbishops of Canterbury in the eighth and tenth centuries.¹¹ Asser used the word *amicitia* to describe the

⁶ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 29, p. 303, trans. II pp. 43-44. The original Latin passage can be found in *Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, III, pr. 5.12-4.

⁷ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 21, p. 285, trans. II, p. 31.

⁸ The Lewis and Short *Latin Dictionary*, under ‘friendship’, notes: ‘very freq. in Cic., occurring more than 200 times’, p. 105.

⁹ See for example the case in a. 926 discussed by Martindale, ‘His special friend’, esp. pp. 30-1 on the value of an *amicus*. See also White, ‘Feuding and peace-making’, at pp. 236, 241, 252-3.

¹⁰ MGH Cap. Vol. II, no. 254, p. 253ff. For a discussion of *amicitia* in the early and later Carolingian periods, see Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 66-80.

¹¹ Barrow, ‘Friends and friendship’.

hierarchical relationship between himself and Alfred, whilst Einhard, whom Asser read, described how Charlemagne ‘increased the glory of his empire by establishing friendship [*amicitia*] alliances with many kings and peoples’.¹²

It is against these semantic shifts that we should understand the Old English translation of the term *amicitia* in the Boethius and the *Soliloquies*. In the passages discussed above, the translator used a wider variety of terms than did the Latin texts: *freond*, *freondscype* and *geferræden*.¹³ All of these words have attested uses in legal or hierarchical contexts, particularly *freondscype*.¹⁴ This association is also made explicit in the Old-English Boethius when *freondscype* is used to describe the relationship between a ruler and someone who seeks their patronage.¹⁵ The word is also used once in the Old-English *Soliloquies* to describe the relationship between Augustine and his lord.¹⁶ We are thus safe in our interpretation of friendship in the Boethius’ interpolations as describing the relationship between king and follower. Correspondingly, we have a pivotal attestation in the Old-English Boethius of ninth-century Anglo-Saxon differentiation between types of faithfulness to the king.

This differentiation is echoed by a passage in the *Soliloquies*. In the above-mentioned exchange featuring the lord’s letter and seal, Reason asks whether Augustine would ‘follow his lord’s intention, or follow the wealth which he previously gave to him in addition to his friendship’. Augustine replies, ‘It seems to me better to renounce the gift and follow the giver, who acts for me as the steward both of the wealth and of his friendship – unless I can have both. I should like, however, to have the wealth and also to follow his intention.’¹⁷ Following

¹² *VA*, c. 79, p. 66, and between Alfred and the Welsh, c. 80, p. 67; also c. 81, p. 67; Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, ed. Holdeer-Egger, c. 16, p. 19; on Asser and Einhard see Campbell, ‘Asser’s *Life*’, *passim*.

¹³ On these terms and their definitions see Nicole Discenza in her discussion of friendship in the Old-English Boethius in *The King’s English*, pp. 77-78.

¹⁴ See their entries in the DOE, esp. *freondscype* (1.b.ii).

¹⁵ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 24, p. 291, trans. II, p. 35.

¹⁶ *Soliloquies*, I, p. 63.

¹⁷ *Soliloquies*, p. 62.

one's lord even if this meant renouncing more immediate reward is then paralleled with giving up worldly goods in favour of the eternal life offered by God.

The shrewdness of Augustine's response pushes the Old-English translator's discussion of loyalty into the realm of realism rather than idealism; he acknowledges that these motivations coexist, but implies that the sense of duty to one's lord, just like faith in God, should take priority over one's desire for the immediate benefits conferred by this relationship. There are clear echoes of this in the Old-English Boethius, when the translator adds the following exchange: Wisdom asks, 'Do you now think that the king's fellowship and wealth and power that he gives his favourites can make any man wealthy and powerful?' Moð then answers, 'Why could they not? What is pleasanter and better in this present life than serving the king and being close to him, and after that the wealth and power?'¹⁸

It is salutary to note that neither translation denies that material reward is an important aspect of how a leader collects and maintains followers: see for example the passage in the *Soliloquies* when Augustine explains that he rejected wealth at nineteen. The Latin outlines that he kept only what he needed in order to live, but the Old English adds 'and to support and keep the people that I ought to support'.¹⁹ One is reminded strongly of the famous passage in the Old-English Boethius where Moð says in the voice of a king that, 'I wished for tools and resources for the task that I was commanded to accomplish, which was that I should virtuously and worthily guide and direct the authority which was entrusted to me [...] in the case of the king, the resources and tools with which to rule are that he must have his land fully manned: he must have praying men, fighting men, and working men', and that he also required the physical necessities to support and equip them.²⁰ Fortune in the *De Consolatione* is cast as the

¹⁸ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 29, p. 301, trans. II, p. 42.

¹⁹ *Soliloquies*, I, p. 72.

²⁰ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 17, p. 277, trans. II p.26. On the threefold division of society in Anglo-Saxon England see Powell, 'The three orders' and more widely in a medieval context Duby, *The Three Orders* at pp. 99-109. See also Nelson, 'The political ideas', pp. 141-4, and more widely on the voice of the king in the Boethius at pp. 145-152.

true owner of worldly goods, but is recast as Wisdom, a male, in the Old-English Boethius, who is a model of good lordship, a giver and lender of goods.²¹ Boethius is actually portrayed as the thegn of Wisdom in the translation, to whom it gave (figurative) weapons, and rewards of wealth, dignity and honour – *pa woruldsælða* – and over whom it gains control when he attains maturity – *to mannum become*.²² In the preface to the Old-English *Soliloquies*, the translator described himself in the first person as desiring the perpetual inheritance of bookland through his lord's kindness, a metaphor for the eternal home with God.²³

Despite these acknowledgements of the material dimension to the lord-retainer relationship however, we are repeatedly told that it should be governed primarily by the virtue rather than benefits of loyalty. The outlines of this dichotomy are further sharpened by emphasis on the element of 'love' (*lufu*) between lords and followers in the *Soliloquies*. In an inserted analogy for the various ways in which men search after wisdom, the Old-English Reason asks Augustine to consider that the lord's love for his men is the defining quality of his relationship with them, regardless of their status relative to one another (and perhaps by extension what they receive from the king).²⁴ This topic is again the focus of an exchange in which Reason shows Augustine how to trust in God via a comparison of his trust in his lord's authority, whom he 'loves so exceedingly'.²⁵ The interpolations of this theme offer, moreover, an insight into the psychology of a powerful individual's approach to their relationship with their subordinates: strategy to find true 'friends' could not have its basis in the prospect of material reward, but in 'love'.

Alfred's preoccupation with these matters is easily understandable. He doubtlessly had endured the hardships of 871-878 only thanks to the type of loyalty for which the *Soliloquies*

²¹ Nelson, 'The political ideas', at p. 145; Frakes, *Fate of Fortune*, pp. 103-104, 109-110.

²² *OE Boethius*, I, cc. 3, 7, pp. 245, 251-3, trans. II, pp. 5-6, 10-12.

²³ *Soliloquies*, p. 47.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77. For the other relevant passages of the *Soliloquies* which reference the loving relationship between a lord and his followers, see pp. 73, 96.

²⁵ *Soliloquies*, p. 63.

and Boethius advocate: for what could Alfred have been able to offer to his men at that time in the form of land or material gain? This was truly the most valuable form of loyalty, one which was being encouraged through its explicit celebration in the translations and the implicit righteousness and legitimacy with which the idea was imbued via inclusion in patristic texts. There is also the matter of the rebellion faced by Alfred's father Æthelwulf from Æthelbald when Alfred must still have been quite young.²⁶ Omitted from the Chronicle, Asser went into detail about this event, but in ways which imply it had been traumatic for the royal family. He over-emphasised the lack of 'disagreement or dissatisfaction' amongst Æthelwulf's nobles, afforded Æthelwulf great agency by claiming that he 'allowed' Æthelbald to divide Wessex through 'forbearance'.²⁷ Æthelwulf had seemingly anticipated the possibility that his pilgrimage to Rome in 855 might bring trouble; his decimation charters were granted not only to the church, but also to laymen.²⁸ Despite this, Æthelwulf returned from Rome to find Æthelbald 'with all his councillors', including Bishop Ealhstan and ealdorman Eanwulf, men who had been some of Æthelwulf's closest advisors, against him.²⁹ Alfred would thus perhaps have grown up wary of the effectiveness of bribery to retain loyalty when one needed it most.

Concern over the factors driving loyalty continues in the Boethius through the translator's engagement with the issue of a leader's behaviour towards his followers, suggesting that the idea of remaining committed to a king was a function of the king's own behaviour.³⁰ The formulation of this theme, and the implications of its presence in a text whose

²⁶ On this see Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf'; Dumville, 'The local rulers', at p. 23; Abels, *Alfred*, p. 70; Kirby, *Earliest English Kings*, p. 165.

²⁷ *VA*, cc. 12-13, pp. 9-12; on the omission of this episode from the Chronicle see Stenton, 'South-Western element', pp. 113-4.

²⁸ The charters in question are S 315 and S 316. On these and the decimation see Abels, *Lordship*, p. 61; and Keynes, 'The West-Saxon charters', at pp. 1120-1121 and 1120 n.4, for the decimation charters' purpose as a tool to secure the loyalty of Æthelwulf's people in his absence. See also Kelly, *Malmesbury*, p. 91, on Æthelwulf considering his position 'safe enough' – partly through the granting of land – 'to abandon his kingdom at a time of crisis'.

²⁹ Abels, *Alfred*, p. 81. See also Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 98-9.

³⁰ Malcolm Godden came to a similar conclusion about the Boethius' interpolations highlighting the 'plight of the follower' in the face of bad kings ('Player-king', at p. 147), and emphasised the translator's fascination with 'kings, counsellors and favourites, and the mixture of tyranny and frailty in kings' ('King and counsellor', at p.

primary audience was probably the very people whom this theme concerned, offers key evidence for what other types of strategies Alfred might have developed to enhance his relationship with his leading secular men.

The first example of this theme highlights the suffering of individuals as a result of the cruelty of the rulers with whom they were close, based loosely upon the Latin text's account of the murder of Seneca and Papinianus at the hands of the emperors Nero and Antoninus. The Old English translator stays faithful to the Latin text's criticism of kings, but when he comes to discussing what happens to followers a few lines later, he omits Philosophia's account of the simultaneous fall of both kings and followers to focus solely on the plight of the follower: 'What do we want to say now about the thegns, but that it often happens that they are robbed of all property and even their lives by their false king?'³¹ The translator goes on to add the following descriptive passages: 'Papinianus was to Antoninus the most beloved of all his favourites'; 'all men know that this Seneca was to Nero, and Papinianus to Antoninus, the most honoured and the most loved and had the most power'; and finally that 'they [Seneca and Papinianus] were destroyed without any guilt'.³² The translator's vivid emphasis on the close personal bonds between the emperors and their innocent, loyal advisors serves as a device to amplify the emperors' cruelty, indicating that he was trying to condemn kings' behaviour when it involved the violation of their followers' trust.

The theme of loyalty as related to the leader's treatment of his followers finds another iteration in the Old English text's portrayal of the relationship between Boethius and the Gothic king of Rome, Theoderic, where a king's behaviour is conceived as a determinant of the extent of his subjects' loyalty. In the translation's biographical introduction of Boethius, he:

206), but considered the presence of this perspective as apparently conclusive internal evidence *against* Alfred's involvement. I argue the opposite – see below.

³¹ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 29, p. 303, trans. II, pp. 43-44.

³² *Ibid.*

[...] understood the manifold evil which King Theodoric did against Christendom and against the Roman senators. He [Boethius] then recalled the ease and the ancient rights which they had under their old rulers, the caesars. Then he began to consider and advise within himself how he might remove that unrighteous king from the kingdom, and bring the power to one of better belief and greater righteousness. He then secretly sent letters to the emperor at Constantinople, which is the great city of the Greeks and their capital, because the emperor was of the king of their former lord; he asked him that he help him restore their Christianity and their ancient rights'.³³

This entire section has no basis in the Latin, and in fact contradicts Boethius' own protestations of innocence in the *De Consolatione*.³⁴ Boethius' treason is instead asserted as fact. In this and a few further details, the translator follows other such biographical introductions to ninth-century continental copies of the *De Consolatione*, labelled *vitae* by historians, some of which he probably read.³⁵ In some aspects however the Old English account differs even from these, and of interest to us is its unique insertion of Theodoric's betrayal of the Romans. The translator, whilst following contemporary assertions of Boethius' revolt against Theodoric, has gone out of his way to further stress the unrighteousness of the king in the shape of a broken promise – specifically a promise of *freondscype*.³⁶ As shown above, this term held connotations not only of patronage; its ideal forms could be based upon mutual respect or affection less obviously intended to yield material benefits. The *freondscype* of a lord was invaluable to an Anglo-Saxon mind, as in the Old English *Soliloquies* when Reason asks Augustine if he could have anything he possessed without his lord's friendship, to which Augustine answers, 'I do not suppose there is anyone so foolish as to believe that'.³⁷ This, along with his other crimes

³³ *Ibid.*, I, c. 1, pp. 243-4, trans. II, pp. 4-5.

³⁴ Bieler, *Boethii*, I, pr. iii. 3; Philosophy repeats these in I pr. V. 8-9.

³⁵ The six *vitae* that precede the Old-English Boethius were printed in Peiper, *Boetii Philosophiae consolationis libri quinque*, pp. xxx-xxxiv; Godden reprinted *vitae* I-IV with accompanying discussion in his 'King and counsellor', pp. 195-198. David Pratt argues for the Old-English translator's probable use of *vitae* I and II in *Political Thought*, p. 282; Discenza argues for the translator's use of *vita* IV, in 'The unauthorised biographies', p. 2.

³⁶ Nicole Discenza has discussed some of the similarities and differences between the Old-English and Latin *vitae*, and this summary stems from her article, 'The unauthorised biographies', p. 3

³⁷ *Soliloquies*, p. 63.

against the Roman people, make Theoderic a bad king, and the translator was careful to frame Boethius' revolt in terms of finding a better, more righteous one.³⁸ The incorrect exercise of power, the mistreatment of one's subjects, and the consequences thereof to the dedication of one's subjects, are thus emphasised.

The third and final iteration of this theme is that of the translator's adaptation of the myth of Ulysses and Circe. The *Consolatione* relayed the myth in a truncated form, with Philosophia passing swiftly over the initial encounter and focusing primarily on the sailors' outward transformation into wild beasts, in order to contrast the fallibility of the body with the inner strength of the mind.³⁹ The Old English translator, however, expands the story for his Christian audience, yet reverses the sequence of the original story. Ulysses and his men arrive at Circe's island and Ulysses and Circe fall in love immediately; after a year, his men threaten to leave him and rebel, at which point Circe turns them into beasts.⁴⁰ Janet Bately has at different times treated this passage as an unexplained anomaly, a mark of ignorance, and a possible sign of deliberate restructuring.⁴¹ This episode's obvious parallels with the two examples of unjust kings previously discussed at least preclude it from being a simple mistake, and suggest it has been restructured, like Boethius' own story discussed previously, in order to insert a discussion of poor kingship and its consequences into the original text. The focus of the Old English version of the myth is on Ulysses, who is portrayed as a bad king for two reasons: he forgets his men's needs for a year, and he causes their subsequent transformation into beasts. The translator is sympathetic to their planned rebellion, which is a direct cause of

³⁸ This theme is added to throughout the Boethius in the shape of two further condemnations of Theoderic, whose name is not mentioned once in the Latin text: *OE Boethius*, I, c. 16, 27 p. 272, 298.

³⁹ Bieler, *Boethii*, IV, m 3.4-39.

⁴⁰ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 38, p. 350, trans. II, pp. 74-75. For a discussion of the similarities between the Old English version of the myth and the Homeric one, indicating that translator was familiar with other sources preserving the myth in greater detail than did Boethius in the *Consolatione*, see Irvine, 'Ulysses and Circe', at p. 392 and Grinda, 'The myth of Circe', at p. 252.

⁴¹ Bately, 'Evidence for knowledge' at p. 41; 'The literary prose', at p. 17; 'Those books', at p. 74, n. 88. See also Grinda, 'The myth of Circe', who comments upon the story's reversed sequence as evidence of a 'Saxonising reconception of the key themes of love and duty', at p. 247.

Ulysses' immoderate behaviour: '[...] he abandoned all his authority and his kindred for love of her, until the time that his thegns could not stay with him any longer, but because of their love of their land and their misery planned to leave him'.⁴²

What then is the final effect? Even aside from the examples mentioned above, the Old-English Boethius is replete with criticism of kings.⁴³ Contrary to the *De Consolatione* however, which leaves no possibility for the exercise of good kingship, we are given by the Old-English translation in the opening *vita* the background against which all subsequent criticisms of kingship must be read. Boethius was accused not, as he claims himself in the *De Consolatione*, of striving for 'the freedom of Rome' and the 'safety of the senate',⁴⁴ for this is omitted from the Old English text – but of trying to find another king. Boethius undermined Theoderic so that he could 'bring power to one of better belief and greater righteousness', and that he chose the Greek emperor 'because [he] was of the kin of their former lord'.⁴⁵ These motivations are unique to the Old-English Boethius – they do not occur in the other *vitae*, or in the glosses. The idea of a kingless society was probably unimaginable to an Anglo-Saxon mind. The Old-English Boethius is saying in fact that men will be loyal to the *right* king. The *right* king is defined above all as one who earns his followers' service (and by extension his authority over them) by treating them with respect, thus portraying loyalty as fundamentally conditional upon the ways in which a king ruled these men.

Some of the most important thematic foci in the Old English interpolations in the *Soliloquies* and the Boethius are thus the motivating forces behind loyalty: followers' 'love' for their lord versus material desire, but also how this 'love' was proportional to the lord himself's input into the relationship. The Boethius contains repeated, clear messages about the

⁴² *OE Boethius*, I, c. 38, p. 350, trans. II, pp. 74-75.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, on Nero: I, c.16, p. 276; on Tarquin: I c.16, p. 272; on Dionysius: c. 29, p. 302; on Liberius: c. 16, p. 273; on 'proud kings', I, c. 37 pp. 345-356.

⁴⁴ Bieler, *Boethii*, I pr. IV 20-2.

⁴⁵ *OE Boethius*, I, c. 1, pp. 243-4, trans. II, pp. 4-5.

king's accountability; and as pointed out by David Pratt, the *Soliloquies* consistently reveal an author keen to assert common cause with aristocratic audiences.⁴⁶ This message has important implications when considered in the context of the medium in which it was set, and Alfred's probable oversight if not direct determination of its content. These two translations formed part of Alfred's programme of literacy, and of the corpus of texts deemed 'the most necessary for all men to know'.⁴⁷ The intended beneficiaries of this programme were 'all the free-born young men... who have the means to apply themselves to learning' – in other words, young aristocrats.⁴⁸ Asser painstakingly conveyed Alfred's personal efforts to re-educate the West-Saxon aristocracy, an attempt which must also have had the effect of associating the possession of wisdom and knowledge with a personal bond with the king.⁴⁹ It is also perhaps significant that it was in this very interactive context that Æthelweard recalled the Boethius being used.⁵⁰ The alignment between the content of the messages in these interpolations and the interests of the men to whom the translations would have been exposed is too close for mere coincidence. Moreover, rather than precluding the scenario in which the translations' interpolations constitute a king's (Alfred's) perspective on the lord-retainer relationship, as Godden has argued,⁵¹ the themes of royal accountability and of the superiority of selfless rather than selfish loyalty, and the context to which the translations belong, make this is the *only* scenario which makes sense. Or, to turn Godden's point on its head: can we more readily imagine a scenario in which someone *other* than the king – so, by definition a leading religious or secular man – could legitimately give direction that a text make loyalty to the king appear conditional?

⁴⁶ Pratt, 'Problems of authorship', at p. 185.

⁴⁷ *Pastoral Care*, prol., p. 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* On this see also Nelson, 'Wealth and wisdom', at p. 37. On the state of learning in England and the insights provided by the *Pastoral Care*'s prefatory letter see Morrish, 'King Alfred's letter as a source of learning', and more widely Bullough, 'The educational tradition' and Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon lay society'. For this idea's Carolingian influences see Godden, 'Prologues and epilogues', esp at pp. 448-61.

⁴⁹ On Alfred's interest in educating noble-born children, see *VA* c.75, 102 and on his interest in educating the older aristocracy, c.106.

⁵⁰ *Chronicon*, a. 899, p. 51.

⁵¹ Godden, 'Player-king'; 'King and counsellor'.

It has been said that Alfred was ‘an obsessive communicator’,⁵² and the Boethius and the *Soliloquies* are a prime example of this; not only in their very existence as texts, but in their representation of a king’s efforts to communicate with his men and to shape the nature of their relationship through abstract means. Through the themes repeatedly emphasised in the interpolations, Alfred – potentially via a translator – made use of the Boethius and *Soliloquies* to solidify the bonds between himself and the powerful thegns and ealdormen at the West-Saxon court by directing the shape of the content which they were likely to find most interesting and relevant, i.e. manifestations of their realities as retainers to a lord. The *Pastoral Care*, another contemporary translation and the one with firmest ties to Alfred himself, here offers a potential parallel. This text was in some aspects intended to create commonality between Alfred and the ecclesiastical leaders of the kingdom. Susan Irvine has remarked how it ‘emphasises ways in which Alfred’s perspective connects to those of his bishops and the kingdom as a whole’, using not only the singular but also the plural, for various groups ranging from Alfred to his bishops to the English people as a whole, past and present.⁵³ David Pratt has come to a similar conclusion about the *æstel*, which accompanied some of the copies of the *Pastoral Care*, enumerating it amongst Alfredian ‘tools of lordship’ such as books and other *ædifica*.⁵⁴ If the *Pastoral Care* was in some aspects intended to create a community of interest between Alfred and the ecclesiastical leaders of the kingdom, might not the Boethius and the *Soliloquies* have been aimed at least partly at enhancing Alfred’s relationship with his lay nobility?

The Old English *Soliloquies* and Boethius leave us with the impression of a king highly sensitive to the experience of the loyal follower,⁵⁵ and keen to mechanise this very empathy –

⁵² Snook, *Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, p. 48.

⁵³ Irvine, ‘The Alfredian prefaces’, at p. 155; Shippey, ‘Wealth and wisdom’, at p. 350.

⁵⁴ Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 192 and Chapter 9 in general.

⁵⁵ For a further Alfredian example of the recasting of historical material in these terms see the discussion of the Cyneheard/Cynewulf episode below, pp. 279.

both the idea, and the texts in which it was communicated – as a means to encourage service focused on devotion rather than reward. Yet perhaps the most important thing to take away from Alfred’s case is his acute awareness of a king’s duty to earn the loyalty, or ‘love’, of his men by treating them justly, and thus necessarily of his awareness that it was conditional.

b. Alfred and Edward: *isti pro dilectis pugnaturi*⁵⁶

As abstract reflections of political thought, what the translations do not do is specify how these general principles were translated into action by King Alfred. This can be reconstructed in part by looking at what the most prominent type(s) of royal interaction with the nobility featured in the sources for the reign might suggest about the king's management of his relationship with his leading men. In Alfred and Edward's case this is their personal leadership of the *fyrð* and military activities, behaviours which would have derived their significance above all from their connotations to an elite audience, and which would have been key to the authority of these kings over and amongst this group. The theoretical case for this can be made initially through the consideration of representations of fighting kings in *Beowulf* and sociological perspectives on the psychology of the leader in battle. It is subsequently demonstrated via examples of the effect of the king's presence in battle upon his men, and contemporary evidence of the continuum in which existed these kings' conceptualisations of their military capability and their relationship with their secular elite.

Alfred

Although the precise date of composition of *Beowulf* is a matter of debate, the most recent scholarly consensus places it in the eighth to ninth century, with Francis Leneghan arguing for the poem's Alfredian context.⁵⁷ The fact that *Beowulf* in its current manuscript was in

⁵⁶ From *VA*, c. 39, p. 30, and discussed below.

⁵⁷ A composition date between the seventh and eleventh centuries is possible, though over the last thirty years or so scholarly consensus seems to have once more settled on a date somewhere in the middle of this period. For a summary of the debate to date see Neidorf, 'Introduction' and the other chapters in *The Dating of Beowulf*. To my knowledge no new arguments for a later date have since been made. See also Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, pp. 143-6, 240-4 for the poem's Alfredian context. My thanks to Professor Francis Leneghan for helping me navigate *Beowulf* criticism and also for help with the text itself.

circulation around the end of the tenth century or the beginning of the eleventh points to the enduring currency and significance of its themes to elite audiences, perhaps even to its performance of an important political role, and in turn makes these themes of interest to us in attempting to understand the contemporary significance of a given royal behaviour.

Beowulf is useful because it offers a window into the potential unspoken assumptions made by the late Anglo-Saxon elite when they heard about, or saw, their king going into battle. The text contains several examples of the king's presence in battle being of importance to his subjects.⁵⁸ Throughout the poem, men are made famous by skill in war and their distribution of treasure won in war: battle-hardened leaders are good and inspiring. In *Beowulf* himself we see 'an image of a pre-Christian ruler in whom the qualities of Germanic warrior-kingship are merged with the virtues of mildness, generosity and kindness associated with the *basileus*'.⁵⁹ Arguably one of the poem's most important themes is that of kings' involvement in war, brought to a climax by *Beowulf*'s battle with the dragon and his death which brings him eternal glory but leaves the Geats lordless and facing an uncertain future.⁶⁰ In his speech, Wiglaf intimates that *Beowulf*'s headstrong decision to fight the dragon alone will have terrible consequences for the Geats.⁶¹ Hygelac's death in a raid against the Frisians is repeatedly returned to throughout the text,⁶² and is similarly problematic. The audience knows that his choice to go on a dangerous raid without a suitable heir starts the chain of events culminating in his nephew *Beowulf*'s death in similar circumstances.⁶³ Although the poet never overtly criticises the king's presence in the vanguard of his troops, the ambivalence with which the

⁵⁸ *Beowulf*, ed. Klaeber, ll. 4-11; ll. 64-7, trans. Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, p. 49.

⁵⁹ Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, p. 17. Leneghan appears to use the term *basileus* generally here but it is worth mentioning that there is no evidence of this term being used in England to describe kings until Æthelstan's charters (on the use of this term and its meaning see Loyn, 'The imperial style' and now Lestremau, 'La prétention imperiale'). The virtues to which Leneghan refers however, those of pastoral kingship, are still very much applicable to Alfred's kingship.

⁶⁰ On this theme more generally in the poem see Stanley, '*Beowulf*'.

⁶¹ See Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, pp. 12, 51-52, 246 for Wiglaf's speech and discussion of *Beowulf*'s motivations.

⁶² *Beowulf*, ll. 1197-1214a, 2201b, 2345b-72, 2497-2509, 2910b-21.

⁶³ For a thorough exposition of the poet's linkage of *Beowulf*'s and Hygelac's narratives see Leneghan, *Dynastic Drama*, pp. 121-139.

deaths of these kings in action are related suggests the poet's reservations about this sort of behaviour. The issue is moreover, should kings risk their own lives and the safety of their people – and if so, when should they do so? Something about kings' personal involvement in battle was conditional, elements of which prevented the poet from being able to truly celebrate that of Beowulf and Hygelac.

Much modern criticism revolves around whether the poem was intended as a commentary on pride and vanity, or a celebration of sacrifice.⁶⁴ Indeed one might argue that what was common to Hygelac's and Beowulf's fates – and what prevented the poet from being able to celebrate them in the same way as Scyld's – was that they died. Yet there seems to have been more to it than that. The portrayal of their deaths contains a judgment about the motivations that must lie behind a king's choice to go into battle which, if unbalanced, lead him to make decisions which serve his own glory and wealth more than his people's wellbeing. Hygelac could have chosen a less fraught mission knowing that Heardred was still too young for the throne, or at least appointed someone else trusted by the Geats. Beowulf could have had a younger man fight the dragon, as he had done for Hrothgar against Grendel and his mother – or at the least, he could have accepted the help of his men against the dragon. But Hygelac and Beowulf did not do these things because their desire for wealth and glory was as great or greater than their wish to protect their people.

The presence of these themes suggests the presence of a specific model through which participation in war was to be undertaken by kings, and thus understood by onlookers, if it was to be acceptable. It had to be done out of one's feeling of obligation for one's people, whose foremost elements, when seen from the perspective of both Beowulf and of real Anglo-Saxon kings, would have been the group of loyal followers who relied upon him and who often had

⁶⁴ For negative appraisals of King Beowulf see Leyerle, 'Beowulf the hero and the king'; Goldsmith, *Mode and Meaning*, esp pp. 65-96; Swanton, *Crisis and Development*, p. 140; Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 171. For earlier, positive views see Schmidt, 'Unity'; Kaske, 'Sapientia et Fortitudo'; for comparisons with Christ, see McNamee, 'Beowulf' and Neville, 'Redeeming Beowulf'.

dedicated their lives to him. This in turn suggests – particularly in the context of contemporary celebration of Alfred’s and Edward’s achievements in war (discussed below) – that the significance of a king’s personal leadership of the *fyrð* also lay in the message it sent to his men.

The currency of this conception at the turn of the tenth century is supported by the sympathies to which the Cynewulf-Cyneheard episode appeals through its implicit criticism of kings who endanger their men by acting unwisely.⁶⁵ Of particular importance is Cynewulf’s lone charge into Cyneheard’s men. This was surely heroic but, as Thomas Shippey noted, a ‘disastrous mistake’, the result of which is the death of all but one of his loyal men and the suffering of the West-Saxon people through the loss of their king.⁶⁶ That this historical episode was recast in such dramatic detail in the Chronicle suggests, much like the interpolations into the Old English Boethius and *Soliloquies*, an Alfredian preoccupation with the risks to which followers were exposed through extreme loyalty, and the corresponding duty of the one who held that loyalty to handle it with respect. Matters of loyalty and of kings’ comportment in war in relation to his men were current, and the extent to which these matters were interlinked made the king’s involvement in war a personal matter for the elite.⁶⁷ Though dating from the late tenth-century, *The Battle of Maldon* evokes similar themes. Byrhtnoth’s *ofermod* in allowing the Danes to cross over the tidal sands has long been a subject of debate,⁶⁸ but it is certainly the case that this choice, along with Byrhtnoth’s death, is what causes the death of the flower

⁶⁵ *ASC* a. 757.

⁶⁶ Shippey, ‘Boar and Badger’, at p. 221. See also Leneghan, ‘Royal wisdom’, at pp. 93-7 and Ferro, ‘King in the doorway’.

⁶⁷ Several studies have emphasised that this story’s incorporation into the Chronicle in such detail may reflect the broader political and social concerns of Alfred’s reign: Kleineschmidt, ‘Old English annal’; Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, pp. 39-60; Sheppard, *Families of the King*, pp. 32-8.

⁶⁸ Tolkien, ‘The homecoming’, wrote that Byrhtnoth was criticised in the poem because ‘he treated a desperate battle as a sporting match, throwing away the lives of his men’, at p. 15. See also Gneuss, “‘The Battle of Maldon’” and Niles, ‘Maldon and mythopoesis’ at pp. 221, 228. For a rehabilitation of Byrhtnoth and his *ofermod* see Burrow, *Poetry of Praise*, pp. 42, 43 and Neville, ‘Redeeming Beowulf and Byrhtnoth’, at p. 60.

of the nobility of Essex. As Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has observed, the heroic idiom of the poem suggests 'regret that such heroism makes death its companion'.⁶⁹

The idea that there were acceptable and unacceptable reasons for a king to go to war was embedded in the Anglo-Saxon cultural consciousness. The melancholy with which these stories were related stems in part from the implied consequences of the war leader's actions on his men. This suggests that whilst the king's direct participation in war was celebrated, it was understood as the arena in which he could honour his men and his people – and in so doing, himself – rather than one in which he sought glory, renown or wealth. Certain types of participation in war, in other words, could be understood in part as a manifestation of kings' dedication to their nobility, both through their presence and their behaviour.

Modern sociological and psychological models of command aid us in conceptualising the potential implications of a late Anglo-Saxon military leader's personal involvement in battle for the bonds linking together the fighting group. Morris Janowitz and Edward Shils' psychological analysis of military dynamics in the Wehrmacht has proved highly influential in its advancement of the 'primary group' theory of cohesion amongst combat forces, and ascribing the success of entire armies, even in the face of defeat, to this compartmentalised loyalty.⁷⁰ Primary groups in Janowitz and Shils' study consist of 'small groups of soldiers of up to perhaps thirty individuals, held together by bonds of comradeship produced by spatial proximity, the capacity for intimate communications, the provision of paternal protectiveness by non-commissioned officers and junior officers, and the gratification of certain personality needs, e.g. manliness, by the military organisation and its activities'.⁷¹

Key to this primary group was the presence and participation of its leader, who acted in sight of his men and vice versa. Military psychologists Paul Bartone and Faris Kirkland have

⁶⁹ O'Keefe, 'Heroic values', at p. 123.

⁷⁰ Janowitz and Shils, 'Cohesion and Disintegration'.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 315. For a sociological discussion and application of Janowitz and Shils' primary group model in the context of military cohesion see King, *Combat Soldier*, Chapter 2.

outlined the profound importance of leaders' active involvement within the group at the progressive stages of its life cycle and to its cohesion, a factor crucial to success in combat.⁷² Cohesion, as highlighted by military psychologist Frederick Manning, is not only the ability to act seamlessly and confidently as a group in combat, but the psychological morale that makes this possible.⁷³ The professional capability of the leader, his credibility as a source of information, and the amount of care and attention he paid to his men were shown to be the three determinants of the extent of confidence and trust his men placed in him generally, with shared experiences being 'the glue that holds the work group together'.⁷⁴ Furthermore, 'they [leaders] are not told as often how important it is for their soldiers to see and know their leader's talents. If they doubt his knowledge they will hesitate to commit their lives to his judgment, and not act as a cohesive unit'.⁷⁵

These dynamics of the primary group can help us to imagine the importance of the king's presence to the leading men in a late Anglo-Saxon context. Whilst we are relatively ignorant of the specific make-up of late Anglo-Saxon 'infantry' organisation, we may be certain that the *fyrð* consisted of the following: '...a royal levy composed of privileged land owners and their own retainers, reinforced by the king's military household and stipendiary troops. The landowners bore arms in the king's service [...] the retainers' obligation was primarily to their own lords [...]. The holders of bookland fought for the king, while their retainers fought for them.'⁷⁶ Moreover, a gathered force revolved around the socio-political ties of lordship which bound their leaders. Although the *Battle of Maldon* is a problematic historical source and dates from over a century after Alfred's reign,⁷⁷ it is the single extant text containing an extended

⁷² Bartone and Kirkland, 'Optimal leadership'.

⁷³ Manning, 'Morale'.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, at pp. 462, 464.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, at p. 464.

⁷⁶ Abels, *Lordship*, p. 146.

⁷⁷ On the poem's dating to c. 1020 see McKinnell, 'On the date', but cf. Scragg, *Battle of Maldon*, pp. 13, 26-8 who argues for a near-contemporary dating. On the poem's representation of an established genre, and thus its problematic nature as a source for the battle, see Clark, 'The battle of Maldon' and Blake, 'The genesis'.

description of the *fyrð* in action.⁷⁸ Whilst it does not involve the king, the manner in which Byrhtnoth places himself at the centre of his most trusted fighting men rather than having them head their individual groups of retainers in some sort of formation implies that the leader, his household fighters, and their own retainers formed concentric circles fed by numerous retainers.⁷⁹ This suggests that when they came together on the battlefield in the late tenth-century the Anglo-Saxon elite formed a primary group. The manner in which ninth-century sources frame the English contingents of battles in terms of a leader (king or ealdorman) and ‘his men’ or ‘and the men of [insert shire]’ gives us a similar feeling.⁸⁰

The dynamic of the primary group helps us understand, on a tactical and psychological basis, why a leader would want, even need, to take an active role in operations. It also helps put the late Anglo-Saxon case in perspective. Unlike the modern case, battlefield and socio-political cohesion could have existed in a seamless continuum in the late Anglo-Saxon world, where the bonds created and nurtured on the battlefield would have translated into those defining the social and political group of the elite and the king. The most prominent of the men with whom Alfred fought would also have been in charge of administering his kingdom and sometimes of mounting their own independent resistance campaigns against the Danes.⁸¹ There are thus good theoretical grounds for interpreting royal leadership of the *fyrð* as having been conceived by kings as furthering their relationship with their leading men in a positive way, and by extension that this would have proved at least part of kings’ motivation for engaging in this activity. Going to battle amongst his men, and to be seen as doing so, would have been

⁷⁸ For a defence of the poem’s usefulness see Abels, *Lordship*, pp. 147-8 and Hooper, ‘Anglo-Saxon warfare’, at p. 90.

⁷⁹ Esp ll. 23-4, trans. Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon*. See also Abels, ‘Tactics’, esp. at pp. 147- 52 on battle tactics in the tenth century.

⁸⁰ In *ASC* annals for e.g. a. 840, 845, 851, 853, 871, 878.

⁸¹ E.g. the campaigns described in *ASC* a. 871.

important for the king's authority over these individuals both on and off the battlefield,⁸² an authority all the more necessary at a time of crisis.

Setting aside the theory, there is direct evidence from Alfred's reign that the king's presence in battle was significant to the elite, and indeed that the king went to war with them in mind as much as the Danes. First, the indications that Alfred's presence on the field had an impact. The Chronicle annal for 885 recounts the defence of Rochester, which was stout despite the king's absence; however, the turning point is recorded as occurring when Alfred himself arrived, which precipitated Danish flight.⁸³ Perhaps ealdorman Sigehelm of Kent was at Rochester:⁸⁴ such a rescue would have been instrumental in boosting his confidence in the king. In any case, there would go on to be an intimate connexion between Alfred and Sigehelm, as the ealdorman's daughter Eadgifu would become Edward's queen. In the 895 annal, the king is again centre-stage in an interesting juxtaposition of information. In the summer, 'a great part of the citizens and also of other people' marched on the Danish army active in the East, but 'were put to flight and four king's thegns were slain'. But when autumn came, the king encamped in the vicinity of the Danish burh by the Lea 'so that the Danes could not deny them that harvest'.⁸⁵ The distinction drawn by the annalist's commentary is sharp: an absent king equals the loss of important men. The king's presence equals the affording of protection and organisation to important men (and everyone).

Asser's account of the battle of Ashdown also has important implications about the significance of the king's presence in the *fyrð*. His statement that Alfred's side fought 'pro vita et dilectis atque patria'⁸⁶ makes direct reference to the way Alfred's care for his men would

⁸² For evidence that the existence of communally-experienced threat increases leaders' influence with their followers see Staw et.al., 'Threat-rigidity'.

⁸³ *ASC* a. 885; *VA*, c. 66, p. 50.

⁸⁴ This Sigehelm was the recipient of a charter in 898 for one hide at Farleigh, 10 miles (a few hours' ride) from Rochester. Perhaps such a small donation suggests that it was intended as an addition to bookland already held by Sigehelm in Farleigh or in the area?

⁸⁵ *ASC* a. 895.

⁸⁶ *VA*, c. 39, p. 30.

have been communicated through his participation in war. Keynes and Lapidge render this line as ‘set to fight for life, loved ones and country’.⁸⁷ Whilst the sentiment conveyed in this translation is accurate, it does not reflect the particular meaning *dilectus* (participle of *diligo*, *diligere*, to esteem, love) seems to have held for Asser. He uses it three more times: to denote King Beorhtric’s feelings towards a young man in his service (whom Eadburh allegedly poisoned for his influence with the king);⁸⁸ to describe the relationship between Alfred and those to whom he bemoaned his lack of learning;⁸⁹ and to describe the thegns to whom Alfred gave instruction for the good of the realm.⁹⁰ In each of these scenarios, the term *dilectus* or its superlative is used in a particular capacity: to describe men who are in the king’s service, probably his leading men. In the first, the young man esteemed by Beorhtric was clearly some sort of favourite thegn; the second, Alfred could only bemoan such things to members of his court circle; whilst in the final instance *dilectissimus* is used explicitly to qualify (secular) members of this group. This suggests that the instance in which it is used to describe one of Alfred’s three motivations to fight (‘isti [...] pro dilectis [...] pugnaturi’) at Ashdown would also have meant a particular group of men: not just ‘loved ones’, but perhaps ‘beloved leading men’. Consequently, this is important evidence that for the king and his contemporaries, the king’s act of going to war had particular connotations as having the king’s beloved men as its object. Due to the obvious benefits conveyed on this relationship if the king’s subordinates were made aware that their king went to war in part out of empathy and solidarity on their account, this alone would be evidence enough to suggest that such participation was actively mobilised by Alfred as a way of gaining the trust and confidence of the West-Saxon and Mercian elite. The fact that it was proclaimed and celebrated in Asser’s *Life* as good as confirms it.

⁸⁷ KL, c. 39, p. 80.

⁸⁸ VA, c. 14, ‘sicut de adolescente quodam regi dilectissimo hoc factum compertum habetur’, p. 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 76 ‘qui sibi familiari dilectione adsciti forent’, p. 60.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 91 ‘sibique dilectissimos suos ministros’, p. 78.

It is in this light that that we should read the Chronicle's and Asser's considerable emphasis on Alfred's personal participation in battle. Out of the twenty-one engagements between English and Danish forces mentioned by the Chronicle between 871 and 900, Alfred was present at fourteen.⁹¹ He probably was involved in several others throughout his reign which were not recorded, as implied by the annal for 871.⁹² In Asser's *Life*, Alfred was present for ten out of the fourteen engagements mentioned between 871 and 885, with Alfred being presented consistently as the source of momentum and leadership throughout the entries. Representative examples include the entries for 875, 'In the same year King Alfred fought a naval battle [...]',⁹³ and 878, 'in the same year King Alfred with a few men made a fortress at Athelney [...]'.⁹⁴ It is salutary to recall here that according to Asser, Alfred 'could have come upon it [the government of the kingdom] with the consent of all [...] above all because he was exceedingly warlike and victorious in nearly all battles'.⁹⁵ The consent of 'all' would of course have been in great part the leading secular men.

It was moreover vitally important for Alfred's central role at the head of the *fyrð* and his success in that position to be highlighted. This was not only because of the implications it had for his strong kingship,⁹⁶ but because of the critical effect that the politicisation of empathy and solidarity could have on how Alfred measured up to this ideal of strong kingship in the eyes of his magnates. A military identity, one where the king himself led his elite in war, would have been actively and deliberately cultivated by kings because they were aware of its effect on the aristocracy and their belief in him as their ruler.⁹⁷

⁹¹ On Alfred's military tactics more widely see Haslam, 'Alfred and the vikings', and for the necessary complementary view of Alfred's military leadership as seen through his overarching strategic vision, see Abels, 'Reflections on Alfred'.

⁹² *ASC* a. 871.

⁹³ *VA*, c. 48, p. 36.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 55, p. 44. Other examples include cc. 53, 42, 67, 87.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 42, p. 32.

⁹⁶ For a summary of the presentation of this theme in sources of the period see Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars*, p. 22.

⁹⁷ A good parallel and a similar argument can be found in Goldberg's article on Louis the German's ruling strategies ('More devoted'). Goldberg wrote that 'Louis the German cultivated and channelled this highly symbolic and ritualised culture of knighthood both to present himself as 'first warrior' of the kingdom and to

Edward the Elder

Edward the Elder is consistently portrayed at the head of the English army, an act which, as established above in Alfred's case, had great potential to have been motivated by its significance to the relationship between the king and his leading men. The phrase 'Edward and the army' or some variation thereon occurs in the annals for 900, 903, 912 and 914-920. The annals for the years 915, 918, 919 and 920 begin with 'In this year [...] King Edward went with the army', foregrounding Edward's leadership, whilst the annals from 912 to 920 show him establishing and strengthening burhs, some of which go on to play an important and successful defensive role in the same annals.⁹⁸

Interestingly, Edward is recorded as sending armies against the Danes in 909 and 910, both of which are said to have had great success, whilst local English forces defeated various Danish armies and forces also without Edward in 913, 914 and 917.⁹⁹ The annal for 917 states that Edward 'ordered the burh to be occupied and built' at Towcester and 'ordered the burh to be built' at Wigingamere.¹⁰⁰ This phrasing implies that Edward himself was not there, since the annals are specific about when Edward was present at the burhs he established, such as in 912 when Edward 'ordered' the burh at Hertford to be built, but in the same year 'went with some of his forces into Essex and Maldon and camped there while the burh was being made and constructed at Witham', and similarly for Buckingham in 914, Bedford in 915, Maldon in

foster a sense of a chivalric community among his nobles', at p. 47. He also makes reference to some highly relevant contemporary references (*AF*, a. 849, p. 38) to Louis' magnates as 'the king's friends' within military contexts, thus emphasising the social bonds and shared elite warrior culture brought about by the king's martial proclivities.

⁹⁸ Towcester was established in 917 and then survived an attack from the Northampton and Leicester armies in the same year; Bedford was established in 915 and survived attack in 917; Wigingamere was built in 917 and survived attack in the same year; Maldon was built in 916 and survived attack in 917. See their respective annals for further details. The literature on the Alfredian and Edwardian network of burhs is vast, but I found the following particularly useful in outlining the tactical and symbolic significance of burhs: Halsam, 'The Burghal Hidage' in response to Baker and Brookes' *Beyond the Burghal Hidage*; Christie, 'Creating defended communities'; and Williams, 'Military and non-military functions'.

⁹⁹ *ASC* a. 909, 910, 913, 914, 917.

¹⁰⁰ *ASC* a. 917. See also *ASC* a. 912, 'Edward ordered the northern burh at Hertford to be built'.

916, Towcester and Colchester in 917, Stamford in 918, Thelwall in 919 and Nottingham in 920. Edward was thus more than capable of sending out armies, of ordering burhs to be built, without needing to be there in person. His presence was not strictly logistically required at every single one of these events. Yet the fact that he still went to so many, and that the Chronicle emphasises this fact, suggests that his personal presence amongst the powerful men of Wessex and those of newly conquered Mercian regions was seen to be crucial to resistance and expansion movements *primarily* because of its effect on morale and the creation and reaffirmation of bonds of loyalty between king and nobleman.

An example in Æthelweard's Chronicle of the effect Edward's presence had on his fighting men is illuminating. In 893, Edward (then ætheling) arrived at Farnham where the English were struggling against the Northamptonshire and Berkshire Danes. Æthelweard records that the men, 'having slipped on their armour [...] exulted, being set free by the prince's arrival, like sheep brought to the pastures by the shepherd after customary ravaging'.¹⁰¹ Æthelweard may have been drawing on a praise poem of the battle, and in any case his entries covering the final years of Alfred's reign were probably taken from a now-lost version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, so we can surmise that his relation of this incident conveys contemporary sentiment.¹⁰² This passage suggests that the audience's attention was meant to be drawn to the human, more than logistical or technical, consequences of Edward's arrival amongst his men. Correspondingly, Edward even as an ætheling would probably have understood the value of his participation in war not only in terms of its potential to bring about victory, but perhaps primarily in terms of the solidarity created between man and king by shared lived experiences.

¹⁰¹ *Chronicon*, a. 893, p. 49.

¹⁰² On Æthelweard's sources see *Chronicon*, pp. xvii-xxxvii; Batley, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* pp. 41-53; Gretsch, 'Historiography', at pp. 214-38; Pelteret, 'Anonymous historian', at p. 325.

That Edward's presence in war ought to be understood as part of a domestic as well as foreign policy is further suggested by a joint consideration of the textuality of the Chronicle annals, their intended effect, and their potential audience. Scott Thompson-Smith has remarked on how the Edwardian annals function as a demarcation of royal *anweald* in much the same way as boundary clauses in diplomas laid out the legitimate possession of land.¹⁰³ The annals for the years 912-920 create a clear link between Edward's movement to a location in the borderlands of his authority and the political submission of the peoples in the region.¹⁰⁴ There is a consistency and rhythm to these entries which seems set to remind the audience of what happened when the king built a burh: expansion, submission and allegiance. The effect, as noted by David Pelteret, is that the king is displayed as 'acting consistently and resolutely' in the context of military exploits, and that 'a subsidiary motive may well have been to underline Edward's rulership capabilities', which gains significance when considered in the light of the Chronicle's potential audience.¹⁰⁵ Based on the famous passage from the Old English *Pastoral Care* about Alfred's intention that its copies be kept in churches,¹⁰⁶ and Gaimar's claim that the Chronicle was bound with a chain and open to those who read it,¹⁰⁷ James Campbell suggested that the Chronicle may have laid in major churches for clerics and lay nobility to read.¹⁰⁸ It does seem as though the Chronicle entries were choreographed to demonstrate, not simply record, and to what audience would the message of Edward's excellence in war be more relevant than to the noblemen alongside whom he fought?¹⁰⁹ The Chronicle was thus a text which represented the king's interests, was probably written by a man in his close entourage,

¹⁰³ Thompson-Smith, 'Marking boundaries', esp. at pp. 173-4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175. On the compositional unity of the annals for these years see Stafford, *After Alfred*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁵ Pelteret, 'Anonymous historian', at p. 328. Ryan Lavelle also associates royal estates and itineraries in the Chronicle with the demonstration of royal power in his 'Geographies of power', *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ *Pastoral Care*, pp. 6-8.

¹⁰⁷ *L'estoire des Anglais*, (ed. Bell, 1960), pp. liii-liv. On the authenticity of this account see *EHD* p. 113 and for a later, more sceptical approach Whitelock et.al., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A revised translation*, pp. xix-xx.

¹⁰⁸ Campbell, 'What is not known', pp. 15-18.

¹⁰⁹ See Davidson, 'The non-submission', p. 205, for the interesting idea that the Chronicler intended to 'win over Mercians unamused by Edward's actions'.

and contained a deliberate policy of celebrating this king's military exploits aimed at an audience sensitive to military issues and royal authority. Together this lends itself to the notion that Edward's participation in war was motivated in part by the positive effect this behaviour had on his relationship with his West Saxon and Mercian noblemen, which in turn encourages us to understand his and Alfred's use of their leadership of the *fyrð* as a mechanism to influence the loyalty of this group.

We also see in Edward's reign a continuation of Alfred's reluctance to grant bookland, a trend which Simon Keynes suggested could have gone back to King Egbert.¹¹⁰ Indeed a moratorium on charter production (or at least on charters which were likely to survive) seems to have existed from 910-924, which surely not coincidentally covers the years in which Edward was most active in burh-building.¹¹¹ This raises the question of the role burhs played in the development of the relationship between the king and his leading men, since something about their construction was connected to a drastically reduced need for, or ability to produce, traditional diplomas, alongside their function in rewarding men.¹¹² Certainly this period in Edward's reign confirms that he was doing something else to gain the loyalty of his men, and that he was doing it right.

It is not really possible to say much more about Edward, but what we do know is that his consistent appearance at the head of the English *fyrð* and the Chronicle's rhythmic emphasis on this probably represents a continuation of Alfred's recognition of the bonding capital offered by these contexts. There is after all evidence of other Alfredian continuations into Edward's reign. Alfred probably prepared his son for kingship by giving him military responsibility in the 890s, which could have resulted in Edward appropriating his father's ruling strategies, here

¹¹⁰ Keynes, 'Edward', at p. 56; also Keynes, 'England c.900-1016', at pp. 465-6 and Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 97.

¹¹¹ Wormald, 'On *þa wæpnedhealfe*', at p. 276. For various interpretations of what this absence signifies see Keynes, 'Edward', at pp. 56-7; Dumville, 'Æthelstan', pp. 151-3; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 30.

¹¹² On the importance of burhs as sites of royal authority see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 49.

synonymous with military strategies.¹¹³ Other evidence for deliberate Edwardian appropriation of Alfredian elements can be found in Edward's legitimisation of his royal authority in the midst of the Æthelwold crisis through engagement with his father's body, via its translation and its possession of sanctuary privileges.¹¹⁴

Summary

There is good evidence from Alfred and Edward's reign that kings' participation in war was understood partly in terms of its significance to the leading men. Alfred and Edward can be seen taking an active role in the leadership of the *fyrð* as a means of influencing their standing in the eyes of their secular elite, of optimising their authority in this group, and this behaviour is thus very likely to constitute evidence of a royal mechanism to cultivate their loyalty.¹¹⁵ In leading armies themselves these kings would have influenced their relationship with their fighting men by building bonds of trust from the shared experience of hardship and peril, and in doing so they maintained their authority, presence and relevance in the context of the situation they were all facing: war and invasion. This represents both Alfred and Edward's attention to the creation of communities of interest with their ealdormen and thegns, which in turn would probably have made devotion to the king's person a foundational aspect of their loyalty.

¹¹³ On Alfred's preparation of Edward see Yorke, 'Edward as ætheling', at pp. 31-2.

¹¹⁴ Marafioti, 'Seeking Alfred's body'.

¹¹⁵ Further support for this position will be offered in Section E of this chapter.

c. Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred: learning to rule an
'English kingdom'

In pursuit of the overarching aim of establishing the ways in which kings sought the loyalty of their secular elite, we continue by exploring the most prominent examples of the interactions of Kings Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred with members of this group (extraneous to their land-granting practices, for which see Chapter Two) for what these represent in terms of royal management of this relationship. These three kings form a natural group because of their common struggle against the Danes of York and their creation, and consolidation, of a kingdom of the English which included this recalcitrant group. We are able to compare how these kings attempted to optimise their relationship with a heterogenous group of leading men, and most of all the evolution of West-Saxon policy towards men of the southern Danelaw, whose significance waxed as the buffer zone between the descendants of Alfred and Ivarr, and towards the Danes of York themselves.

Æthelstan

The most obvious way in which we see Æthelstan interacting with his secular elite is at assemblies, with the consensus-building activities taking place at these meetings playing a central role in the creation of willing support for and participation in his rule.¹¹⁶ Æthelstan's assemblies differed from those of his predecessors in important ways, the most obvious being their significantly greater number and regularity.¹¹⁷ Although we do not have much precedent with which to compare them in Alfred and Edward's reigns, another striking aspect of

¹¹⁶ Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, *passim*.

¹¹⁷ The significance of Æthelstan's assemblies has often been underlined: e.g. Stenton, *ASE*, p. 351-2; Dumville, 'Æthelstan', at p. 148. For more specific discussions see Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 130-132; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 57-63. See also Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 57-9. For theories about the increased number of assemblies see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 32; cf. Maddicott, *Origins*, p. 6.

Æthelstan's assemblies – particularly in the context of his newly enlarged kingdom – is their focus on central Wessex. After Æthelstan's coronation at Kingston, on the border of Mercia and Wessex, the king rarely held assemblies outside central Wessex, even after he had annexed Northumbria.¹¹⁸ Although the reigns of later tenth-century kings seem to reflect a reorientation towards the Thames valley, this was apparently not the case in Æthelstan's day despite the Mercian foundation of his original political power base.¹¹⁹ This holds important implications about how Æthelstan chose to develop his dynamic with the magnates in the different areas of his realm, with those of Wessex and Northumbria being focused upon here.

We begin with the Northumbrian case. The D-recension of the Chronicle records that in 926 (for 927) Æthelstan 'succeeded to the kingdom of the Northumbrians'.¹²⁰ This was in the direct aftermath of King Sihtric of York's death, to whom Æthelstan had married his sister Eadgyth in 926.¹²¹ We do not know how long he stayed up there, or what mechanisms he put in place in order for his authority to be lasting and legitimate. The E-recension of the Chronicle states that Æthelstan drove out 'King' Guthfrith (Sihtric's brother) in the same year, which implies that he met some resistance.¹²² Æthelstan's next verifiable location was Penrith on 12 July,¹²³ and from there straight to Exeter,¹²⁴ and he cannot be shown to have returned north until 934.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ On the king's focus on Wessex see; Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 79; Maddicott, *The Origins*, 16; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 60, 102. On Æthelstan's coronation see Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 74; Nelson, 'The first use', at p. 122, n. 27; cf. Keynes, 'Alfred and the Mercians', at p. 34.

¹¹⁹ On Æthelstan's election in Mercia see Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 17-18; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 34. On the 'Mercian character' of the start of his reign see Wood, 'Monsters', at p. 199; but cf. Dumville, 'Æthelstan', at p. 146. On the reorientation of power see Reuter, 'Assembly politics', at p. 436. A similar pattern appears in the reigns of Ottonian kings: Campbell, *Anglo-Saxon State*, pp. 48-9.

¹²⁰ *ASC* a. 926.

¹²¹ On this union see Stafford, 'Sons and mothers' at p. 97 and Foot, 'Dynastic strategies' at p. 243.

¹²² William offers more information and implies that the Danish fort at York was a refuge of disloyalty: *GR*, ii, 134, pp. 214-15. Thomson, *Commentary*, 120-2 sees much of William's account of these events as deriving from the lost book. See Foot, *Æthelstan*, Appendix I (and notes) on William as a source for Æthelstan's reign and the scholarship behind this position.

¹²³ *ASC* 926 (for 927).

¹²⁴ On this see Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 164; and S 399 and 400, issued in Exeter on 16 April 928.

¹²⁵ Though we cannot be sure that we have a full record of his movements.

That Æthelstan chose not to assert his royal authority in person over this newly conquered region is surprising. Instead, what we find by looking at assembly witness lists is that Æthelstan maintained contact with this region by requiring many of his new leading subjects from Northumbria to regularly attend southern assemblies.¹²⁶ Whilst the exceptionally long witness lists of these charters can probably be attributed to the diplomatic of ‘Æthelstan-A’, they still contain key evidence for how Æthelstan ruled his newly enlarged kingdom.¹²⁷ From 930 he was attended by lords from Northumbria and northern Mercia: Ealdred and Uhtred, the former a son of Eadulf lord of Bamburgh with Uhtred possibly being another;¹²⁸ Osulf, who may have been Ealdred’s son but probably in any case took over his territory, since Ealdred ceased attesting in 933 and Osulf began (and ended) in 934;¹²⁹ and Æscbriht and Ælfstan, who had been confirmed in their lands by Ragnald after his victory at Corbridge in 918 and were probably Northumbrian lords (and perhaps also brothers).¹³⁰ A number of Scandinavian names also appear titled *dux* from 928 to 934, probably representing powerful men of York: Guthrum, Urm, Ragnald, Scule, Grim, Stircer, Regenwold, Hadd, Hawerd, Inhwaer and Halfdene. These relationships must have been what Æthelstan relied upon to call Northumbria ‘his’,¹³¹ and thus the surviving evidence of this dynamic represents Æthelstan’s efforts not only to assert his authority over Northumbria, but rather to assert authority over these men – which is of course simply the obverse of the maximisation of their loyalty. The fact that these men came south suggests several things in this regard. First, that Æthelstan allowed them to retain a degree of autonomy when it came to overseeing their respective

¹²⁶ Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 128; Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, discusses this within wider scope of what kings Æthelstan to Edgar did relative to northern magnates, pp. 101-2; Nelson, ‘Rulers’, at pp. 116-7.

¹²⁷ On Æthelstan-A see Woodman, ‘“Athelstan-A”’ and Chaplais, ‘Anglo-Saxon ‘chancery’’, at pp. 47-9. More generally, Lapidge, ‘Hermeneutic style’.

¹²⁸ Sawyer, *Burton*, pp. 33-4; Eadulf was called king by the *Annals of Ulster*, ed. Mac Niocaill, (a. 913), and reeve of Bamburgh by Æthelweard (*Chronicon*, a. 912 (= 913), p. 53).

¹²⁹ Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 234-5.

¹³⁰ *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, c. 24 for confirmation of lands. For discussion, Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 235.

¹³¹ On the change in Æthelstan’s royal styles after the annexation of Northumbria see Molyneux, ‘Why were some’, at pp. 60-2 and Dumville, ‘Æthelstan’, at pp. 149-50.

domains and networks of power, but that this was in exchange for their own active participation in West-Saxon kingship. In this way Æthelstan did not attempt to integrate Northumbria proper into England, as Edward had done with Mercia through the establishment of territorial institutions which articulated his power in physical, social and symbolic ways, and proved key to gaining the submission of the Danish armies thereabouts.¹³² Instead, he focused on the assimilation of its magnates into the south's political fabric and into personal lordship with him. We can assume that he hoped to achieve the integration of Northumbria by refracting political assimilation and allegiance through local men such as Ealdred, Urm, Æscbriht and others.¹³³

Secondly, we ought also to think about the implications for royal approaches to Northern magnates if the symbolic potential of this policy was exploited by Æthelstan. The applied consequences of Æthelstan's requirement for far-flung magnates to come to him were effectively the mediation of their personal relationship, and his lordship, through the formality and ceremony of his kingship, embodied by assemblies. It was furthermore perhaps intended to highlight their subservience. The parallels between these northern magnates' journeys deep into West Saxon heartlands for assemblies, and those of foreign kings submitting to West-Saxon kings, has not been acknowledged. Some of these men, namely Ealdred and (perhaps, if they were brothers) Uhtred, were not just powerful lords but possibly royal in their own right. Eadwulf their father was called king of the Saxons of the North by the annals of Ulster, whilst the annals of Clonmacnoise record that 'Adulf, King of the North Saxons', died in 934.¹³⁴ As for the men of York, we may imagine that some of these had been Sihtric's earls: they were the only remnants of the separate political entity and order of the Danish kingdom of York.

¹³² On burhs as territorial institutions see Dommelen, 'Boroughs', esp at pp. 237-8. On Edward and the significance of burhs as sites of royal authority: Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 49, cf. Airlie, 'The palace'.

¹³³ For a Cornish parallel of this ruling style see Insley, 'Kings and lords'.

¹³⁴ *Annals of Ulster*, ed. Mac Niocaill, (a. 913); *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. Murphy, a. 928 (= 934). For discussion see Woolf, *From Pictland*, pp. 163-4.

The locations chosen for acts of peace-making or submission in this period are particularly revealing of the hierarchical relationship between the parties involved. When one party travelled far into the other's realms, this was taken as a sign of the former's subservience to the latter, whilst locations chosen on borders or rivers normally meant a more equal relationship.¹³⁵ The northern magnates' travels to the south for Æthelstan's assemblies could be read in the same way. One might draw a parallel with Charles the Bald's administration of Aquitaine, a separatist region in the mid ninth-century under the Aquitanian king Pippin II. Some of the most powerful Aquitanian figures such as Archbishop Rodulf of Bourges and Count Eccard of Autun had benefitted from the Aquitanian rebellions.¹³⁶ Charles regained control of the region in the late 840s, and after 855 he never again visited or resided in Aquitaine, but administered the sub-kingdom himself from his own power bases, bypassing its notional *rex* Pippin and forcing Aquitanian magnates to come to him. Jane Martindale has described this policy as 'wherever and whenever possible intended to check any opportunities for the establishment of aristocratic power blocs within Aquitaine, and thus to make its magnates entirely dependent on him [Charles] for favours'.¹³⁷ This case offers a useful analogue to Æthelstan's dealings with the magnates in the similarly troubled, and freshly subdued, Northumbrian region: both he and Charles attempted to solidify their authority over, and therefore the loyalty of, these localities through their subscription to mechanisms of centralisation. Not only that, but by making themselves the sole possible provider of patronage, these kings also tied powerful local magnates to themselves in material terms.

There would of course have been some practical considerations involved in Æthelstan's choice to remain in the south for gatherings of state. Home is where the proverbial heart (and provision) is, and arguably the further one went from Wessex, the fewer resources were

¹³⁵ On this see Barrow, 'Earliest regatta'; Dalton, 'Peacemaking', and Wickham, 'Consensus and assemblies'.

¹³⁶ Martindale, 'Government of Aquitaine', at p. 129.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-32. For the distribution of patronage exclusively as a prerogative of Carolingian kings for control of the periphery see Smith, '*Fines imperii*', at p. 183.

available to sustain large meetings of the royal court.¹³⁸ But it is worth noting that by the time Æthelstan went north in 927, Mercia and the Five Boroughs were securely within his remit thanks to Edward's conquests in this region.¹³⁹ Ealdred, lord of Bamburgh, had probably already 'submitted' in 926, and in any case this family had been friendly with the West-Saxon dynasty since Alfred's day.¹⁴⁰ Ealdorman Uhtred had been well established as a man of influence under the West-Saxon king in the Five Boroughs and/or Northern Mercia since Edward's reign (and reaffirmed by Æthelstan in 926),¹⁴¹ Ealdorman Alfred may have already been set up in East Anglia,¹⁴² and Æthelstan had himself after all been elected king in Mercia. From a practical perspective a more northerly itinerary would thus not have gone entirely unsupported. This coupled with the symbolic and practical implications of bringing northern magnates south suggests that there were deliberate elements to this southern-assembly policy, and that it was at least partly developed as a strategy for Æthelstan's cultivation of his authority over, and therefore the loyalty of, the northern magnates. Æthelstan's approach to this issue in the years after 927 was overall one of political assimilation and indeed of assertion rather than one founded upon the formation of personal bonds of trust and communities of shared interest.

In this context, one must wonder whether the presence of these Northern magnates at southern assemblies seems more likely to represent any far-reaching policy by Æthelstan to *seek* consensus amongst geographically-dispersed magnates in an expanded realm,¹⁴³ or indeed

¹³⁸ For arguments to this effect see Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 63; cf. the concentration of royal manors and the farm of one night render in Wessex: Stafford, 'The farm of one night', at pp. 500-2 and Lavelle, *Estates*, pp. 13-47.

¹³⁹ See Edward's activities: *ASC* a. 917, 918, 920. Wainwright, 'North-West Mercia', pp. 25-6; Keynes, 'Edward', at pp. 55-7.

¹⁴⁰ Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 233; See *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, c. 22, for the statement that Ealdred was loved by Edward just as his father Eadwulf was loved by Alfred.

¹⁴¹ S 397, with discussion in Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 3. On Uhtred more widely see Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey', at pp. 33-4

¹⁴² Although he did not begin to attest Æthelstan's charters until 930, that when he did it was alongside Uhtred suggests that these men had been in positions of power before they started attesting at court, and that Æthelstan only started having the midlands ealdormen attesting charters from the 930s: Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 95.

¹⁴³ Such an explanation for the larger and more heterogenous nature of assemblies is implied by Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 31-2 and Dumville, 'Æthelstan', at p. 148.

one intended to use the presence – and implied loyalty – of the northern magnates to *create* consensus about his kingship amongst those of the south. Discussions of Æthelstan’s incursion into northern politics in 926 with his sister’s marriage to King Sihtric of York, and then his annexation of the kingdom in 927, have normally centred around his intentions to secure his kingdom’s northern border or to assert himself as the only king in England.¹⁴⁴ We should however be cautious not to overlook the southern political context in which they occurred and any possible ensuing causality. Æthelstan probably struggled for authority in the Wessex heartlands in the earliest years of his reign.¹⁴⁵ The West-Saxon magnates had probably formed Ælfweard’s power base, and although Æthelstan was attended by the southern ealdormen at the time, the first time he actually issued land in this region was in 928.¹⁴⁶ It is at least possible that Æthelstan’s movements in the north were intended to increase his legitimacy as king in the eyes of the south. Æthelstan’s land granting in the south began in earnest – indeed more so than his predecessors – in the aftermath of his move North.¹⁴⁷ This must have meant that either the increased prestige, power and probably therefore authority that accompanied this, combined with the implied acquisition of lands in these areas, affected his remit in the south.

This need not have been simply a happy consequence of Æthelstan’s northern movements. It may well have been an objective. It is here salutary to recall the poem *Carte dirige gressus*, written in the direct aftermath of the meeting at Eamont in July 927 while the king was still in the north for members of the royal court at one of the king’s burhs in the south.¹⁴⁸ It is particularly significant in this context that there existed clear associations, both in terms of structural proximity and the notions of development implied by the term *iam* (now)

¹⁴⁴ Examples include: Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 161; Dumville, ‘Æthelstan’, at p. 146; Wood, ‘Monsters’, at p. 200; Lapidge, ‘Poems’, at p. 91; Molyneaux, ‘Why were some’, at p. 79.

¹⁴⁵ On the causes and manifestations of this see Keynes, ‘England, 900-1016’, at pp. 467-8; Yorke, ‘Æthelwold’, at pp. 70-73; Thacker, ‘Dynastic monasteries’, at pp. 254-7; and Keynes, *LV*, pp. 19-22.

¹⁴⁶ S 400.

¹⁴⁷ See Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 73, 135. Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 97-8.

¹⁴⁸ Text and translation in Lapidge, ‘Poems’, at pp. 88-90.

between Æthelstan's conquests in the north and his power in the south. For the development in the nature of Æthelstan's rule implied in the lines 'whom he now rules with this / England made whole /' can be interpreted not only in terms of his extended realm,¹⁴⁹ but also as implying a development in Æthelstan's authority over these men in this new context. It is also significant that the loyalty of Constantin is explicitly mentioned in this poem: this fact brought Æthelstan power and contributed to the image of legitimacy built by the poem and intended originally for southern eyes. That the poem was copied in both Northumbria and Wessex further encourages the prospect of a contemporary awareness of the calculated concentricity in Æthelstan's northern and southern policies, namely the role played by the submission of the north, and therefore the subordination of its magnates, in the king's efforts to consolidate power in the south.¹⁵⁰ It is in this context that we ought to interpret the continuation of Æthelstan's northern policy, i.e. the regular displacement south of northern magnates for royal assemblies. Their presence at these events demonstrated their subordination, and the king's power through his ability to require their attendance, and could thus plausibly have been intended by Æthelstan as an exhibition to important southern magnates of his authority as a *basileus*.¹⁵¹

To stay for a moment on the topic of the West-Saxon elite, Æthelstan's changes to the frequency, and possibly structure, of assemblies, whilst holding them in such concentration in Wessex, represent his management of this relationship in other, more direct ways. In comparison with Alfred's reign, where assemblies appear to have been rarer, to Edward's, the latter half of which leaves no trace whatsoever of assemblies, and to the discussions above about the much greater consistency of assembly attendance amongst royal thegns under

¹⁴⁹ This is the poem's common interpretation by historians, e.g. Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 19, 112, 161; Lapidge, 'Poems', at pp. 91-3.

¹⁵⁰ On the two manuscripts containing the poem, which probably originated respectively in Chester-le-Street and 'furthestmost Wessex, possibly at St-Germans', see Lapidge, 'Poems', at pp. 83-86.

¹⁵¹ On Æthelstan's use of this style see Foot, *Æthelstan*, p. 213 and Jorn, *Orbis*, p. 52. On Æthelstan's styles in a wider context see Reuter, 'The making', at pp. 296-8.

Æthelstan compared to that under his father and grandfather,¹⁵² Æthelstan's emphasis on assemblies would have meant real changes to the ways in which these men interacted with their king, with the introduction of greater elements of formalisation, of institutionalisation, and of collective administration to the relationship dynamic. Assemblies would further have been controlled environments where the king could meet his magnates face-to-face, but which also would have functioned as arenas in which the king could discharge his role 'publicly', and indeed thus where interactions would have happened in a decidedly hierarchical, performative dynamic.¹⁵³ As George Molyneaux put it, 'the basic point [of assemblies is] that turning up at such a gathering amounted to recognition of the superiority of the person at whose behest it had been organised'.¹⁵⁴ The king was the superior, and everyone else in attendance, by virtue of their response to the summons and the capacities in which they participated, were the subordinates. A natural by-product of assemblies would have been reminding men of this dynamic and its reinforcement through its enactment, but would also probably have provided opportunities for the development of a sense of community which, under Alfred and Edward, had been provided by constant conflict.¹⁵⁵ The fact that a king would choose to make these meetings more frequent and more impressive, in a time and place where his authority was uncertain, is telling about the motivations which lay behind such changes. When this is considered along the more indirect strategy of insisting upon the presence of newly conquered Northern magnates, assemblies, moreover, can be shown to have served as a dual mechanism in Æthelstan's management of his southern elite. They allowed him to strengthen his authority over West-Saxon magnates by exercising it, whilst simultaneously allowing for the articulation

¹⁵² See the analysis section for Æthelstan in Chapter Two.

¹⁵³ The fact that so many of them seem to have been 'legislative meetings' (Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 53-4), the ultimate effect of which would have been the articulation and demonstration of royal authority over the actions of subjects, lends itself to this interpretation.

¹⁵⁴ Molyneaux, *Formation*, p. 56.

¹⁵⁵ Roach has suggested on this topic that as the borders of England were no longer threatened by invading Danes, the king had more time and resources to organise these impressive gatherings whilst the kingdom's magnates had more freedom to attend them: *Kingship and Consent*, p. 32.

of shared superiority over the other peoples of Britain which would have cultivated a sense of communal identity and belief in the ruler.

Although the names of the northern magnates cease to be recorded after 934, there is no evidence that Æthelstan's strategies in ruling these men changed, and one wonders whether a confirmation of the strategy outlined above cannot be seen in the troubles of 937 which culminated in the battle of Brunanburh. As Michael Wood argued, basing himself on William of Malmesbury's verbatim quotations from a Latin panegyric about Æthelstan, the object of the coalition's incursions in 937 had been Northumbria, and these men had willingly, even gladly, submitted themselves to the invaders.¹⁵⁶ It seems that the Norse forces began their offensive by raiding deep into northern Mercia, a move which would only have been possible with the cooperation of the Northumbrians.¹⁵⁷ Æthelstan's campaign in 937 might be seen as an assault to subdue the Danes of York as much as one to defend the English kingdom against the incursions of Olafr, Constantín and Owain,¹⁵⁸ and in any case would an anti-English coalition in 937 have been so bold, or caused so much damage or required such a strong reaction, had Æthelstan simply ruled Northumbria differently starting in 927? The actions of the magnates who supported the invaders in 937 moreover suggest those of men whose loyalty had not been achieved because effective integration had not taken place, and they had not been offered incentives they actually found valuable. That the incursions of Olafr even got so far as to make a battle such as Brunanburh necessary might be thanks to Æthelstan's own failures in his approaches to the loyalty of the Northumbrians, and thus in truly ruling as 'king of the English'.

¹⁵⁶ Wood, 'Brunanburh revisited', at p. 201. The passage itself is in *GR* i, p. 151. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. Murphy, a. 931 (= 937) further say that the allies gave battle with the support of the Danes within England, who can hardly be other than the Northumbrians. On their involvement see also Blair, 'The Northumbrians', at pp. 100-1; Smyth, *Scandinavian York* II, pp. 35-6, 43-4.

¹⁵⁷ Wood, 'Brunanburh revisited', at p. 202.

¹⁵⁸ *ASC* a. 937. Historians traditionally have focused upon the latter as motivation: e.g. Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 242-3, Woolf, *From Pictland*, pp. 168-75, Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 169-72; with Smyth, *Scandinavian York* II, pp. 36, 43-4 locating the conflict in the wider context of York's desire to remain independent from Wessex.

Ought the travels of the midland magnates (ealdormen Alfred, Æthelstan and Uhtred's) south to attend assemblies from 930x931 onward be seen in the same light as those of the York magnates?¹⁵⁹ Probably not. The situation of the midland magnates differed significantly from that of the York magnates in relation to the south. They had been ruled by West-Saxon kings for much longer than the Northumbrians, West-Saxon infrastructure in the form of burhs and administration extended into the region, and the Mercian magnates had elected Æthelstan as king. It is more likely that Æthelstan's requirement for men like Æthelstan Half-King to make the journey south simply had different connotations than it did for Northumbrian magnates. It is perfectly plausible that these men were loyal to the king but that travel south to attend assemblies, the business of most of which was not directly relevant to midlands matters, was simply not yet in practice as a mechanism of governance by 928. Perhaps Æthelstan was only able to legitimately require the midlands magnates to attend regular southern assemblies once he had done so for the newly conquered northern magnates. The charters of Edward and Alfred reveal that Mercian ealdormen only witnessed charters, and therefore probably only attended assemblies, that dealt with matters in which they would have had an interest.¹⁶⁰ Whilst Æthelstan's approach to managing his relationship with prominent men from the Midlands might not have been as forceful as that aimed at the Northumbrians, the implication is that his dynamic with these individuals was subsumed into a centralised approach focused on Wessex. Edmund, as will be seen below, can be seen taking a different approach than his brother.

Æthelstan's assembly politics provide a window onto some of the ways in which he managed his relationships with the secular elite of his kingdom, and suggest they were used as

¹⁵⁹ It is not possible to discern the outlines of a 'Mercian' contingent in Æthelstan's royal thegns. The only individual who can be identified with relative certainty as Mercian is Eadric 1, who began attesting at the same time as did the midlands ealdormen (S 403 in 930). See his entry in Table 8 above in Chapter Two.

¹⁶⁰ The only diploma in Alfred's reign attended by Æthelred was S 346 in 892, which had to do with London and which was jointly issued by Alfred and Æthelred. In Edward's reign, S 361, 367, 367a and 371 are all attested by Æthelred and Æthelflaed but are also jointly issued in their names and deal with lands in Mercia and with Mercian beneficiaries.

mechanisms to leverage the loyalty of the secular elite in a number of ways. His choice to conduct matters of state in the south suggests a process of negotiation when it came to the West-Saxon loyalty, one where the secular elite were courted, their probable reluctance to leave West Saxon heartlands for distant political gatherings respected, their council on legal matters sought,¹⁶¹ and where land was granted for good service,¹⁶² but simultaneously belies an interest in the potential of assemblies for the articulation of his authority over these same men. Æthelstan's approach to the loyalty of the northern magnates as observed through his management of this relationship at assemblies was centred on control, the assertion of authority, and also probably upon the prospect of boosting his legitimacy in the eyes of the West-Saxon elite. In this way Æthelstan would have created amongst these West Saxon men a shared sense of participation in his quasi-imperial rule, of common cause in their superiority over Danish, Welsh and Cornish leaders.¹⁶³

Edmund

The surviving evidence for Edmund's assemblies suggests a slight reorientation at the inception of his reign towards the east and the midlands compared to Æthelstan. In the first year of his reign Edmund had assemblies at Colchester in Essex (S 472), and Chippenham in north Wiltsire (S 473); and in 942 he was in Winchcombe (S 479), a Mercian town.¹⁶⁴ These also happen to be the only surviving records of Edmund's assemblies. Whilst we are undoubtedly

¹⁶¹ On the exchange between royal and peripheral legal texts demonstrated by the codes see Pratt, 'Written law', at p. 340 and Roach, 'Law codes'. On the partnership between the king and the *witan* demonstrated by the codes see Maddicott, *The Origin*, pp. 28-30 and Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 137-8.

¹⁶² See section on Æthelstan in Chapter Two above.

¹⁶³ For the 'imperial notion' of Æthelstan's kingship and how he treated the Northumbrians, Scots and Welsh see Dumville, 'Æthelstan', at pp. 153-5, and on the 'demands' of Æthelstan over these peoples see Molyneaux, *Formation*, pp. 61-2 and *Armes Prydein*, ed. Williams, ll. 17-22, 69-86 on the onerous taxation imposed on the Welsh by an unnamed English king. Charles-Edward, *Wales*, pp. 519-35.

¹⁶⁴ Sawyer, 'The royal tun', appendix.

not seeing the whole picture, what remains suggests that Edmund and his councillors may have thought the relationship between the West-Saxon king and his Mercian representatives required immediate attention. As we have seen, the balance between the location of assemblies, who was required to attend them and how the king dealt with these men generally can be shown to connote some of the king's approaches to his relationship with his leading men. The location of Edmund's assemblies in 940 and 942 could thus represent an effort on his behalf to take communities of power to the eastern and Mercian men, rather than the other way round.

In his first year Edmund also promoted four ealdormen. Three were to new ealdordoms in Mercia, probably in the west as Uhtred and Æthelstan were in the east: Ealhhelm, who was probably ealdorman of the Hwicce and had ties to Evesham, Æthelstan (not the Half-King) to north-west Mercia, and Æthelmund in the Hereford region.¹⁶⁵ A fourth, Æthelwold (a brother of Æthelstan Half-King's), was promoted to the ealdordom of the east-Wessex provinces.¹⁶⁶ What is remarkable however is not only that so many new offices were created in one year, but what policies these appointments represent. Æthelwold was from a Mercian family, that of Æthelstan and of Æthelfrith ealdorman of Mercia before him, whilst Æthelstan of north-west Mercia and Æthelmund were probably West-Saxon.¹⁶⁷ Æthelwold's will records that he received significant land grants in Wessex from the king, which suggests that establishing noblemen in new regions must have involved substantial investment by kings.¹⁶⁸ Further evidence of Edmund's greater attention to Mercian relationships after 940 can be found in the rising star of Æthelstan Half-King, who by 943-4 had become the most important ealdorman at Edmund's court, seemingly at the expense of the leading West-Saxon ealdorman, Wulfgar. Æthelwold, the Mercian ealdorman in Wessex, witnesses next after Æthelstan after 942 and

¹⁶⁵ Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 109-115. Æthelwold, Ealhhelm and Æthelmund appear all together in S 465. Æthelstan's first attestation is in S 469.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 113. On Æthelstan Half-King's family being of Mercian rather than West-Saxon extraction see Banton, esp. p. 98.

¹⁶⁸ S 1504. On Æthelwold see Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 112; cf. Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 119.

above him in 946. Such integration of the West-Saxon and Mercian nobilities was unparalleled, and along with the creation of new offices represented part of Edmund's novel approach to the loyalty of the magnates upon whom he would need to depend if he were to outlast the threat of Olaf, to whom we will come in a moment.

We might see a corroboration of this 'Mercian policy' in the way Edmund granted land. Edmund is the first king for whom we have sustained evidence of granting to Mercian men, and men who had important Mercian contacts. The first of these was Wulfsgie the Black, to whom Edmund granted two charters in 942: S 479 in 942 for forty hides in Staffordshire, and S 484/1606 for land in Derbyshire.¹⁶⁹ Peter Sawyer has pointed out that these lands controlled strategic routes through Mercia and the Five Boroughs, and regarded this series to Wulfsgie as 'one of the means whereby Edmund reasserted English royal authority in central Mercia'.¹⁷⁰ The second was Eadric, probably one of Edmund's military retainers and a Mercian, to whom he leased four hides in Gloucestershire, granted land in Wiltshire and Berkshire.¹⁷¹ The third was a certain Æthelric, to whom Edmund gave an estate at *Gætesdena* in Hertfordshire.¹⁷² The fourth was Wulfric, probably a kinsman of the new Mercian ealdorman Ealhhelm and of Dunstan who received S 472 and 473 in 940.¹⁷³ A case can be made for his Mercian origins, or at least connexions, in several ways. His relation to ealdorman Ealhhelm is indicated by the passing of one of his estates to Ælfwine who was an important Mercian thegn from 956-70 and probably the brother of ealdormen Ælfhere and Ælfheah, and thus probably Ealhhelm's son.¹⁷⁴ The diplomas for land in Grittleton and Langley, Wiltshire (S 472 and 473) he received from Edmund are the first in the 'alliterative series' issued in Edmund's and Eadred's reigns, most

¹⁶⁹ See Sawyer, *Burton*, nos. 6, 7. One of S 484 and S 1606 is a forgery but it is impossible to know which.

¹⁷⁰ Sawyer, 'Charters of Burton Abbey', at p. 38.

¹⁷¹ S 467, 478, 491. On Eadric see his entry in Edmund's table of royal thegns above (Table 12).

¹⁷² S 1497. See Crick, *St Albans*, pp. 93-4, and nos. 7, 7a. Whitelock, *Will of Æthelgifu*, pp. 38-44.

¹⁷³ See Williams, 'Princeps', at pp. 146, 154-55; Brooks, 'Career', at pp. 8-10; Hart, *ECNE*, p. 371-2.

¹⁷⁴ S 472. Glastonbury's *Liber Terrarum* elaborates that it was Wulfric's successor Ælfwine who gave the estates S 472 and 504 to Glastonbury (Abrams, *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury*, p. 32). For the identification of Ælfwine as Ælfheah's brother see Williams, 'Princeps', pp. 154-5.

of which dealt with lands to the north of the Thames, involved attestations of midland and northern magnates, and were connected to the Worcester scriptorium.¹⁷⁵ Finally, this Wulfric was probably the recipient of an extensive grant in Gloucestershire from Eadred, S 550.¹⁷⁶ The fifth was ealdorman Æthelstan Half-King of East Anglia, who received land in Berkshire and Somerset in 942.¹⁷⁷

Here, again, in the first few years of Edmund's reign we see him paying obvious attention to his midland relationships. This is more than any surviving evidence for what Æthelstan did in this region, suggesting that from the very beginning of his reign Edmund took the midlands policy in a different direction than had his brother. He leaves significant evidence of having actively reinforced relationships via the granting of bookland and of administrative office, and perhaps via more frequent royal visits. It is hard to escape the conclusion that this was done with an eye to securing the loyalty of men in these regions, to create a group of Mercian leading men who, although not all attending southern assemblies, could refract West-Saxon royal interests in the midlands.

Again, consideration of the context of these developments in policy helps us to ascertain their motives. Olaf Guthfrithsson lost no time upon hearing of Æthelstan's death and succeeded in entering York before the end of 939. The Chronicle tells us that 'The Northumbrians were false to their pledges and chose Olaf from Ireland as king'.¹⁷⁸ The mention of the Northumbrians' pledges and oaths would come up again in Eadred's reign, indicating that this was repeatedly the first recourse of West-Saxon kings when dealing with the Danes of York.¹⁷⁹ Presumably oaths had been made to Æthelstan after Brunanburh, but regardless of whether the Danes thought his death brought about the end of their obligations,

¹⁷⁵ On the alliterative series see Sawyer, *Burton*, pp. xlvi-xlix; Keynes, 'Koenwald', at pp. 273-5; Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 431-53; and Dumville, 'A twelfth-century translation'.

¹⁷⁶ Williams, '*Princeps*', at p. 146 n. 11; Hart, *ECNE*, p. 372. Cf. Sawyer, *Burton*, p. xli.

¹⁷⁷ S 480, 481.

¹⁷⁸ *ASC* D a. 941 (= 939).

¹⁷⁹ See *ASC* a. 947, D a. 948.

it seems they had once again transferred their allegiance when given the chance. In 940 Olaf marched south to Northampton, and when it resisted him he continued to Tamworth and took Wulfrun captive, a high-ranking Mercian lady who was probably a relative of Wulfsige the Black, the later beneficiary of several estates mentioned above.¹⁸⁰ Edmund besieged Olaf, who had Archbishop Wulfstan I of York with him, at Leicester, whence they escaped by night, after which Olaf and Edmund negotiated a treaty with the help of Archbishops Oda of Canterbury and Wulfstan of York which saw Olaf's territory end at Watling Street.¹⁸¹ This was the furthest south the border with the Danes had come since Alfred's time, and must have seriously worried Edmund and the English *witan*. It was at this time that Edmund created the ealdordoms in south-west Mercia for Ealhhelm, Æthelstan of north-west Mercia and Æthelmund discussed previously and appointed the Mercian Æthelwold to a West Saxon office.¹⁸²

Olaf would not have been able to make these gains without the consent of the York Danes, the active participation of whom is indicated by Wulfstan's presence at Olaf's side in 940.¹⁸³ Roger of Wendover, who probably drew on now-lost northern annals for this material, recorded that Olaf was able to gain the southern Danelaw through the help and counsel of earl Ormr (probably the earl 'Urm' who attests first out of the Scandinavian witnesses to Æthelstan's charters), whose daughter he married.¹⁸⁴ There is reason to believe, as Banton argued, that Ormr was a Northumbrian Dane who owned land in north-east Mercia and had influence there.¹⁸⁵ Indeed that Olaf married Ormr's daughter at all suggests that Olaf might have met some resistance in the Five Boroughs and the southern Danelaw which he could only get around by making his takeover truly worthwhile for the York Danes – in this case, for the

¹⁸⁰ ASC D 943 (= 940-943). On Wulfrun see Insley, 'Wulfric', pp. 122-3.

¹⁸¹ Symeon, *HR*, a. 939 (= 940), *EHD*, p. 276. On the *HR* see Blair, 'Some observations'.

¹⁸² On these appointments see Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 109-115.

¹⁸³ Smyth, *Scandinavian York*, p. 93.

¹⁸⁴ Roger of Wendover, *Flores*, ed. Coxe, a. 940; Wood, 'Monsters', at p. 202 deemed Roger's account trustworthy on an aspect of Æthelstan's reign; Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 278.

¹⁸⁵ Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 240-2. See entry '(Th)Urum' in Table 7 (Æthelstan's earls) in Chapter Two above, with note.

most eminent amongst them to become kin with the powerful Dublin-York royal dynasty. We should interpret Edmund's creation of new ealdordoms in light of these events, and his granting of land in 942 to Mercians or to men with powerful Mercian connexions. Edmund realised that he might be competing for the loyalty of men whose every day lives were conducted within the spheres of influence of powerful men who probably preferred an independent Northumbria, and if not independent, then ruled by someone other than the West-Saxon king.

Edmund's reign is obscure, and so are his designs when it came to ruling the men of his realm. What remains does however allow us to see a clear reorientation of royal attention towards Mercia, probably representing Edmund's recognition of its huge importance as both a buffer zone and a base from which to tackle the recalcitrant denizens of the Vale of York. Edmund developed novel approaches to the rule of south-western Mercia in 940, and north-eastern Mercia in 942, which suggests an interest in the creation of communities of interest through techniques of administrative and personal integration. He also had an obvious interest in the stability and longevity of loyalty to the king, evidenced by his charters for land in Mercia which granted land on these conditions,¹⁸⁶ unique in the charter record, and the oath contained in his legislation of 946,¹⁸⁷ all of which ought to be seen as driven by concerns about the extent to which loyalty to the West Saxon kings was an attractive proposition to men in the southern Danelaw. Edmund moreover attempted to secure loyalty by extending his presence and relevance rather than by focusing all relationships through the lens of his own charisma and West-Saxon ambition.

¹⁸⁶ The only surviving charters which explicitly link the grant to an expectation of continuing loyalty are S 478, 508 and 484, all from Edmund's reign.

¹⁸⁷ On which see above in Chapter One, pp. 68-78

Eadred

From the diplomatic evidence, it quickly becomes evident that Eadred devised policies tailor-made for the particularities of the Northumbrian issue. It is immediately striking that the names of the Northern magnates reappear in the witness list of Eadred's first charter after having been absent since 934.¹⁸⁸ In fact they appear in four more of the genuine charters from Eadred's reign.¹⁸⁹ Whilst this might at first suggest that Eadred was returning to Æthelstan's approach, an important detail lies in the fact that all four of these charters were part of the 'alliterative' series, the majority of which were concerned with lands in Mercia and which were some of the earliest diplomas of West Saxon rulers for Mercia and the Danelaw.¹⁹⁰ Although many of the alliterative charters do not include a place of issue, those that do suggest that these documents were often issued when the king's court travelled north of the normal royal itinerary to places such as Kingston (Surrey), Kirtlington (Oxfordshire), and Winchcombe (Gloucestershire).¹⁹¹ This might in turn suggest that Eadred devised an arrangement whereby the northern earls were only expected to come to assemblies whose objects were individuals and lands germane to their own interests, thus giving them a greater incentive to participate in West-Saxon political institutions and thus to slowly become more amenable to their role as subordinates within those institutions.

Before placing any weight on this idea, it is necessary to address whether the Northern earls' attestations should be attributed simply to a documentary filter. Several factors make this

¹⁸⁸ S 520.

¹⁸⁹ S 544, 550, 552a and 557. Osulf high-reeve of Bamburgh's attestation is present in S 946, but this charter is of uncertain authenticity: Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 27, n. 40; Lapidge, 'Æthelwold', at pp. 91-2.

¹⁹⁰ On which see Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 431-53, and for a conspectus of Eadred's alliterative charters see esp. pp. 433-4.

¹⁹¹ The diplomas in the alliterative series which provide their place of issue are the following: S 473 (Chippenham, north Wiltshire); S 479, 484, 1606 (Winchcombe, Gloucestershire); S 1497 which records Edmund's gift of land at *Gatesdena* (Kirtlington, Oxfordshire); S 520 (Kingston, Surrey); S 549 (Somerton, Somerset); S 633 (Cirencester, Gloucestershire). None of the alliterative charters from Eadred's reign provide their place of issue except S 520 and 549, and one of these is from the borderlands between Wessex and Mercia (S 520).

unlikely. The diploma for Wulfhelm *miles*, for example, issued in 951, does not actually record the names of the earls present, instead noting that ‘six *duces* and *eorles* subscribed’, along with five *ministri* and *praelecti*.¹⁹² This care to record the presence of the northern earls along with that of the ealdormen and thegns, even if their names were not actually set down, suggests that if the northern magnates were present it was expected that this would be recorded even if simply in this cursory manner. By extension, if no record was made of their presence, we should consider the possibility that they actually were not there. In his rationale for the documentary filter explanation, Levi Roach argues that English interests in Wales and Northumbria were not confined to the periods in which the charters which contain the Welsh and northern attestations were produced, and so we ‘should do well to presume that they were an occasional presence at assemblies throughout this era’.¹⁹³ It is of course impossible to prove this either way, however it seems unwise to presume that the absence at assemblies of magnates from certain areas would have communicated the message that the English had abandoned their interests in these areas. Consider anytime a Mercian ealdorman may have been absent from an assembly, or Uhtred of the Five Boroughs. It is not assumed that these ealdormen needed to be there in order for West-Saxon interest in the area to remain. Additionally, the two charters in Eadred’s reign which were for one of these Danelaw earls¹⁹⁴ would ostensibly have been ones in which these magnates would have had greater interest, but were not marked as being witnessed by Northern earls.

Roach also frequently alludes to the fact that the northern earls’ names only appear in charters from ‘idiosyncratic agencies’ relative to mainstream royal diplomatic – namely the Æthelstan-A and alliterative series, and Edgar’s Danelaw charters, and that these agencies were all more likely to include northern earls in their witness lists because of the draftsman’s

¹⁹² S 557 (Sawyer, *Burton*, no. 11).

¹⁹³ Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁴ S 548 and 569, both probably for ealdorman Uhtred of the Five Boroughs and for lands in Derbyshire.

‘personal choice’.¹⁹⁵ Yet if these agencies were idiosyncratic, which they certainly were, it is counterintuitive to claim that that a commonality in idiosyncrasy can explain the presence of common elements – namely, the names of northern magnates in their witness lists – especially if they are spread over the reigns of four kings. Instead, we should approach the problem from the other direction: perhaps these agencies were set up specifically, or at least in part, to reflect a reorientation, a self-conscious change in diplomatic style and in those expected to participate, because the matters being dealt with or the ideological messages being sent differed from the norm. We have already seen how the presence of the Northumbrian magnates at Æthelstan’s assemblies probably had symbolic meaning, whilst the Æthelstan-A charters themselves are well known to be bombastic and concerned with Æthelstan’s royal titulature, both of which were changed as a result of the annexation of the north.¹⁹⁶ As for the alliterative charters, rather than representing the incidental inclusion of the northern magnates due to the geographic location of the grant and the scribe’s personal choice, they could represent the specific, isolated instances the northern magnates were at court, and thus could have fulfilled a particular political function.

This theory is further supported by the fact that the pattern of the northern earls’ attestations of alliterative charters during Eadred’s reign seems apparently to coincide with the shifting political situation in Northumbria. Eadred’s reign saw the incursion of Erik Bloodaxe into the Northumbrian scene, a son of King Harald of Norway and a figure who added yet another element into the English kings’ long and complex struggle for the York Danes’ submission.¹⁹⁷ In 948, shortly after Eadred accepted the submission of archbishop Wulfstan and the Northumbrian *witan*, they chose Erik for their king.¹⁹⁸ This caused Eadred to invade

¹⁹⁵ Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 37-39.

¹⁹⁶ On the scribe Æthelstan-A see Woodman, ‘Athelstan A’ and Chaplais, ‘The royal Anglo-Saxon ‘chancery’’ at pp. 47-9.

¹⁹⁷ On Erik see Sawyer, ‘The last’ and Woolf, ‘Eric Bloodaxe’. cf. Clare Downham’s two articles, ‘Eric Bloodaxe axed’ and ‘The chronology’.

¹⁹⁸ *ASC* D a. 948.

Northumbria, ravaging the countryside and burning Ripon, and when he was on his way home the York army attacked Eadred's men at Castleford. In a rare description of a king's emotions, the Chronicle records that 'the king became so angry that he wished to march back into the land [Northumbria] and destroy it utterly'. In the face of what must have been an impressive show of Mercian and West-Saxon strength, the York Danes abandoned Erik and paid compensation to Eadred.¹⁹⁹ Olaf *Cuaran* then became king in York once more in 949 until 952 when the Northumbrian *witan* again chose Erik as king, who remained until 954 when the Northumbrians drove him out and Eadred succeeded to the kingdom.²⁰⁰ It is difficult to reconstruct the dynamic of the relationship between Eadred and the York Danes for this period when the Chronicle entries are so meagre, but since we only have record of Eadred attacking them when they recognised Erik as king, and no record of West-Saxon attacks from 949-952 when Olaf was king, the existence of an agreement between Eadred and Olaf whereby the latter ruled York on behalf of Wessex seems possible. Perhaps Eadred intended to use Olaf as a way of placating the York Danes whilst slowly getting them used to recognising the West-Saxon king as their lord. The story told by the attestations of the northern magnates seems to support this. Figure 2 shows all of the surviving genuine alliterative charters of Eadred's reign with the ones attested by northern magnates highlighted in orange, and sets this against a timeline of the kings who held Northumbria from 946-955.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ ASC E a. 949, DE a. 952, D a. 954.

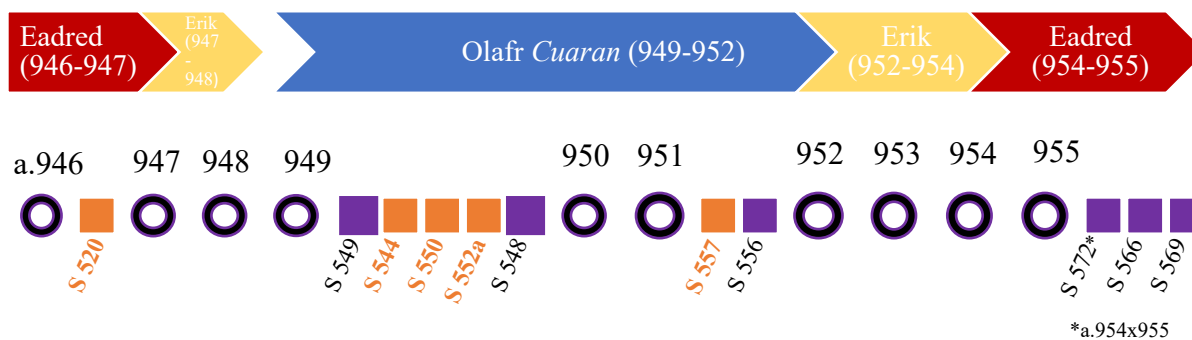


Figure 2: All apparently genuine alliterative charters issued during Eadred's reign with those attested by northern magnates coloured orange (S 520, 544, 550, 552a, 557) and those not attested by these magnates in purple, against a timeline of contemporary kings in York. A break occurs in the top timeline from 948-949 because Erik was expelled in 948, but we only have record of Olaf returning to York in 949.

Although this graphic only represents surviving charters and so probably does not give us the full picture, northern magnates' attestations were not part of the witness lists of all alliterative charters, even though all of these dealt with roughly the same geographic area. They only seem to have attested charters when Eadred or Olaf were king and disappear when Erik was king. Indeed no alliterative charters survive from the years when Erik was king in York. Many regular charters survive from the years 947 and 948, a few survive from 953-955, with none surviving from 952. However, the fact that royal charters were still being produced in Eadred's name for most of the times during which Erik reigned in York precludes the notion that the absence of alliterative charters from these years can be attributed to some halt in centralised royal diploma production, which leaves us with the suggestion that the absence of alliterative charters from these years reflects actual pauses in their production. This in turn would point to a link between the production of alliterative charters, northern earls' participation in them, and who was in charge of York. This correlation further supports the notion that the presence of northern attestations in witness lists was not simply the result of a documentary filter, and instead signified a deliberate choice by Eadred and his *witan* to involve these men in West-Saxon institutions in specific ways, at specific times.

Thinking of this now in terms of the wider context of relations between the English kingdom and Northumbria at this time, it is plausible that the assemblies that produced the alliterative charters were used by Eadred as a way of developing the relationship with these men in more neutral circumstances. In asking them to come south he was following Æthelstan, but mediated by requiring them to come only to certain assemblies which dispensed land, and probably discussed issues, in areas of potentially greater interest and relevance to them. Eadred was also not insisting they come as far south as Æthelstan had. This could have allowed the Northumbrian elite to keep total subordination to Eadred at arm's length, whilst allowing Eadred to keep advancing his agenda albeit more gradually, and may have constituted some sort of compromise. Eadred's acceptance of the submission of Wulfstan and the Northumbrian *witan* at Tanshelf, on the southern border of Northumbria, may have been driven by the same spirit.²⁰¹ It may even be possible that through the alliterative charters, Eadred attempted to create a community of interest between the Mercians, the men of the southern Danelaw and the Northumbrians. Certainly some the charters in this series stressed West-Saxon leadership of the Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian and Celtic peoples.²⁰² But it seems that this strategy was only viable when Eadred himself or Olafr was in charge in York, with the communications corridor breaking down during the periods when Erik was king. It was perhaps when one of these communications corridors was operational, i.e. 946-7 or 949-952, that Eadred visited Abingdon with his 'Northumbrian thegns' who drank to such excess.²⁰³

Eadred seems also to have paid particular attention to the development of his relationship with the lords of Bamburgh and their kin, a policy which may at its heart have been intended to put pressure on the York Danes. He was generous with land in Derbyshire to members of this family, granting land to ealdorman Uhtred in 949, who only appeared in

²⁰¹ Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, p. 52.

²⁰² S 520, 544, 548-50, 569, 572, and 566. See Hart, *Danelaw*, pp. 443-4 and Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 120-1.

²⁰³ *VÆ*, c. 12, p. 22.

alliterative charters during this period;²⁰⁴ to Ulfcytel in the same year, who may have been the Ulfcytel who gave lands to the community of St Cuthbert around this time²⁰⁵ and who witnessed Danelaw charters under Edgar, and who was ‘the son of Osulf’, who may have been Osulf the high-reeve of Bamburgh,²⁰⁶ and in 955 to Uhtred Cild, who may have been a relative of ealdorman Uhtred.²⁰⁷ Osulf also attested several charters (S 520, 544, 550, 552a and 546) after having been absent at the West-Saxon court since Æthelstan’s reign. It seems plausible that these overtures can be explained as efforts to strengthen the West-Saxon king’s bond with the Bamburgh family with the ultimate aim being better to contain the Danes of York.²⁰⁸ There are indications of a long-standing conflict between the Danes of York and Bernicia which would have created animosity of which a West-Saxon king could take advantage.²⁰⁹ The History of St Cuthbert relates that when Ragnall arrived in Northumbria during Edward’s reign (c.914-16) he occupied the lands of Ealdred, lord of Bamburgh, who was put to flight and sought help from Constantine, who then allied himself with Ealdred at the Battle of Corbridge in 918.²¹⁰ Ragnall then seized lands belonging to St Cuthbert and gave them to his followers Scule and Olaf Ball.²¹¹ Scule, it should be remembered, was still attesting charters as a leading York magnate during Eadred’s reign.²¹² Symeon wrote that in 941 ‘Olaf [Guthfrithson], when he had ravaged the church of St Bealdere and burnt Tynningame, perished. Therefore the men of York laid waste the island of Lindisfarne and killed many people.’²¹³ The way in which this is related implies that Olaf died as a result of his raids north, and that his men acted in revenge

²⁰⁴ S 548.

²⁰⁵ This along with several other grants from individuals with Danish names was noted in the Durham *Liber Vitae* around the end of the tenth century (Craster, ‘The patrimony’, pp. 192-3; Robertson, *Charters*, no. 68, p. 383).

²⁰⁶ Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 238. The Edgar charters in which Ulfcytel witnessed as minister are S 679 and 681.

²⁰⁷ S 569. On Uhtred see his entry in Table 18 above.

²⁰⁸ Sawyer briefly hinted at this in ‘Some sources’, at p. 4.

²⁰⁹ For an overview of the evolving geo-political boundaries between the regions governed by the lords of Bamburgh and those of York see Banton, *Ealdormen*, pp. 253-60.

²¹⁰ *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, c. 22.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, c. 23.

²¹² See the witness lists of S 528, 544, 550.

²¹³ Symeon, *HR*, a. 941, trans. *EHD* p. 276.

by returning and raiding Lindisfarne. This in turn suggests that Olaf had faced potentially serious opposition when he raided Tynninghame, perhaps a significant battle, which would still have been well remembered by the men of Bamburgh in Eadred's reign. These are all the direct records that remain of the York-Bernicia dynamic, but the situation faced in York by incoming Irish viking kings makes it likely that there were more conflicts. When the descendants of Ivarr came to York in the tenth century, they probably found it impossible or unwise to seize lands for their retainers in the colonised Vale of York without risking confrontation with the Danes there, whose support they needed to establish themselves in York. A convenient alternative may have lain in Bernicia.²¹⁴

This situation could have been further aggravated by Erik Bloodaxe's arrival in 947, and return in 952, in two ways. If Erik followed the example of other hopefuls for the crown of York, he might have raided north into the lands of Osulf, the high-reeve of Bamburgh in Eadred's reign, and Ealdred of Bamburgh's son. But more concretely, as seen above with the years in which alliterative charters were issued, when Erik was in power in York the communications corridor between York and Eadred, and therefore probably between Bamburgh and Eadred, was cut off. The Bamburgh family had for a long time been supporters of the West-Saxon kings and thence received lands and power further south. Erik and the intractable Danes of York must have been at least a hindrance, at most an enemy that threatened the lives, livelihoods and political aspirations of the lords of Bamburgh. Eadred perhaps capitalised on this situation by bringing these men further into the West-Saxon fold, an allegiance which may have gone so far as to plot the death of Erik. Roger of Wendover related that Eric was 'treacherously killed by earl Maccus in a certain lonely place called Stainmore, with his son and his brother, betrayed by earl Oswulf, and afterward Eadred ruled in these districts', whilst Symeon wrote that in 953 (for 954) Eadred granted the earldom of the

²¹⁴ Smyth, *Scandinavian York*, p. 97, suggests this.

Northumbrians to Oswulf.²¹⁵ If these accounts are to be believed, this would presumably have been a reward for his role in eliminating the final obstacle preventing West-Saxon control of York.

Eadred seems also to have continued, even intensified, Edmund's efforts to develop the relationship with the Mercian magnates. Although the nine alliterative charters of Eadred's reign for secular beneficiaries were probably part of a West-Saxon strategy aimed ultimately at the subordination of Northumbrian magnates and their integration into the midlands elite, their immediate target was of course this midlands elite. One went to Wulfric brother of Dunstan (also titled *miles*, and who was connected to the Mercian family of ealdorman Ealhhelm and his sons Ælfhere, Ælfheah and Ælfwine),²¹⁶ one to another Wulfric,²¹⁷ one to an Æthelmaer *praeses*,²¹⁸ two to Ælfsige 'Hunlafing' (also potentially titled *miles*),²¹⁹ one to ealdorman Uhtred *miles*,²²⁰ one to Ulfcetel *miles*,²²¹ one to Wulfhelm *miles*,²²² and one to Uhtred 'Cild'.²²³ Of these only ealdorman Uhtred can be shown to have attested West-Saxon charters regularly (in Æthelstan and Edmund's reigns). As noted in Section E of Chapter Two, Eadred seemed to have been particularly interested in granting to *militēs*. He made ten grants to beneficiaries styled *miles*, more than any other king, with a clear concentration in the years 947-951,²²⁴ whilst just under half of the laymen to whom he granted land from 949-951 were styled *miles* (7/15). Most of these grants were made to men styled elsewhere or in the same charter as *minister* or *dux*. This implies an effort to focus on the military identity of these beneficiaries over, or at least alongside, that of thegn or ealdorman. The English king may not

²¹⁵ Roger of Wendover, *Flores*, ed. Coxe, a. 950 (= 954); Symeon, *HR*, a. 953, trans. *EHD* p. 277.

²¹⁶ S 550 (see Wulfric brother of Dunstan in Table 17 above). On Wulfric's connexions see Williams, 'Princeps', at pp. 146, 154-55; Brooks, 'Career', at pp. 8-10; Hart, *ECNE*, p. 371-2.

²¹⁷ S 520 (see Wulfric 3 in Table 18 above).

²¹⁸ S 544 (see Æthelmær in Table 18 above).

²¹⁹ S 566, 556 (see Ælfsige Hunlafing in Table 18 above).

²²⁰ S 548 (see Uhtred Table 16 above).

²²¹ S 549 (see Table 18 above).

²²² 557 (see Wulfhelm in Table 18 above).

²²³ S 569.

²²⁴ S 523, 529, 542, 548, 549, 550, 551, 578, 556, 557.

only have been making a concerted effort to create and continue strong relationships with influential men in the midlands, but also recognising and raising up Mercians who had performed important military roles in his campaigns against Northumbria in 948 and who might continue to prove valuable in the future. The fact that these charters were granted north of the normal royal itinerary also speaks to Eadred's greater interest in Mercia than his predecessors, and suggests that he may have brought the West-Saxon court away from its heartlands in order to better integrate the Mercians into the 'English' political apparatus. The importance to Eadred of ealdorman Æthelstan, the most powerful man in the Midlands and his highest-ranking ealdorman, should also be highlighted, and that Eadred seems to have granted him the honour of fostering his nephew, the future King Edgar.²²⁵ Many resources were moreover being invested into Mercia and into the elite who represented it.

Eadred's court, 951-955

In the first half of his reign we therefore have evidence of Eadred using a stern but diplomatic approach to his management of his relationship with the Danes of York. One of compromise and integration, involving the innovative inclusion of York magnates into the political systems of the English kingdom but in a more compromising fashion than Æthelstan had done; one of containment by exercising allegiance with the lords of Bamburgh potentially against the Danes of York; and one of military aggression, but only when provoked. There are several indications that something changed, or happened, at court around 951 which distinguished the second half of Eadred's reign from the first. These were outlined in Eadred's section in Chapter Two, with their consequences explored in Eadwig's section in the same chapter. It has been suggested

²²⁵ *Chronicon Ramesiensis*, ed. Macray, pp. 11, 53. On which see Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 124; and Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 18 for discussion of Ælfwyn (Æthelstan's wife)'s possible royal connexions and how this may have influenced Eadred's choice to send Edgar there in addition to Æthelstan's power and status.

that Eadred's absence from witness lists for these years could be the result of his illness worsening to the point that he was no longer well enough to attend the issuing of charters in person.²²⁶ In the context of the other changes discussed above this is the most plausible explanation, rendered even more so by a comparison of the Chronicle's description of Eadred's actions pre- and post- 951. In the years 946, 947 and 948 Eadred is given an active role: he 'reduced' (*gewealde*) Northumbria to his rule, he 'came' (*com*) to Tanshelf to receive the Northumbrians' submission, he 'ravaged' (*oferhergode*) all of Northumbria, and when he was 'on his way home' (*se cyning hamweard wæs*) and the Danes attacked him 'he became so angry that he wished to march back into the land and destroy it utterly' (*Ða wearð se cyning swa gram þæt he wolde eft in fyrðian 7 þone eard mid ealle fordon*).²²⁷ By contrast, whenever Eadred is mentioned in the annals for 952-954, he is awarded a passive role. In 952 he 'ordered' (*het*) archbishop Wulfstan to be taken captive, and he 'ordered' (*het*) the slaughter at Thetford.²²⁸ He did not go north to take Wulfstan captive himself, neither did he punish Thetford himself. In 954 it was the Northumbrians who drove out Eric, at which point Eadred succeeded to the kingdom. It would be expected at this point to read that Eadred had gone north to receive their oaths and pledges, but the next time we hear of Eadred in the Chronicle was at his death in 955.²²⁹

Eadred was therefore probably physically absent from much of these engagements in the latter half of his reign. The importance of the king's presence at military engagements has been established above, and will be elaborated upon in Æthelred's section below, but these years of Eadred's reign raise interesting questions. Namely, whether the changes in the composition of the *witan* are connected to the issue of the extent to which a king could expect

²²⁶ The illness is mentioned in *VD* c. 20, p. 64; on the absence of Eadred's name and his illness see Keynes, 'Dunstan-B charters', at pp. 185-93.

²²⁷ *ASC* C a. 946, D a. 947, D a. 948.

²²⁸ *ASC* D a. 952

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, a. 955.

to maintain authority over, and therefore the loyalty of, his leading men when he was not seen to be taking an active role in the demands of a commanding position at the time, whether that was administering the kingdom in peacetime or leading armies in times of conflict. For whilst it is true that there is no evidence that something as extreme as an attempt on the throne happened in these years, the changes in the *witan* were nonetheless significant, and correlated perfectly with the time of the king's absence. Who could have been responsible for them? Consideration of this question is valuable not only in grounding the new interpretation found in Section F of Chapter Two of Eadwig's policies a few years later, but also for evaluating the effects of royal absenteeism – conversely therefore of royal presence – in times of conflict.

The assumption has traditionally been that Eadred left the governance of the kingdom in the hands of Dunstan as a sort of 'vice-regent'.²³⁰ This has been based upon four pieces of evidence: the prevalence of Dunstan B charters from 953-955, in which Dunstan was a prominent figure; the claims in the *Vita Dunstani* about Eadred's 'love' for Dunstan, and his entrusting of royal treasures to him;²³¹ and Eadred's will, in which he left money to the kingdom's bishops against the Danes.²³² However, Dunstan's leading role in the production of charters from 953-55 need not necessarily reflect a leading role over that of anyone else in the governance of the kingdom, not to mention that certain ecclesiastics had previously been associated with the production of charters, such as Koenwald of Worcester with the alliterative series.²³³ 'B's claim in the *Vita Dunstani* that Eadred 'loved the blessed father Dunstan with such great warmth of love that he preferred hardly anyone of his chief men to him' may be significant, but its existence within a work intended to glorify Dunstan should always caveat its acceptance.²³⁴ This may in any case constitute an effort by 'B' to rewrite Dunstan's place at

²³⁰ Keynes, 'Dunstan-B charters', at p. 186; *VD*, p. xxiii. But cf. Hart, *Danelaw*, p. 444, who called Æthelstan Half-King 'virtually the regent' rather than Dunstan.

²³¹ *VD*, c. 19, p. 61.

²³² S 1515; Miller, *New Minster*, no. 17.

²³³ Keynes, 'Koenwald', pp. 273-5.

²³⁴ *VD*, c. 19, p. 61.

court due to an unease felt about the factions that had reportedly caused him to be exiled under both Æthelstan and Edmund.²³⁵ As for granting safekeeping of royal treasures to Dunstan, it would perhaps be unwise for a king to entrust them to anyone else: monasteries might have been seen as more secure, and were less likely to upset the balance of power at court. This certainly suggests that Dunstan was favoured by Eadred, but it does not follow that he was selected to run the kingdom. The fact that Eadred left money to his bishops to secure peace from the Danes does not imply that he left the defence of the kingdom in their hands rather than that of the ealdormen or king's thegns.²³⁶ It was not unusual for bishops to play a role in diplomatic overtures with the Danes *alongside* ealdormen, such as archbishop Odo may have done with Edmund in 940, and as Bishop Ælfheah had done with Æthelweard in 994.²³⁷

We should not moreover reflexively overstate the position of Dunstan at the expense of that possible for Æthelstan Half-King in these years. He was the most powerful man in the kingdom, and had much to gain from a situation in which his sphere of authority was expanded yet further over Mercia and East-Anglia, as is implied by the absence of other Mercian ealdormen at court. This would also perhaps allow him to attempt to force a submission in the north through unusual strategies such as the capture and imprisonment of an archbishop, and a (potential) murder-plot against Eric Bloodaxe involving Osulf of Bamburgh.²³⁸ There is no obvious reason that this expansion of power would have faced opposition from Dunstan. There is evidence of a longstanding friendship between Æthelstan and Dunstan,²³⁹ and in any case

²³⁵ See the *VD*'s account of Dunstan's exile in Æthelstan's reign (c. 6, p. 22) and Edmund's (c. 13, p. 46), with Winterbottom and Lapidge's commentary on a 'hatred of Dunstan' amongst members of the *witan*, p. xxiii. On the resentment felt at court for Dunstan by certain nobles see Brooks, 'Career', pp. 10-1, and Stafford, 'Reign of Æthelred', at p. 23.

²³⁶ Banton, *Ealdormen*, p. 125.

²³⁷ Symeon, *HR*, a. 939; *ASC* CDE a. 994.

²³⁸ On which see above, pp. 315-6.

²³⁹ The *VD* records that Dunstan rode next to Æthelstan in the king's retinue (c. 31, p. 92). Æthelstan's brother Æthelwold gave an estate which he received from Edmund to Glastonbury in his lifetime (Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 119, n. 3); Eadric, another brother of the Half-King, gave an estate he received from Eadred (S 524) to Glastonbury (*Idem*, p. 120, n. 4). Æthelstan himself possessed substantial estates in Somerset which descended to Glastonbury (*idem*, p. 124, n. 2; *VD* p. 93, n. 271).

Dunstan potentially had to gain from it. The archbishop had faced opposition at the royal court since Æthelstan's reign,²⁴⁰ and possibly still did so in Eadred's if he really was as loved by Eadred as 'B' claimed. To him, Æthelstan's power might have meant the suppression of other individuals at court who may have been part of the 'anti-Dunstan' faction. The king was in any case too sick to act on his own, and the kingdom (and therefore the church) was in need of a strong military protector.

Æthelstan certainly faced hostility with the change of regime. King Eadwig straightaway in 955 appointed a new ealdorman (Æthelstan 'Rota') to the ealdordom of south-east Mercia, and in early 956 appointed his kinsman Ælfhere, a son of ealdorman Ealhhelm who had ceased attesting in 951, to that of central Mercia.²⁴¹ By the summer of 956 Æthelstan Half-King's influence had been severely curtailed, Dunstan had been exiled, and the ealdorman retired to Glastonbury as a monk.²⁴² Although this did not prove to be a permanent set-back for the Half-King's family, with his sons Æthelwold and then Æthelwine inheriting his estates, it never again rose to the same eminence it enjoyed when Æthelstan Half-King himself was in office.²⁴³ These circumstances suggest that the nature of the conflict between Eadwig and Æthelstan was mainly of a personal nature.²⁴⁴

Summary

Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred all faced similar problems: how to integrate Mercia within the West-Saxon government, and then how to achieve stable submission from the Northumbrians?

²⁴⁰ See n. 235 above.

²⁴¹ S 570 is the first charter attested by Æthelstan Rota, but is a fabrication whose witness list belongs to 953x55. See Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', p. 126 n. 6.

²⁴² *VO*, iii.14, p. 85.

²⁴³ Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', at p. 127, n. 3.

²⁴⁴ Suggested by Blanchard, 'A new perspective', p. 248; cf. Higham, *The Death*, p. 4, on Eadwig's reduction of the power of Æthelstan's 'faction'.

All three kings can be shown to have devised novel ways of doing this, and therein lies the best avenue available to us in our efforts to understand how these kings acted to achieve the loyalty of these men.

Æthelstan pioneered the use of assemblies to achieve these goals. These gatherings had not nearly the same importance under Alfred and Edward. Æthelstan did not only use them as tools for the administration of his kingdom, but as ways to communicate messages about his authority over the leading men via who was in attendance, in which capacity they participated, and where assemblies were held relative to these factors. His approach to Northumbria was first to use its conquest in order to consolidate his power in Wessex, before attempting to forcibly assimilate its magnates into the West-Saxon system whilst probably never going north to rule Northumbria in person. His approach to Mercia was largely to ignore it, apart from expecting its most prominent magnates to attend his assemblies regardless of whether those assemblies discussed Mercian business.

Edmund was forced to reckon with his brother's lack of foresight, and developed more tactful ways of dealing with the Northumbrians whilst paying much closer attention to the Mercians. Perhaps realising the futility of attempting to subdue the Northumbrians without a solid base in the southern Danelaw, he focused his attentions in creating stable loyalty in this region which could then be weaponised against the Northumbrians.

Finally, Eadred combined aspects of his brothers' strategies to attempt to strike a compromise with the York Danes whilst paying the greatest attention of all to Mercia, tactics which culminated in the final capitulation of the York *witan* and the final realisation of Æthelstan's vision. The second half of Eadred's reign probably saw Æthelstan and Dunstan take the reins of government in a period which finally brought about the consolidation of the English kingdom, but which may also have helped sow the seeds of the next national crisis: the division of the kingdom between Eadwig and Edgar.

The era of the sons of Edward thus saw a demonstrable progression in strategies to retain the loyalty of the Mercians, and a constant interest in devising new ways to subordinate the Northumbrian *witan*. There was clearly a developing notion of how to optimise the loyalty of such a far-flung and composite group of magnates, and a growing awareness that in order for this to be stable it had to be founded on factors other than an individual king's magnetism and coercive power.

d. Eadwig and Edgar: managing factionalism

With the reigns of Eadwig and Edgar comes yet another shift in the capacities in which it is possible for us to see kings acting in surviving evidence. Based probably partly upon a change in the actual historical contexts of these kings, it is for example no longer possible to follow their approaches to the management of their relationship with their Northumbrian magnates because we are no longer given a window onto this arena by extant sources. Continuing with our approach of assessing only the implications of presences of policy rather than absences, as some threads followed under Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred are put down others can be picked up in the form of what is available to us in the contexts of Eadwig and Edgar. The reigns of Eadwig and Edgar offer the chance to compare how these kings responded to the issue of factionalism – inherited, in the sense of Eadwig’s assumption of the situation at Eadred’s court from c.951-955; and internal, because of the tensions lying behind and resulting from the division of the kingdom.

Eadwig

As argued in Chapter Two, the witness lists of Eadwig’s charters show that the king (or his leading councillors, though for the present purposes it is irrelevant whose actual idea it was, only that it was developed with the king as its object) is likely to have developed a novel way of managing the extent to which his secular elite were invested in his kingship: via manipulation of the capacities in which they participated in the four highly-productive assemblies for which we have evidence in 956. The need for this policy seems to have been rooted in Eadred’s absence at court in the second half of his reign. Not only do the circumstances surrounding Eadred’s death in November 955, specifically the arrangements for

his burial,²⁴⁵ hint that this was a significant moment of crisis in high circles, but the witness lists from the period c.951x955 suggest this created a vacuum into which factionalism bloomed. This was inherited by Eadwig, and it is against such factionalism that the evidence for Eadwig's management of his elite should be interpreted.

Turning now to Eadwig's unusual land-granting policies, we benefit from reflection upon them in the context of the division of the kingdom. Historians have noted the apparent 'straightforward territorial division' between the realms of Eadwig and Edgar, as evidenced by the attestations in witness lists such as that attached to S 677, with Simon Keynes arguing that this does not seem compatible with the necessary tumult of rebellion.²⁴⁶ Whether the impetus started with Edgar himself or with the Mercians, we will never know, but from the notion of a purely geographically-based, planned division follows the elimination of a concern over loyalty as a relevant motive for Edgar and Eadwig's actions in 956-957. Just because there seems to have been a clean break when the break did happen, does not necessarily preclude some sort of non-violent contestation of power beforehand. This could have taken the shape of, for example, Eadwig and Edgar attempting to win over magnates in Wessex and Mercia respectively and each succeeding, or the breakaway of northern magnates in the face of Eadwig's overwhelming focus on Wessex. Or, *following* a contest of power between Eadwig and Edgar, an agreement imposed by the stronger king – in this case, probably Edgar – that Eadwig could continue to rule until his death, and that for the sake of simplicity and of respecting the holdings and spheres of influence of thegns and ealdormen, the brothers' respective courts would follow existing geopolitical boundaries. In any case, Eadwig's land-

²⁴⁵ On which see Keynes, 'The burial', at pp. 135-6.

²⁴⁶ Kelly, *Bath and Wells*, no. 31. Keynes, 'England, c. 900-1016', at pp. 477-8. The view that there was a sharp political break in 957 has gradually been giving way to one of a more gradual shift of power between Eadwig and Edgar, and even that the division was agreed upon at the end of Eadred's reign. For the old view see Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 366-7 and Dumville, 'The Ætheling', at p. 30. For more recent views of a gradual shift see Yorke, 'Æthelwold', at p. 78; Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 7-9 and his 'England, c.900-1016', at p. 478; Williams, *Kingship and Government*, p. 87 and *idem*, 'Some notes and considerations'. For the view that the division was in fact pre-ordered at Eadred's death see Biggs, 'Edgar's path' and Jayakumar, 'Edgar and Eadwig', at p. 90.

granting and *witan*-management policies and are so unusual that there is little available to explain them apart from an effort to assert authority in the face of a challenge.

An instructive parallel which may help us further discern the driving factors and thus intention behind Eadwig's remarkable charter output can be found in the case of Arnulf of Carinthia, king of East Francia from 887-899. Arnulf issued ninety diplomas between November 27, 887 and November 1, 891.²⁴⁷ Approximately 176 charters survive from his twelve-year reign, meaning that Arnulf probably issued slightly more than half of all his charters in the first four years of his reign.²⁴⁸ In 888 alone, the first year of his reign, Arnulf issued thirty-four diplomas; in their first years as kings, Louis the German (r. 840-876), Carloman (r. 876-880), Louis the Younger (r. 876-882) and Charles the Fat (r. 876-877) each respectively issued five, seven, seven and five charters.²⁴⁹

Arnulf became king by rebelling against his uncle Charles the Fat who was deposed in November 887 and relegated to a few estates in Swabia where he died several weeks later.²⁵⁰ Arnulf's position for many years both before and after his accession had been far from secure. Before Charles' death, Arnulf's efforts to become the emperor's heir were repeatedly rebuffed,²⁵¹ whilst his status as a bastard cast doubt on his legitimacy as a Carolingian.²⁵² Then, when Arnulf became king in East Francia he had to contend with the other powerful *reguli* or 'kinglets' who appeared on the European stage in the aftermath of the Carolingian empire's dissolution.²⁵³ The first of these presented a threat to Arnulf in the direct aftermath of Charles'

²⁴⁷ MGH *Dipl.* III, ed. Kehr.

²⁴⁸ Kehr's edition contains 176, but several of these seem very fragmentary and perhaps unreliable: DD A 6, 36, 46, 62, 72a, 107a, 108, 137, 143, 151, 161, 163.

²⁴⁹ This data is taken from the respective MGH volumes for each king: Louis the German, Carloman and Louis the Younger in MGH *Dipl.* I, ed. Kehr, and Charles the Fat in MGH *Dipl.* II, ed. Kehr.

²⁵⁰ For a recent discussion of Arnulf's rebellion, Charles' deposition, and the factors and events leading to the end of the Carolingian empire, see MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 161-198, and pp. 191-198 on Arnulf's takeover particularly.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 192. Examples at *AF* (Mainz continuation) a. 885, p. 103, and (probably) *AF* (Bavarian continuation), a. 887, p. 115.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 158, 231.

²⁵³ *AF* (Bavarian continuation) a. 888, p. 166.

death, and thus of Arnulf's accession. Sometime in 888, Rudolf I set himself up as king of Burgundy, which according to the Annals of Fulda and Regino motivated Arnulf's immediate attack on Rudolf. Regino's account gives a detail crucial to understanding the swift nature of Arnulf's retribution: he recorded that 'After this [Rudolf being made king] he sent legates through all of the kingdom of Lothar and by persuasions and promises he charmed the minds of the bishops and the noble men into his favour'.²⁵⁴ Thus it seems that it was not only Rudolf's ascension as king that irked Arnulf, but also his efforts to win over the magnates of Lotharingia to his cause and in so doing claim dominion over Lotharingia. These were men whom Arnulf clearly wanted for himself, in a traditionally Carolingian territory which had been part of East Francia since the treaty of Meerssen in 870, an arrangement strengthened further by the Treaty of Ribemont in 880.²⁵⁵ The years following Arnulf's accession, particularly his first year as king, were thus characterised by insecurity about the extent of his authority over Lotharingia and its nobles.

This is further suggested by the charters Arnulf granted to Lotharingian recipients in the first year of his reign. Arnulf's first charter (November 27, 887) recorded an exchange between Liutbert, archbishop of Mainz and Arnulf;²⁵⁶ Liutbert had been the archchaplain to Charles the Fat (though he had been replaced by Liutward for a while). Ten days after the death of Charles the Fat, Arnulf issued a diploma for St Maximin in Trier, the intercessor for which was Megingoz, an important count in the region.²⁵⁷ Megingoz would have been an important ally against Rudolf; indeed a probable cause of his murder in 892 by count Alberic was his closeness to the king, a position which by definition denied that privilege to others.²⁵⁸ Several

²⁵⁴ Regino, *Chronicon*, a. 888, p. 130.

²⁵⁵ *AB* a. 870, pp. 172-4; *AF* a. 880, p. 94. For a discussion of Louis the German's potential intention for Arnulf's father to inherit Lotharingia see Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire*, pp. 304-9. On Lotharingia more generally see MacLean, 'Shadow kingdom'.

²⁵⁶ D A 1: on Liutbert, see MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, 24-7.

²⁵⁷ D A 10: see Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 217-19, 225-7.

²⁵⁸ Regino, *Chronicon* a. 892, p. 139; Innes, *State and Society*, p. 227.

of Arnulf's other Lotharingian charters in the first year of his reign were aimed at important, historically Carolingian locations in Lotharingia, such as Prüm, Trier, Metz and Lobbes.²⁵⁹ Simon MacLean and Matthew Innes understood Arnulf's deployment of local elites in Lotharingia as a reflection of his inability to project power there;²⁶⁰ this would further root the patterns of Arnulf's charters in an atmosphere of insecurity. We may note here the calibre of most of the beneficiaries of Eadwig's twelve extant charters for lands in the midlands. Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia;²⁶¹ ealdorman Byrhtnoth of Essex;²⁶² Brihthelm bishop elect for Winchester;²⁶³ Ælfwine thegn, who was potentially the brother of Ælfhere and Ælfheah and who in any case was a prominent presence at court;²⁶⁴ Wulfstan thegn who had attested only six times by the time this was issued but whose calibre is demonstrated by his recalling to the West-Saxon court by Edgar when his initial Mercian supporters were elevated, and his prominent position therein for many years;²⁶⁵ Æthelgeard thegn, who had been around since Æthelstan's reign;²⁶⁶ Ælfsige thegn, a prominent royal thegn;²⁶⁷ and Byrhtic, probably a kinsman of ealdorman Byrhtnoth.²⁶⁸

The Lotharingian charters show that an increase in the volume of diplomas, and their targeting to a particular area or set of recipients, could be symptomatic of an insecurity on behalf of the grantor, in this case Arnulf in the context of his freshly acquired kingship and the immediate challenges he faced in that capacity by Rudolf. This type of munificence in this type of context probably represented a king's efforts to remedy the insecurity of his kingship and his potential lack of legitimacy through the use of land. This is an important conclusion to keep

²⁵⁹ D A 29, D A 39, D A 53, D A 56, D A 64.

²⁶⁰ MacLean, 'Insinuation, censorship', at pp. 7-9; Innes, 'People, places' at p. 433.

²⁶¹ S 588.

²⁶² S 611.

²⁶³ S 615. The beneficiary was likely related to ealdorman Byrhtnoth: Wormald, 'The strange affair' with summary in Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar', at pp. 86-7.

²⁶⁴ S 595: see Ælfwine in Table 22 above.

²⁶⁵ S 649: see Wulfstan in Tables 24 and 27 above.

²⁶⁶ S 599: see Æthelgeard in Tablea 9, 12, 17, 22 above.

²⁶⁷ S 592: see Ælfsige 1 in Table 22 above.

²⁶⁸ S 618: the beneficiary was also potentially related to ealdorman Byrhtnoth. See Byrhtic in Table 23 above.

in mind when assessing the evidence for, and context of, Eadwig's policies. There are of course differences between Eadwig's case and Arnulf's, such as the fact that Arnulf rebelled for the crown and Eadwig did not, and that Arnulf probably struggled more with the issue of legitimacy than Eadwig, a matter which played an important role in his diploma output for 887-888. Despite this however the similarities between the two are nonetheless striking. Both Arnulf and Eadwig issued an abnormally large number of charters in the year immediately following their accession. In Arnulf's case, this activity was clearly linked to an insecurity about his newfound kingship. Arnulf faced a challenge to his kingship from Rudolf in Lotharinga immediately following his accession, and Eadwig faced the division of his kingdom between himself and Edgar only a short while after his accession. Arnulf directed many of the charters in his first year as king towards Lotharinga, the geographical area where his authority was under question, and in 956 Eadwig granted more land in Mercia – the very area which was to support Edgar's accession in 958 – to men who had a significant presence in the south than did Eadred or Edgar.

When combined with comparisons to continental examples, and when considered in the context of the fallout of Eadred's reign and the division of the kingdom in 957, the charter evidence for Eadwig's reign can moreover be read as a king's innovative attempts to manage his dynamic with his secular elite through the mechanisms of assembly participation and anticipatory granting – indeed one might almost see in the latter a later version of Æthelwulf's decimation. They suggest the presence of guiding principles such as that of compromise, flexibility, and of dedication to the fostering of interpersonal bonds with the secular elite even in the face of looming challenge and competition. Whilst one might be quick to point out that qualities such as compromise could be the result of an inability to act otherwise (the king's agency within this interpretation being presumably circumscribed by the power of leading

councillors such as Æthelstan) rather than an elective policy,²⁶⁹ it is salutary to recall that Eadwig had the power and authority to make his own decisions when it came to his leading men, such as the exile of Dunstan and the appointment of two ealdormen who circumscribed the influence of Æthelstan himself rather than that of the king.

Edgar

Since Edgar's reign lacks sufficient temporal landmarks around which to organise a chronological approach, as has been done for most of the previous kings in this chapter, it is best approached thematically.²⁷⁰ The nature of the surviving evidence from Edgar's reign means that the most prominent manner in which he can be seen interacting with his secular nobility is through his management of the membership of the *witan*, explored in Chapter Two above, and in the assemblies in the aftermath of his accessions. By analysing these interactions and the principles which seem to have characterised them, we may extrapolate some of Edgar's strategies to effect the loyalty of these men and, by extension, the mechanisms used to that end.

An interesting phenomenon is visible in the witness lists of Edgar's charters, which to my knowledge has not been commented upon before and which might constitute important

²⁶⁹ Insinuations of such impotence can be found in Keynes, 'Edgar', pp. 30-1. It is interesting that when arguments are made in the historiography for what surviving evidence does or does not signify about how the division of the kingdom happened in practice, this results in wild inconsistencies in the implied agency of kings compared to that of their leading men, and where and how these agencies intersected, but this is never addressed explicitly by the historians in question. Compare for example Keynes' article above with Jayakumar's statements about the nobility 'not having a great deal of choice in where their fortunes now lay', in her 'Eadwig and Edgar', at p. 90, and with Stafford's that the nobility of England had great power in this period, which was largely 'a product of the process of unification' a 'royal creation', in her 'The reign', at p. 17. This indicates that in modern discussions, the rhetorical function of royal agency in this period becomes whatever is necessary in order for an argument to be put forward rather than the other way round.

²⁷⁰ This approach follows that of Keynes in his 'Edgar'. Whilst much ink has been spilled on the topic of monastic reform in Edgar's reign, we actually know very little about the king himself and his ruling strategies, or what else happened in his reign (apart from the second coronation in Bath, on which see Nelson, 'Inauguration rituals', at pp. 296-303, and on the subsequent submission of the rulers of Wales and North Britain see: Barrow, 'Dee-rowing'; Thornton, 'Edgar'; Lewis, 'Edgar'; Jayakumar, 'Foreign policies', at pp. 31-5; Williams, 'An outing'; Breeze, 'Edgar'; Matthews, 'King Edgar').

evidence for his ruling strategies relative to his secular nobility. It is illustrated in Figure 3 which includes snapshots of the witness lists of the first several charters of Edgar's reign (as king of the Mercians and then his first charter as king of the English) as seen in Edgar's witness lists in the appendices.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1		674	679	667	677	675	576	678	676	676a	681	
2		958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	958	959	
32	Thegns											
33	Ælfwine	1	1		1	1		7		1	1	
34	Wulfhelm	2	2		2					2	5	
35	Ælfwine 2	3	4					9				
36	Sigulf	4	3								2	
37	Wulfsige 1	5	5								6	
38	Wulfnoth	6	6									
39	Æthelstan	7	7									
40	Æthelweard 1	8	8									
41	Æthelwold	9	9			10		6	6			
42	Sigereð	10	10									
43	Ælfred	11	11									
44	Æthelsige	12			3	4		1	1			
45	Ælfwold	13	12			2				4	4	
46	Thurkytel	14	13								12	
47	Thurmod	15	14									
48	Ufa	16						3	3	3		
49	Æthelred	17										
50	Ælfsige 1	18	16			5		2	2	6		
51	Ælfnoth	19	17									
52	Ælfheah											
53	Ælfhere		15									
54	Ulfketel		18								7	
55	Hrowald		19								8	
56	Duntan		20									
57	Sumerled		21									
58	Brihtsige		22									
59	Thor		23									
60	Ourde		24									
61	Soca		25									
62	Cytelbeam		26									
63	Fomo		27									
64	Dunstan		28									
65	Wærstan				4							
66	Wulfgar				5							
67	Wulfstan				6							
68	Eahlstan											
69	Eanulf					3						
70	Ælfhelm					6						
71	Æafsige 2					7						
72	Æscferth					8						
73	Æthelwine					9					5	
74	Osfeth							11		4	4	7
75	Æthelric											
76	Wulfric											

	A	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1		676a	681	673	680	670	685	673
2		958	959	959	959	951	960	959
3	Laetwara							
0	Æthelferth		3	26				
1	Dragmael		9					
2	Sigeferth		10		16			
3	Thureth		11					
4	Ælfgar			1	1		1	
5	Oswig			5	6		8	
6	Eadric 1			6	5		5	
7	Oswearð			7	7		7	
8	Osulf			8	8		9	
9	Wulfhere			10				
0	Æthelsige 2			11				
1	Ealdred			16	14		10	
2	Æthelsige 3			17				
3	Ealdred 2			21				
4	Lyfing			22				
5	Ælfwig			23	13			
6	Ælfwine 3			24				
7	Ælfric 1			27	10			
8	Wulfric 1			28				
9	Cyneric			29				
10	Wihtsige			30				
11	Leofa (possibly Wu			32				
12	Ælfric 2			35				
13	Wulfric 2			36				
14	Ceolheah			37				
15	Brihtric			38				
16	Ælfwold 2			39	15			
17	Eadwig			41				
18	Ordgar			42				
19	Ælfmaer			43				
10	Æthelferth 2			44				
11	Ordnoth			45				
12	Ordwald			46				
13	Osmær			47				
14	Lyfing 2			48				
15	Ælfsige 3			49				
16	Byrthelm			51				
17	Ælfweard 1			52				
18	Eadric 2			53				
19	Brihtwald			54				
20	Æthelferth 3			55				
21	Æthelweard 2			56				
22	Eadulf			57				
23	Sigelm			58				
24	Æthelm			59				
25	Eadric 3			60				

Figure 3: Snapshots of the witness lists for Edgar's charters S 674, 679, 677, 675, 681, and 673 showing these to be made up of successive groups of new thegns.

In order to appreciate fully how different these charters' witness lists look compared to those of the charters for the rest of the reign, one should consult Edgar's table in the appendix and view them in that context. The witness lists for S 674, 679, 677, 675 and 681 before the re-

unification, which make up most of the surviving charters from Edgar's time as king of the Mercians, and S 673 after the unification,²⁷¹ which is the first charter Edgar issued as king of the English, all include groups of 'new' attesting thegns, ranging from three to over twenty. These new thegns do not generally reappear often or at all, i.e. they are non-royal thegns, those who were not members of the body of thegns who were regular attestors of royal diplomas. By comparison, most of the other charters for the reign, as discussed in Edgar's section in Chapter Two, were witnessed by a stable core group of thegns, with the odd new name or non-royal thegn also attesting. Essentially, the immediate diplomatic aftermath of Edgar's two accessions – as king of the Mercians and then as king of the English – was characterised by charters that included new groups of thegns as witnesses, most of whom would then not be seen again, at least not consistently or as a group, in the next charters to be issued after the one in which they first appeared.

It seems unlikely that this constitutes merely the personal preferences of the draftsman/men for these particular charters, because if we take, for example, the charters which display this trend issued when Edgar was king of the Mercians, we know that these were issued by four different agencies.²⁷² It does not seem reasonable to assume that the agencies of production mentioned above, with their individually distinct identities, would nonetheless have coordinated amongst themselves in order to settle on maintaining one self-consciously common aspect – namely, the inclusion of rolling groups of 'new' thegns' names in the witness

²⁷¹ The authenticity of this 'orthodoxorum charter' is the subject of debate between Simon Keynes, 'Church councils' and *Diplomas*, pp. 98-103, also Roach, 'The privilege', cf. Kelly, *Abingdon*, pp. xxxiv-cxv. For a summary of the issue see Cubitt, 'Penance', at pp. 180-1 and now Roach, *Forgery*, pp. 122-7. Whether or not S 873 is a forgery does not however materially affect the arguments presented here, for two main reasons. First, S 673's witness list is not the only testament to the pattern under examination, with Edgar's 'Mercian' charters providing other cases and with this pattern being repeated in the reigns of other tenth-century English kings (see below, Figures 5-9). The second reason is that if S 673 were indeed forged, this in fact strengthens the present case for the pattern's significance. This is because a forger's addition of an extremely long witness list in the style of what had traditionally been done in previous accession charters would have constituted self-conscious reproduction of an observed practice in the history of royal diploma forms, which reinforces the idea that this was a deliberate practice associated explicitly with royal accession diplomas. S 673 will thus continue to be included as a demonstration of the pattern.

²⁷² See Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 13-15 and Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 75-6.

lists simply as a diplomatic flourish rather than as an actual reflection of those present at that specific gathering – and to only have done this for charters after Edgar’s accessions. Neither is this pattern limited to Edgar’s ‘Mercian’ charters, for it also occurs in S 673, issued upon the re-unification of the kingdom.²⁷³

A remaining plausible explanation for this pattern is that it represents a phased introduction to court of both royal and non-royal thegns (though primarily the latter). Or, at the very least, a phased introduction of thegns to participation at assemblies in the capacity of charter witness and thus to participation in performances of the kingdom’s administrative apparatus, directly upon Edgar’s accessions, with these groups often not overlapping much if at all. This in turn would have meant that membership of the group of thegns who witnessed these initial charters, and thus probably attended these initial assemblies, was centrally-coordinated by the leading members of the *witan*. Indeed if this were the case then there is no good reason to assume that it was not directed by the king himself either nominally or actually.

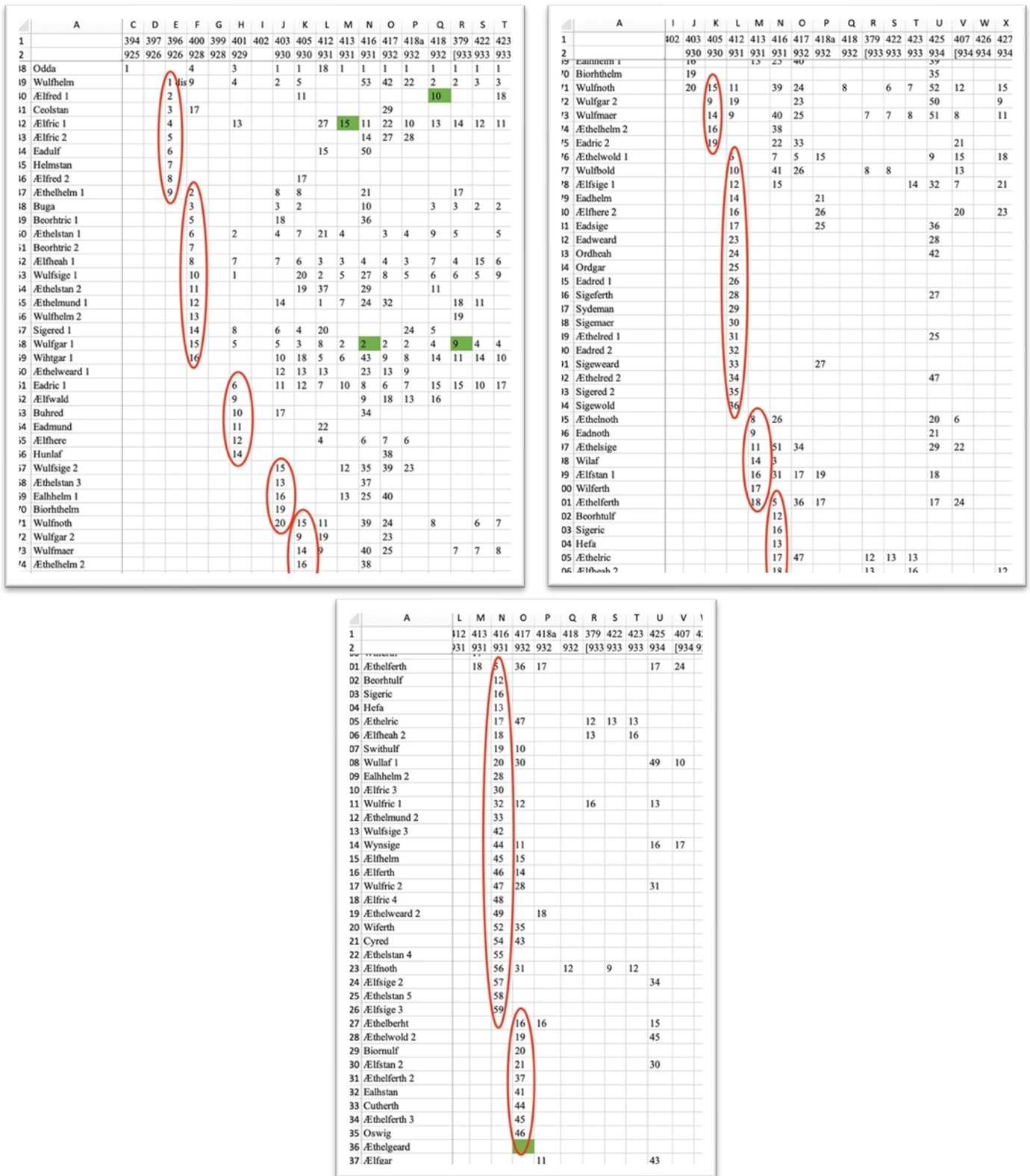
This scenario has several important implications. First, for our understanding of how Edgar established relationships with the secular nobility of the kingdom and the principles behind his approach to these relationships generally, for it is difficult to see in the ‘phased introduction pattern’ as it will be referred to hereafter, anything other than a phased introduction of the kingdom’s thegns to the new king himself. This in turn suggests that the role of a face-to-face introduction to his thegns was for Edgar an important one. The effect of this would have been a strengthening of Edgar’s bond with these individuals, and we can safely assume that in so doing he probably aimed to reinforce their loyalty to him. The patterns of attestation surrounding Edgar’s royal accessions thus suggest that this system was indeed geared towards putting a face to a name, and of building a personal relationship, when the person who occupied the role of royal lord had changed.

²⁷³ An observation caveated by the possibility that this may be a forgery: see n. 271 above.

This phased introduction pattern continues to gain in significance, and becomes even more convincingly attached to the issue of loyalty, when considered in the context of the particular situation faced by Edgar, and when compared with the attestation patterns after the accessions of other English kings of the period and with continental practices. Edgar was first elected as king by the Mercian *witan* whilst his older brother Eadwig had still been king of the English, and he ruled everything north of the Humber from 957 to 959 whilst Eadwig ruled Wessex. In 959 Eadwig died, and Edgar acceded to the whole kingdom. We have very little information on the dynamics of this system of dual kingship, or about how the split itself came about. I have argued above that much of the evidence of Eadwig's actions can be explained essentially as crisis management and as those of someone who was trying to prove something, and one does not go out of one's way to prove something, or to assert oneself, unless one is facing a challenge – in this case, probably from Edgar. I have also argued that the division of the kingdom, though seeming superficially to be orderly, was still probably the product of some contestation of power, even if this was non-violent. At the very least it is safe to say that the circumstances of Edgar's accession were unusual, and that there was very probably some tension between different noble factions, and possibly between the Mercian nobility and that of Wessex, which simmered under both his accession to Mercia and then to England. It is perhaps as a royal response to this tension, and as an effort to remedy it through the strengthening of the bond of lordship, that we ought to see the phased introduction of thegns to Edgar's court.

It is particularly instructive to note the other occurrences of the phased introduction pattern in this period, and their contexts. It happens most strikingly in the surviving charters of Æthelstan, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred (Figures 4-5). Snapshots of these phased introductions are provided below, though they are best observed when embedded in their respective tables of attestations, found in the appendices, because this wider perspective allows

the reader to visualise the ‘waves’ of thegns present at certain times in comparison to the attendance implied in the witness lists of most charters during the reigns.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1		830	832	831	828	829		
2		976	977	977	956'	956'		
3	Ealdormen							
4	Ælfhere	1	1	1	1	1		
5	Æthelwine	2	2	2	2	2		
6	Æthelweard	3		3	4			
7	Leofwine	4	4					
8	Byrhtnoth		3	4	3	3		
9								
10	Thegns							
11	Ælfweard	1	1	3	1	2		
12	Leofwine	2	3		9	5		
13	Bryhtmaer	3	4	1	5			
14	Ælfgar	4	5					
15	Ælfsige		2	6	4	1		
16	Æthelweard		2			3		
17	Eadwig		4					
18	Ælfwig		5					
19	Æthelweard 2		7			8		
20	Leofric		8					
21	Ælfwold		9		3			
22	Æthelric		10					
23	Leofric 2		11					
24	Ælfric 1			2		6		
25	Byrhtferth			6				
26	Æthelwold			7				
27	Eardulf			8				
28	Leofwine 2			10				
29	Eadwine					4		
30	Æthelsige					7		
31	Wulfstan					9		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
1		834	835	836	837	838	839	841	840	842	848	846	849	844	8	
2		979	979	980	980	981	982	982	982	982	983	983	983	983	9	
3																
4	Thegns															
5	Ælfwold	1														
6	Ælfweard 1	2			2	1		4	1	1	2	2		2		
7	Ælfric 1	3			1	15?		2	1	4	2	1	1	1	>ealdorm	
8	Æthelsige	4						7		12	3					
9	Ælfgar	5						5	2		6	5	5	4		
10	Æthelsige 2	6														
11	Wulfstige				3			3	5	5	5			5		
12	Ælfsige 1				4			4	4	3	13?	4	4	4	3	
13	Brihtwold				5			3		7						
14	Leofwine				6			10							7	
15	Leofric 1				7			11	8		6				9	
16	Orulf				8					2					6	
17	Fraena				9											
18	Leofwine 2				10											
19	Thureferth				11											
20	Wulfic 1				12				10		3		6	6		
21	Ælfic 2				13				15?	9	6	8			8	
22	Godwine				14				13							
23	Æthelweard				2			1				3	3	10		
24	Brihtnoth				5											
25	Ælfsige 2				6						13?					
26	Orðhelm				7											
27	God				8											
28	Ælfsige 3				9											
29	Ælfmaer				12											
30	Ælfwine				14											
31	Æthelweard 2/3							6								
32	Leofic 2								11							
33	Ælfhelm									8						
34	Ælfwig										7					
35	Orðnoth										9					
36	Ælfnoth										10?					
37	Æthelnoth										10?					
38	Leofstige										11					
39	Æthelwine															

Figure 5: The phased introduction of thegns to Edward the Martyr and Æthelred's courts

For the sake of comparison with this clear presentation of the phased introduction pattern in the first assemblies of the reigns of Æthelstan, Edgar, Edward and Æthelred (Figures 4-5), Figure 6 shows snapshots of the witness lists at the beginnings of the reigns of Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1		461	462	463	464	465	470	467	466	472	473	46	
2		940	940	940	940	940	940	940	940	940	940	940	94
10	Thegns												
11	Odda	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
12	Ælfric 1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2					
13	Eadmund	3	4	3	3	3	3	3					
14	Wulfsige	4	5	4		4	4						
15	Wullaf	5	6	5	4	5							
16	Wihgar	6	7	6	5	6							
17	Æthelwold	7	8	7									
18	Ælfred	8	9	8	6	7							
19	Wulfric 1	9			7	8							
20	Wulfgar	10	10	9	8	9							
21	Ælfsige 1	11	11	10	9	10							
22	Ordheah	12	12	11	10	11							
23	Eadric	13	13	12	11	12							
24	Ealhhelm	14	14	13									
25	Ælfsige 2	15	15	14	12	13							
26	Æthelred	16	16	15	13	14							1
27	Æthelmund	17	17	16									
28	Wulfhelm	18	18	17	14	15							1
29	Ælfheah		wife										
30	Sigeric			3									
31	Æthelgeard												
32	Wulfheah				18								
33	Wulfsige 2				19								
34	Wulfnoth				20								
35	Æthelstan				22								
36	Eanulf				23								
37	Wulfric 2												
38	Ordwold												
39	Ganulf												

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1		520	518	517a	519	517b	517a	1793	522a	526	523	529	528	527
2		946	946	946	946	946		946	947	947	947	947	947	947
8	Thegns													
9	Ælfstan		1		2	1					2	2	2	1
0	Wulfric		2	2	3	3				2	3	3	3	2
1	Ælfsige		3	9	6	4				3	4	4	4	3
2	Sigferth		4											
3	Ealdred		5											
4	Heresige													
5	Eadmund				1	1	2			1	1	1	1	1
6	Æthelstan				3									
7	Ælfheah				4	10								9
8	Æthelsige				5	5								6
9	Ælfric				6	4	5			9	6			5
0	Wihgar				7									
1	Ælfred				8	11	6			10	8			10
2	Æthelgeard				10	9	7			6		7	7	8
3	Wulfric 2					7				5	5	5	5	4
4	Æthelnoth					8				7	7	8	9	7
5	Æthelred					12								11
6	Berhtwold										8			
7	Beorhtsige												6	8
8	Wulfsige													6
9	Oswig													
0	Ælfsige 2													
1	Wulfric (Dunstan's brother?)													
2	Wulfric													
3	Wigferth													
4	Eadred													
5	Æthelric													
6	Ælfhelm													
7	Frytheric													
8	Berhtferth													
9	Eadhelm													

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1		582	605	633	597	627	666	594	608	629	589	614	631	637	672	590		
2		955	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956		
3	Thegns																	
4	Leofwine						6											
5	Ælfhere									8	2							
6	Ælfheah 1					1 disc				5	1	3	1	1		3	4	
7	Ælfsige 1					2 dis	1	1	4	7	2	4	2	2		6	1	
8	Æthelmaer					8	2		3	6		5	5	3		5	3	
9	Ælfric 1											8						10
0	Ælfgar					7	1			1		1				1	5	
1	Byrhtferth					8	2			2		2				2	6	
2	Oswear					9												
3	Ælfsige 2					10	dyring					9				8	9	
4	Cynesige					11												
5	Wynsige					12												
6	Ælfred					13			4	9	10	7	4	5				
7	Ælfheah 2					14				11								7
8	Æthelgeard					15	3		9	3	6	3	6	3	4			
9	Æthelbriht					16												
0	Osulf					17												
1	Oswig					18												
2	Irdwold					19												
3	Wulfgar					20					9							13
4	Ælfric 2					21												
5	Ælfwold					22												8
6	Wulfric 1						4				10	5	10				7	2
7	Eadric											4						
8	Eadmund																	
9	Æthelwold											7						12
0	Ælfwine														4			
1	Æthelsige																	
2	Hehelm																	
3	Wiferth																	
4	Æthelweard																	
5	Wullaf																	
6	Wihgar																	
7	Wulfric 2																	
8																		

Figure 6: Snapshots of the beginnings of the reigns of Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig as seen through their witness lists

We ought first to discount the idea that the phased introduction patterns visible in the reigns of Æthelstan, Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred are simply the result of documentary filters or of the creative license of a draftsman or agency, for these patterns occur over too long a timeframe and across too many different agencies for this to be a plausible explanation. We should also discount the possibility that this simply reflects an accepted diplomatic custom for the ways in which the charters immediately succeeding an accession should be drawn up, for it does not appear to have been the case for the charters of Edmund, Eadred or Eadwig. The only remaining explanation is that the waves of thegns visible in diploma witness lists reflected an actual system whereby groups of individuals were brought in consecutively at the start of these reigns (Æthelstan, Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred's) to be formally introduced to king and council. That this was the main objective of the staggered witnessing of initial charters is implied by two things: first, the fact that these thegns for the most part do not reappear again. Second, that the witness lists of these first charters rarely manifest the order in which leading thegns would go on to attest the king's charters for most of the reign, or the order in which they had attested the previous king's last charters, instead being apparently given over primarily as vehicles for the execution of this phased-introduction custom.

The reigns of Æthelstan, Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred all had something in common. Their beginnings were all to a greater or lesser extent marred by a succession dispute, whereas the reigns of Edmund, Eadred and Eadwig were not.²⁷⁴ Æthelstan – who, like Edgar, was elected in Mercia – initially struggled for recognition in Wessex, which was the support base of his brother Ælfweard;²⁷⁵ Edgar was in what would have been at least an awkward (and at most a very tense) position relative to Eadwig in 957-9, and then probably needed to tread relatively carefully when he became king of the English; Edward the Martyr's short reign was

²⁷⁴ These reigns have been compared in this capacity before: Stafford, 'The reign', at p. 15. On the issue of rules of succession at this time, which had not yet been formalised, see Williams, 'Some notes', and Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 149-52.

²⁷⁵ On which see above p. 297.

riven by factionalism, much of which revolved around the opposed support bases for himself and his brother Æthelred,²⁷⁶ and Æthelred's accession (and legitimacy) was marred by the murder of Edward and this event's ensuing tensions.²⁷⁷

The phased introduction pattern seems therefore to have occurred when there existed, or had recently existed, a challenge to the legitimacy of the king upon accession and/or he had a rival. The implication of this is that in a crisis, especially when a king felt that his nobility might have a choice between himself and someone else, he employed a custom after his accession which allowed him to meet many of the nobles of the kingdom face-to-face, to forge a personal bond with them, and in so doing probably aim to secure their loyalty. As was argued in Chapter One, there is little evidence in the late Anglo-Saxon period for a standardised oath of loyalty being imposed formally by the king onto his nobility, and the impression is that if oaths of loyalty were given, this was done on an intimate and relatively ad-hoc basis between individuals and the king in ways which created a special, personal relationship between them. The phased introduction theory proposed above could provide further support for this, for it very much looks as though the kings who did this were inviting discrete groups of thegns to meet them one after the other in the conjoined contexts of accession and crisis. It is easy to imagine these circumstances as being the perfect setting for the exchanges of oaths between king and thegn, or perhaps for receiving the kiss of peace from various groups of thegns.²⁷⁸

Comparison with Ottonian practices may help to further interpret the mechanics behind the phased-introduction pattern visible in these English witness lists, and its significance. During the late Ottonian and early Salian periods, upon accession the king undertook an initial progression throughout the realm which represented him taking both real and symbolic control

²⁷⁶ See Byrhtferth's testament in the *VO*, iv, 18, pp. 136-8. But cf. Williams, 'Princeps', at pp. 159-72 and Fisher, 'Anti-monastic reaction', and for a qualification of Fisher's conclusions, Jayakumar's 'Reform'. See also Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 64-8 with notes; Yorke, 'Æthelwold', at pp. 80-7.

²⁷⁷ Yorke, 'Edward'; Stafford, 'The reign', at pp. 21-6; Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 72-90; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 154-76. On the development of Edward's cult in Æthelred's reign see Keynes, 'The cult'.

²⁷⁸ On this see Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, p. 251.

of his kingdom, for on this initial *iter* the new king gathered the assent to his election from the regional assemblies of nobles and received their homage.²⁷⁹ The mutual legitimisation this effected – that of the king’s election, and of the status of the nobility he visited – served, in addition to the sacrality of the king’s person, as protection against opposition.²⁸⁰ Whilst Anglo-Saxon kings’ itinerant kingship in its general sense has been compared to that of the Ottonians’ and Salians’ before,²⁸¹ the detail in which these comparisons can be made, and the extent to which ensuing conclusions about German practices can be applied to English ones, has been limited by our lack of knowledge of most assembly locations in the English context.²⁸² It has not yet been remarked that the witness lists of Anglo-Saxon charters immediately following the accessions of Æthelstan, Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred contain a potential English manifestation of the initial, royal German *iter* specifically in its post-accession context and ambitions.²⁸³ The phased introduction pattern visible in the charters of these kings shows the first charters after a king’s accession (and in Æthelstan’s case, the surviving charters until 932) may well be evidence that Anglo-Saxon kings, especially when faced with a challenge to their authority upon accession, undertook an initial perambulation specifically with the intention of meeting the kingdom’s powerful thegns face-to-face and to involve them in the ceremony of their kingship via the issuing of royal diplomas.

The groups of thegns we can observe attending these initial assemblies would, according to this theory, be individuals local to the location of the assembly, whose loyalty the

²⁷⁹ On the topic of Ottonian, Salian and Carolingian royal perambulations see Bernhardt, ‘Itinerant kingship’; McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 171-212; Leyser, ‘Ottonian Government’, at pp. 94-5. For itinerant kingship in the Anglo-Saxon context, see Charles-Edwards, ‘Early-medieval kingship’.

²⁸⁰ Bernhardt, ‘Itinerant kingship’, at p. 50.

²⁸¹ A summary of such comparisons may be found in Roach, *Kingship and Consent*, pp. 45-8.

²⁸² The exception to this is Æthelstan, for whom good evidence survives of the royal *iter*. See Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp. 77-91 and more generally on the itineraries of tenth-century English kings, Hill, *Atlas*, pp. 85-92.

²⁸³ An explanation for such apparent similarities can always be offered by the prospect of convergent evolution, but we should not discount the possibility that it was imitation: Anglo-Saxon models of kingship have been discussed by Insley in the context of increasing West-Saxon exposure to Ottonian political and artistic culture over the tenth century (‘Charters, ritual’). Indeed Byrhtferth tells us that Edgar himself sent abbot Æscwig with the thegn Wulfmær bearing gifts to Otto I (*VO*, iv.4).

king was seeking to strengthen by bringing his court to their general vicinity, but they could also have been groups of thegns from other regions whose presence the king has specifically requested. I have attempted to prove geographic links between the groups of thegns who witness these charters, whether to the location of the assembly (if it is known) or to the environs of the land being granted in the charter in question. I tried to do this through cross-examination of these two pieces of information with the geographical interests of the thegns who witnessed these initial charters, as potentially indicated if they only or primarily thereafter attested charters granting lands in certain areas. It was unfortunately not possible to do this apart from perhaps for a group of Danes who attested one of Edgar's phased introduction charters after his accession as king of the Mercians.²⁸⁴ The problem is that we do not know whether they were in fact York magnates simply coming south to the midlands to attend a meeting in whose proceedings they had a vested interest, for Edgar was alienating bookland in Nottinghamshire to archbishop Oscytel of York. Alternatively, it has been remarked that in Edgar's reign in general, groups of thegns with Danish names, who can be assigned with more or less certainty a Danish identity thanks to a vigorous naming tradition in the Norse linguistic context and who were probably local to the east-midlands,²⁸⁵ only appear in charters alienating lands in this area.²⁸⁶ This might suggest that the witness list of S 679 is in fact testament to Edgar actually travelling in 958 to Nottinghamshire to meet the secular elite of this area. Again, however, we have no way of proving that it was Edgar who went to them rather than the other way round. It is moreover impossible in most cases to prove that the groups of 'new' thegns attesting phased introduction charters came from a specific locality, and in the cases where it is possible, it is not possible to prove whether this locality was proximate to the location of the assembly or not. Yet their consecutive appearance in these groups in the aftermath of accessions in the

²⁸⁴ S 679: Ulfketel, Hrowald, Duntan, Sumerled, Thor, Ourde, Soca, Cytelbearn, Forno.

²⁸⁵ Abrams, 'Edgar', at pp. 180, 184; Parsons, 'Anna' and Townend, *Scandinavian Culture*.

²⁸⁶ This is unlike, for example, what I argued was happening under Æthelstan.

context of what we know about itinerant Anglo-Saxon kingship, makes one or both of these scenarios likely.

This discovery might also inform German scholars' impression of contemporary English government, for these frequently seem to downplay the importance of the element of interpersonality in Anglo-Saxon rulership and government because of a fixation with how German monarchs ruled such a comparatively decentralised kingdom. Timothy Reuter, for example, claimed that 'the English had laws, customs, and language to define *Engla Lond*. In consequence, it mattered much less who actually ruled the kingdom'.²⁸⁷ Yet a finding which showed English kings travelling around after their coronations to meet their nobility in person, particularly when there was a succession dispute afoot, would suggest strongly that irrespective of laws, customs and language, it certainly *did* matter who actually ruled the English kingdom. Indeed, it would show that asserting a personal relationship with key players early on was crucial to these kings being able to generate loyalty to themselves, which would of course have been synonymous with the securing of authority.

Summary

Kings Eadwig and Edgar were both faced with the issue of factionalism, though in varying forms. Their father and uncles – Eadred, Æthelstan and Edmund – had not, to our knowledge, faced this issue, or at least not to this extent. As argued in Chapter Two, Eadwig seems to have attempted to secure himself as the object of the loyalty of the different court factions which may have emerged from the second half of Eadred's reign, and which were also perhaps forming in the face of Edgar's pretensions to the throne, or at least in the face of what was

²⁸⁷ Reuter, 'The making', at p. 299. For similar intimations see Bernhardt, 'Itinerant kingship', at p. 48; Leyser, 'The Ottonians', at p. 73; and in *idem*, 'Anglo-Saxons', at p. 109.

perhaps a growing notion amongst some ealdormen and thegns that there existed an alternative to Eadwig. Eadwig's visible strategies balanced the claims to social ascendancy of different groups through allowing their participation in diploma-issuing processes in different capacities, whilst leaning heavily on land grants in order to establish the value of loyalty to him in the face of a challenge, as Arnulf of Carinthia seems to have done. If these policies were indeed aimed at the issue of loyalty and of maintaining authority over the entire kingdom, they failed, and whether through forceful compulsion (for which no evidence survives) or through some other type of pressure originating from Edgar, the midland and Danelaw magnates, or both, his sphere of authority was limited to Wessex, whilst Edgar's covered everything else.

Though it is less evident than in Eadwig's case, we can gather that Edgar too had to deal with factionalism based on his irregular accession, first to Mercia then to England; his dealings with his court; and the explosion of tensions upon his death, which can probably be interpreted to mean that it was Edgar himself who had managed to keep a lid on this in his lifetime. Edgar's response to factionalism differed greatly from his brother's. The amount of land issued to laymen plummeted, but its lack seems to have been made up by Edgar in other quarters. He adopted the phased-introduction approach, one which may have been adopted by kings who came to power in particularly fractious or challenging circumstances and who thus aimed to gain a firmer grip on power by establishing a personal relationship with their men, whether that was accompanied or defined by an oath, a kiss of peace, or some such ritual announcing acceptance of the king's authority. Edgar also probably achieved the loyalty of his men, and the control of his kingdom, in part through a close personal involvement in its governance, having possibly taken on the role of ealdorman of Wessex,²⁸⁸ effecting extensive

²⁸⁸ Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 32, 53. Cf. Hart, 'Æthelstan 'Half-King'', who believed Ælfhere was the most likely candidate to hold responsibility for England south of the Thames when there was no ealdorman for this area, at pp. 133-4.

coinage reforms,²⁸⁹ and as we saw in Chapter Two, a more synthetic management of the membership of the *witan* in order to honour the Mercians who had supported him in 957-9.

²⁸⁹ For a summary of findings and scholarship on this issue see Keynes, 'Edgar', at pp. 23-4. More specifically see Jonsson, 'Pre-reform coinage' and Pagan, 'Pre-reform coinage'.

e. Æthelred: Reframing royal prerogative

The final section of this chapter deals with King Æthelred, and briefly with King Edmund Ironside.²⁹⁰ A great deal has been written about Æthelred. It is not my aim to survey here all of the literature written about him or his reign, but it is salutary to roughly locate the analysis which follows in the context of what has already been said, and why it is necessary to bring up the issue of Æthelred's relationship with his leading men yet again. The last forty-odd years have seen persistent efforts to rehabilitate the image of this king,²⁹¹ a development of particular relevance to this thesis because one of its effects has been the whitewashing, or at least passing-over, of Æthelred's treatment of his nobility. This rehabilitation initiative is in some way to be expected, given the sinusoidal nature of historiographical consensus. It has also resulted in a necessary modulation of the old, overly-simplistic view of Æthelred.²⁹² But it is possible to push this process of rehabilitation, and reinterpretation, past the point of nuance and into the realm of fiction. In an important article Simon Keynes argued that, essentially, if we try hard enough, we can find many reasons why Æthelred was not *not* a good king – but that in fact no judgment can be made about Æthelred's personal kingship because of the teleological nature of the Æthelredian Chronicle, and especially not compared to Alfred's, with whom we oughtn't to bother trying to compare Æthelred at all.²⁹³ Yet there is a good deal which remains to be said about Æthelred's kingship and, by extension, what happened to the English kingdom during his reign, mainly thanks to the study of how Æthelred managed his relationships within the secular *witan*. Much of this lies outside the traditional approaches and conclusions of both the 'ill-counselled-Æthelred' and the 'simply-unlucky-and-misunderstood-Æthelred' camps.

²⁹⁰ A discussion of Edward the Martyr's strategies has been omitted since there is simply not enough evidence for his actions and policies as king to speculate on how he dealt with his lay elite. The little evidence that does survive however does not suggest that he was massively competent or admired. For a summary of what is known see Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 68-73.

²⁹¹ Examples of such attempts include Keynes, 'A tale'; Stafford, 'The reign'; Roach, *Æthelred*.

²⁹² Freeman, *The History*, pp. 260-1; Stenton, *ASE*, pp. 374, 394-6.

²⁹³ Keynes, 'A tale'.

The main issue taken by the proponents of the latter camp is with the picture of the king painted by the Chronicle, which, as Keynes initially proposed and which has since been universally accepted, was probably written in Cnut's reign from the perspective of defeat.²⁹⁴ It is repeatedly insisted upon that it is impossible to arrive at any knowledge of Æthelred without rooting oneself solely in other sources for the reign such as charters, legislation and coinage, and that if these are examined, the picture which emerges of the king is different than that painted by the Chronicle – namely, not one of total uselessness.²⁹⁵ Yet, whilst it is certainly true that different angles of Æthelred's kingship are revealed by close analysis of these more contemporaneous sources, it is still absolutely possible even with some of these alone to show that Æthelred had a radically different, even damaging, approach to the development and maintenance of his relationship with his lay elite. This in turn allows for the rehabilitation (in turn) of aspects of the Æthelredian Chronicler's testimony, and has fascinating implications for our understanding of how Æthelred attempted to secure the loyalty of these men. Equally, our knowledge that he failed, combined with contemporary comparisons between him, Edmund Ironside, Alfred and Edward the Elder, illuminate brilliantly the received eleventh-century opinion of how Anglo-Saxon kings were meant to do this.

Æthelred's management of the *witan*'s power dynamics as seen through royal diplomas has already been explored extensively in Chapter Two. Another prominent piece of evidence for this however pertains to their punishment at the king's hands, as we see in the cases of the blinding of Ælfgar in 993, the blinding of Wulfheah and Ufegeat in 1006, and the killing of ealdorman Ælfhelm in the same year.²⁹⁶ These episodes have been mentioned frequently by historians, and all within the same framework, again pioneered by Simon Keynes in his initial

²⁹⁴ Keynes, 'Declining reputation', at pp. 229-36.

²⁹⁵ See for example Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 154-231; Keynes, 'Re-reading Æthelred', at p. 82; Roach, 'A tale', at p. 234.

²⁹⁶ *ASC* a. 993, 1006. Though these episodes were recorded in the Chronicle, they are being considered here in the section dealing with sources outside of the Chronicle because they seem to constitute mere records of events than retrospective defeatism of the Chronicler.

rehabilitation of Æthelred: that such punishments were normal if the contemporary political climate and the context of Anglo-Saxon legislation are considered, and thus that we ought not to read into them as setting Æthelred apart in any way as particularly violent.²⁹⁷ Yet this deserves a more precise assessment, because the issue of punishment and the threat of punishment is of great importance to the issue of how kings might have secured loyalty. Consequently, ascertaining whether contemporaries would have attached special significance to Æthelred's actions, and thus whether they might have constituted a (new) royal strategy, is key.

To this aim it is salutary to remember that the issue at stake is not necessarily whether Æthelred's actions were within the remit of what Anglo-Saxon law detailed,²⁹⁸ or whether, as Nicole Marafioti has argued, corporeal punishments were in theory conceived as a better option than death as it allowed the criminal the opportunity to atone,²⁹⁹ or indeed whether corporeal punishment of officials was carried out by Carolingians at the time.³⁰⁰ The issue is whether or not such severe punishments, and indeed the murder of an ealdorman, would have been seen as something different in *Æthelred's* reign by *Æthelred's* men, and whether by extension we might theorise that Æthelred was relying upon a new strategy compared to his predecessors to achieve loyalty.

Let us return to the allegedly mitigating factors quoted by historians when dealing with these episodes: the 'background of domestic intrigue' at Æthelred's court, including the 'complex tale of palace revolution'; and the context of Anglo-Saxon law and how corporeal punishment was viewed more widely. Regardless of the possibility that Ælfgar (blinded in 993)

²⁹⁷ Keynes, 'A tale', at pp. 211-213. For echoes of this perspective see Marafioti, 'Punishing', at pp. 39-48; Williams, 'Military and non-military', at p. 153; Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 209; Roach, 'A tale', at p. 251. More generally about mutilations in England in this period see O'Brien-O'Keefe, 'Body and law', esp. at pp. 17-18; and in a cross-channel context, Burher-Thierry, 'Just anger'.

²⁹⁸ As argued by Keynes, 'A tale', at p. 212.

²⁹⁹ Marafioti, 'Punishing', *passim*.

³⁰⁰ Roach, *Æthelred*, p. 209.

was the same man who Æthelred claimed led him astray in his younger years, or that Ufegeat and Wulfheah somehow became antagonists,³⁰¹ there is no evidence that such a punishment was considered proportionate to that crime. Keynes, Roach and Marafioti all suggest that this was the case because Anglo-Saxon law allowed for mutilation as punishment for crimes, but this does not add up to what happened to Ælfgar, Wulfheah and Ufegeat, nor does it add up to what the laws actually say. Whilst mutilation had long been a punishment in Anglo-Saxon law-codes,³⁰² blinding is a particularly severe form of this and we cannot extrapolate that having a criminal's eyes out was as normalised as having body parts chopped off. So, if we look now only at the provisions for blinding, Lantfred recalled in his *Life* of St Swithun an otherwise-unattested law of Edgar which prescribed blinding for thieves.³⁰³ When we come to Æthelred's lawcodes, we find provision for bodily mutilation in I Æthelred 2 for thieving slaves and in IV Æthelred 5.3 for the striking of false coin, and neither prescribes blinding as punishment. V Æthelred 28 prescribed death or the loss of wergild for desertion of the king, but again, not blinding. Keynes' explanation for this was that 'Edgar's law on mutilation presumably remained in force throughout Æthelred's reign', but if this were the case, it would then just as presumably still only have applied to thieves. II Cnut 8.1 and 16, a code based on those of Æthelred, prescribes mutilation for false accusations and theft, but not blinding.³⁰⁴ In any case, even if legislation allowed for blinding as a punishment for powerful men in theory, it is entirely possible that its actual application to such men would have been shocking and unusual.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ On the potential motivations for the blinding of Ælfhelm's sons, related to the probable enmity between Eadric and Ælfhelm, see Insley, 'Politics, conflict', at pp. 30-32.

³⁰² Fruscione, 'Beginnings'; O'Gorman, 'Mutilation'; O'Brien-O'Keefe, 'Body and law'; Marafioti, 'Punishing'.

³⁰³ Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 125-28.

³⁰⁴ II Cn. 8.1, 16 (Liebermann, I, pp. 314, 320).

³⁰⁵ Whether formally institutionalised or simply an unspoken reality of the hierarchical society of Anglo-Saxon England, special treatment under the law could be given to powerful men. See e.g. Edgar 1.4, 2a, 13, provisions which would not be needed if it were known that all laws applied equally to all individuals at all times. See also III Ætr 10, which suggests that the king could make special exceptions for kings' thegns, and see the evidence found in S 883 of the king flouting the law against Christian burials of thieves in order to protect Æthelwig reeve. Cf also Janet Nelson's comments in 'Bad kingship' on the issue of the Frankish aristocracy's accusations of Louis

The king was thus relying on violent punishment, and thus the threat of violent punishment, of his leading men much more than surviving evidence indicates had been done by his predecessors, and the instances of this which survive (in 993 and 1006) happened only after the Viking attacks began in earnest (c. early 990s). Based on the examination of Æthelred's management of *witan* dynamics and relationships in both this and the previous chapter, the king seems to have been parsimonious about the granting of promotion; and cultivated an atmosphere of mistrust amongst peers, of insecurity about career prospects and one's status, and fear for one's life, in ways which would have probably had the effect of allowing him to maintain control.

The remaining way in which Æthelred might be seen attempting to engineer the relationship between himself and the leading men to his favour (not counting Chronicle evidence) is through his close realignment with the church, its officials, and penitential ideology in the latter decades of his reign. Simon Keynes' work has shown that 993 formed a turning point in Æthelred's reign, when he turned his back on his 'youthful indiscretions' and on the people who had reportedly advised such actions, and realigned himself with the legacy of Æthelwold and the monastic reform movement.³⁰⁶ In the famous charters S 876 for Abingdon, S 885 and S 893 for Rochester, and S 891 for Winchester, in which the king restored land to these institutions which had been previously alienated with his permission, the motif of Æthelred's youthful wrongdoings is repeated, and his remorse is made clear.³⁰⁷ Through these charters, Æthelred was broadcasting his newfound allegiance with the church, and the intended audience of such a broadcast can only have been the leading men – lay, and of the church. How

the Pious and Lothar for excessive violence against faithful men, and the damage this arbitrariness would have done to these kings' relationship with their men, esp. at pp. 21-2

³⁰⁶ Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 176-208.

³⁰⁷ On these see Cubitt, 'The politics', *passim*. For an alternate view on the penitential quality of S 876 see Stafford, 'The reign'. See further Roach, 'Penitential discourse', *idem*, 'Public rites', and Stafford, 'Political ideas', at p. 71. For a more wide-ranging discussion of Æthelred's recognition of, and attempt to remedy, his wrongdoings and to tackle the Viking invasions see Keynes, 'An abbot'. On these charters as 'an essential part of political communication in these years' see Roach, 'A tale', at p. 255.

might such a strong declaration – couched in charters attacking the ‘abhorrent greed’ of previous councillors, some of whom laymen³⁰⁸ – have been interpreted by the former?

In relation to this question must be considered the other two ways in which Æthelred made this allegiance public. The 990s into the early 1000s saw a reversal of the emphasis on grants to laymen found earlier in the reign, with a much greater number – both compared to grants to laymen, and compared to the reigns of other kings – of grants of land issued to the church.³⁰⁹ This cannot have escaped the notice of these laymen. Not only that, but as Pauline Stafford has argued, the advance of royal power which the 990s saw, and the return to the church of lands that had been regranted by Æthelred in all likelihood to laymen, ‘had combined with monastic reform to raise general but urgent questions about family inheritance and the degree to which hereditary claims should be or could be overridden’.³¹⁰ All of this may have been quite alienating for the secular members of Æthelred’s *witan*, and may have caused a feeling of disenfranchisement; we must ask if this (or at the very least, a perception in the eyes of the church that they were getting the long end of the stick) was not in fact intended. It rather seems as though Æthelred was making a point – and not just to the church.

These years also saw the appearance of Bishop Wulfstan as one of Æthelred’s top advisors, one who eventually came to embody the king’s legislation starting around a decade later. This rise and relationship will prove of particular interest in the light of Wulfstan’s views and how they might have served the king. Wulfstan appeared rather suddenly as bishop of London in 996, and he was immediately accorded a place high in the lists of bishops before being translated to the see of York in 1002.³¹¹ By 1008 he was composing legislation, being

³⁰⁸ S 893 criticised Æthelsige; S 896 exiled Ælfric; S 876 quoted the abhorrent greed of councillors. See Stafford, ‘Political ideas’, at pp. 75-6.

³⁰⁹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 197-199; *idem*, ‘Wulfstige’, at pp. 67-8.

³¹⁰ Stafford, ‘Political ideas’, at p. 78.

³¹¹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 189. On Wulfstan’s career see Whitelock, ‘Homilist and statesman’ and Wormald, ‘Wulfstan’. For a more recent summary of Wulfstan’s career with recent scholarship see Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 9-16. For Wulfstan at London see Whitelock, *Bishops of London*, pp. 25-31.

responsible for codes V-X Æthelred, which saw unrelenting emphasis not only on the everyday practices necessary to lead a Christian life in an attempt to realise his vision of a holy society, but on the importance of barefoot processions to demonstrate repentance.³¹² In Wulfstan's promotion by Æthelred, and the overtly religious tones of the king's legislation in the final decade of his reign, we again see evidence of the king's efforts to realign himself more closely with the church.

Yet with this example it is easiest to argue for Æthelred's further motivation of using this realignment for the purpose of cementing his own royal authority, something which would not have been needed if he did not perceive his authority as being eroded or challenged. For whilst Wulfstan's rise in the council and as a legislator was no doubt due largely, as Keynes wrote, to his prodigious abilities,³¹³ much of Wulfstan's legislation and political theory would have had corollaries of strengthening the king's authority. It has been suggested, for example, that Carolingian litanic processions were helpful in 'fostering some sense of loyalty and community of interest to the advantage of the distant king'.³¹⁴ But Wulfstan also stood for something which was a very powerful tool in the hands of a king, and which would have been in Æthelred's interests to promote: the Law of God as found in the Old Testament.³¹⁵ The principle from this doctrine which is most visible in Wulfstan's legislation is of course the notion that the cause of political disaster was sin and crime, and thus to obey God's law was the only key to worldly success.³¹⁶ But a corollary of Old Testament law was also to underscore the king as God's elect and his representative on earth, thus according the king an enormous

³¹² Key scholarship on Wulfstan's vision include: Bethurum, 'Wulfstan'; Lawson, 'Archbishop Wulfstan'; Wormald, 'Wulfstan'.

³¹³ Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 189.

³¹⁴ McCormick, 'Liturgy of war', at pp. 22-3; discussed in Keynes, 'An abbot', at p. 188.

³¹⁵ Wulfstan did not of course adhere solely to the law of the Old Testament. He and Ælfric for example advocated for corporal punishment rather than execution, rooted in the New Testament notions of the sin of killing one's fellow man (see Marafioti, 'Punishing', *passim* and Rabin, 'Capital punishment'). Wulfstan's knowledge was also refracted through Carolingian sources (on which see for example Whitelock, 'Homilist and statesman'; Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 330-66 and 449-65; Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 29-30).

³¹⁶ Wormald, 'The making', at pp. 15-17.

amount of authority and power, and justifying loyalty to him not as a choice, or as something depending upon his behaviour or success, but as a Christian duty. As told in 1 Samuel, David, the paradigmatic Old Testament king, chose not to kill Saul though he could, and in 2 Samuel 1 when Amalekite killed Saul expecting a reward, David asked incredulously, ‘how wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thy hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed’?³¹⁷ Ideas about the inviolability of the king’s position as related to Old Testament doctrine had already been made explicit in Old English writings, with the Old English translation of Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* stating that David ‘forbore slaying Saul for fear of God and his old loyalty, so do the pious minds of good servants’, and further that ‘when we offend against lords we offend against the God who created lordship’.³¹⁸

Considering Wulfstan’s promotion of the Law of God in his legislation, it is certainly no coincidence that it constitutes the only other evidence of Anglo-Saxon law being used to prescribe loyalty to the king apart from Edmund’s Colyton code. It is in such legislation that the political usefulness to Æthelred of Wulfstan’s ideology, and of his ability to communicate it, is most obvious. V Æthelred, promulgated in 1008 at the Enham council, opens with the following statement: ‘We have confirmed, both by word and by pledge, our firm intention of observing one Christian faith under the authority of one king’, and closes with ‘And let us loyally support [*holdlice healdan*] one royal lord’.³¹⁹ The instruction to loyally follow one royal lord becomes a fixture of Æthelred’s laws from this point on.³²⁰ In all of Wulfstan’s surviving legislation for Æthelred are thus included clauses which obviously were intended to strengthen

³¹⁷ 2 Samuel 1:14.

³¹⁸ *Pastoral Care*, p. 200. On this statement see Pratt, *Political Thought*, p. 204 and Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 250.

³¹⁹ V Ætr 1, 35. For another other novel provision in relation to behaviour towards the king see V Ætr 28, 30. See also V Ætr 30 on plotting against the king (cf. Af 4; II As 4; VI Atr 37). For a thorough discussion of V-VI (Lat. and Anglo-Saxon) Æthelred and their complex relationship, see Wormald, ‘Æthelred the lawmaker’, at pp. 49-58; Wormald, *MEL*, pp. 330-335; see also Keynes, ‘An abbot’, pp. 177-179.

³²⁰ VI Æthelred 1, 35, 37. On the promulgation of VI Æthelred and its Latin equivalent, see Wormald, *MEL*, p. 332 and Lawson, ‘Archbishop Wulfstan’, pp. 573-4, 577. Other examples at VII Ætr 1; VIII Ætr 44; IX Æthelred.

the king's claim to loyalty by placing loyalty to the king in a continuum with loyalty to God.³²¹ By repeatedly emphasising both loyalty to the king as a Christian duty, and the king's authority as derived from God, the combined effect was to cast Æthelred as entitled to his men's active loyalty as a result of his status, regardless of how he acted.

There is yet more material in Wulfstan's works to suggest that his own interest was not only to strengthen the church, but to strengthen the position of ecclesiastics *at the expense of* the lay elite.³²² Wulfstan consistently, for instance, raised the rank of priests to equate that of thegnns.³²³ In the section on the people's counsellors in the *Institutes of Polity*, a composite work dating to 1008x1010 made up of earlier tracts on status,³²⁴ Wulfstan begins by recognising roles of both secular and religious leaders to be of one mind as the people's councillors, but then goes on to only discuss the role of bishops.³²⁵ As the text progresses through the ranks of society down from king to laymen and widows, the section on nobles finds itself behind that on bishops. The clearest witness to Wulfstan's empowerment of the church however comes from the opening statement of his tract *Episcopus*, which reads 'it is proper for a bishop to offer guidance in all things, both in religious and in secular matters'.³²⁶ As noted by Dorothy Bethurum-Loomis, Wulfstan did not take this position out of ignorance. He was well aware, for example, that the duty of overseeing the borough court lay in equal parts with the diocesan bishop and the ealdorman, because his regulation on this matter in II Cnut 18.1 drew on a decree in III Edgar 5 which said as much.³²⁷ Wulfstan's ideas and legislation can be imagined

³²¹ The topic of loyalty is also prominent in Wulfstan's other politico-homiletic writings. See in his *Institutes of Polity*, *II Polity*, ed. Jost, p. 152; in his Homily Napier 51, for which see Wormald, *MEL*, p. 337, n. 344; Napier 50, p. 266, l. 8-9; p. 268, l. 24-28; *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. Bethurum, pp. 257-8, ll. 64-70.

³²² Bethurum noted Wulfstan's tendency towards this in her '*Regnum and sacerdotium*', at p. 140.

³²³ V Ætr 9.1; VI Ætr 5.3; VIII Ætr 28; I Cnut 6.2; Hadbot 68.3, *Geþyncdðo* 7, Að 2. *Norðleoda* 5 further equates the wergeld of a priest and a thegnæ Að 2 states their oaths are of equal value. *Norðleoda* 2 equates the wergeld of an archbishop and ætheling.

³²⁴ Rabin, *Political Writings*, pp. 101-102. See also Rabin, 'Archbishop Wulfstan's', at pp. 175-192.

³²⁵ *II Polity*, ed. Jost, p. 62. On the problematic placement of this section within Cotton Nero A.i's version of the *Institutes* and its potential relationship with the *Sermo Lupi* see Wilcox, 'The wolf on shepherds', at p. 410.

³²⁶ Liebermann, I, pp. 577; see also Whitelock, *Councils and Synods*, p. 417.

³²⁷ Bethurum, '*Regnum and sacerdotium*', at p. 143.

to have affected the leading men in several ways. Loyalty to the king was removed from any role it previously had as a function of the king's own behaviour, and instead framed explicitly as a Christian duty, likened to being faithful to God. The king's capacity for punishment, and specifically for the punishment of disloyalty, was significantly widened, examples of which might be seen in the blindings of 993 and 1006. And the prerogatives and power of elite laymen were perceived as circumscribed by the growing power of their ecclesiastical counterparts, with the king's blessing.

Wulfstan's dissemination of such ideas, so potentially useful to a king in crisis, would need to have been designed and facilitated by Æthelred himself because of the way these ideas could be used to his advantage. If this were the case, then we can hardly escape the conclusion that Æthelred's realignment with the church in the 990s and the way this evolved in the 1000s was not driven solely by pious and remorseful intent, but by the parallel, if not dominant, motivation of buttressing his royal authority. 'Royal authority' has an object in that it cannot exist without the acquiescence of the leading men, nor can it exist without individuals over whom to have authority; therefore, any effort to buttress 'royal authority', to create it or secure it, will be aimed by a king at the elite. The extent of a king's 'royal authority', or royal authority over men, is also synonymous with the extent to which those individuals are loyal to the king, for a king cannot be said to have authority if there is no one beneath him who is acquiescing to act in his interests and to exist in a consistent state of subordination relative to him – i.e., the definition of political and personal loyalty. Thus, Æthelred's change of direction in the 990s should be seen as a strategy to secure the loyalty of the leading men to himself via an increase of his power and authority thanks to his newfound allegiance with the church. Not only that, but in doing so, and in his approach to the management of the *witan*, Æthelred was reframing royal prerogative relative to the loyalty of his men. He could demand it, he could enforce it, and this could be done irrespectively of the extent to which he fulfilled their expectations. The

principles of this approach constitute a clear continuation of how Æthelred managed the dynamics of the *witan*, overall painting a very different picture of royal behaviour relative to the leading men compared to that of his predecessors, and by extension a different picture of how loyalty might have been cultivated.

It is now worth having another look at the Chronicle's account for what it might add, and indeed to highlight some reasons why it ought not be so readily discounted. One of the main reasons to rehabilitate the Chronicle's account also constitutes an important commentary on the ways in which kings were expected to earn the loyalty of their men in a time of war. This is the foil that the Chronicler seems to have created between Edmund Ironside and Æthelred. In the first of his many articles discussing the matter, Simon Keynes' main point, since adopted almost universally by scholars, was that the Æthelredian chronicle was written by the same individual, probably at the court of Cnut, from the perspective of defeat, meaning it could not be trusted.³²⁸ The problem with this interpretation of the Chronicle's value, however, is the way Edmund was portrayed by the chronicler: he was celebrated, but was still defeated by Cnut. In both instances of defeat (Æthelred's and Edmund's) Eadric's deception precipitated defeat by Cnut's forces.³²⁹ Why was Edmund celebrated, but Æthelred lambasted? There is no good reason this should be the case if we follow the reasoning that the entire Æthelredian chronicle (i.e., including the Edmund annals) looks the way that it does because its author was jaded as a result of English defeat. If the answer to the different portrayals of Edmund and Æthelred does not lie in the outcome of one's resistance versus that of the other's, the answer must lie in the ways they (actually) comported themselves, whether or not the Chronicle's account is a precisely accurate rendition of this. Against this one might argue that

³²⁸ Keynes, 'Declining reputation', at pp. 231, 235; repeated in Keynes, 'A tale'. For a reiteration of Keynes' position and efforts to distance Æthelred from the Chronicler's portrayal see Stafford, *Unification*, esp. pp. 62-8. For a different view see Hart, 'The early section', at pp. 298-301 and 307-8. For an analytical approach to the annals themselves and their constitution see now Stafford, *After Alfred*, Chapter Nine.

³²⁹ *ASC* a. 1015, 1016.

the Chronicler did not really see the outcomes of both kings' resistance as the same, perhaps seeing Edmund's defeat as secondary in ignominy than Æthelred's, or seeing Æthelred's as the first, and thus deciding, instance of defeat. But this would still leave us with the question of why the Chronicler would not have laid at least some blame for Æthelred's defeat at Edmund's feet due to his rebellious activities in 1015-16.³³⁰ If we divorce ourselves from the notion that Æthelred's image was so crafted by the chronicler because of the latter's knowledge of his defeat, and instead begin to consider the possibility that Æthelred and Edmund had very different ruling styles in reality which might have been magnified by the chronicler as a criticism of certain royal behaviour in the context of war and invasion, then we are back to the conclusion that we ought to trust the chronicler's account of Æthelred more than we do.

In what ways do Æthelred and Edmund contrast the most in the Chronicle, and of what does this suggest the chronicler is critical? The answer is of course in their leadership of the *fyrð*. For Æthelred, this is essentially non-existent. In campaigns led in the years 992, 1003, 1010, 1015 and 1016, he gave over leadership to ealdormen, and in 993, 998, 1003, 1005, 1009, 1010, 1015 and 1016 there were also campaigns undertaken with no named leader. Indeed Æthelred is conspicuous for his absence from the annals 991-1016. There are many entries detailing what the vikings were doing, just like there were in the end of the ninth and early tenth centuries, but this effectively highlights the absence of the corresponding entries about what the king himself was doing about it, which are present in abundance in Alfred's and Edward's annals. There is further veiled criticism of Æthelred at several moments. In 1003, the Chronicler refers to a contemporary saying, 'when the leader gives way, the whole army will be much hindered'. The immediate object of this statement is ealdorman Ælfric, yet in the context of the ultimate leader's (Æthelred's) obvious absence from military engagements, the

³³⁰ Stafford, *Unification*, mentioned the deleterious effects of Edmund's rebellion upon English resistance, p. 68. For an interesting discussion of how Edmund's image may have been manipulated by the Chronicler, but which suffers from an unconvincing argument for the existence of a contemporary account of the events of 1015-16 which the Æthelredian chronicler then copied down, see Howard, 'Promoting royal authority'.

ulterior object of this criticism cannot have been other than the king. In 1009, amid the fiasco caused by Brihtric and Wulfnoth, Æthelred ‘betook himself home, as did the ealdormen and chief councillors, and deserted the ships thus lightly’. Whilst here the *witan* seems to be blamed in equal measure with the king, the sense of the sentence is that the *king* deserted the ships thus lightly, with the ealdormen and councillors simply following suit. In 1016, the Chronicler twice highlights that the king was expected to join the English army, reporting even that they ‘begged’ him to come – and that when he finally did, he promptly left again because of rumours of betrayal.³³¹ It would seem that Æthelred’s absence from the battlefield was something which contemporaries were also debating. The presence of the enigmatic *wyrdwriteras* text, though interpretable either as an exoneration or a criticism of a king’s devolution of leadership to generals, has been argued by Malcolm Godden as constituting the use of Old Testament precedents to justify a king deciding not to lead his armies in person.³³²

One might argue that the Chronicler intentionally suppressed instances of when Æthelred was at the head of armies in order to magnify his criticism of the king, but this is unlikely in the context of the 1009 entry. This is one of only two times Æthelred is said by the Chronicler to have led an army, and frames his presence in absolute terms: ‘then on one occasion the king got in front of them [the vikings] with all his army’, with the implication that it was his presence which made the ‘whole people ready to attack them’.³³³ This is a detail that was clearly intended by the Chronicler to indicate the singularity of Æthelred’s participation in this event. The only other time the king can be seen taking a leading role in military activities is in the 1014 annal. There was an obvious causal connexion for the Chronicler between three

³³¹ See also instances in *ASC* a.1006, 1010, and 1014.

³³² Godden, ‘The Old Testament’. Mary Clayton has argued that it instead represents an oblique critique of Æthelred’s reluctance to appoint ealdormen, thus leaving many powerful men disappointed and therefore potentially a greater danger to the unity of Æthelred’s advisors. See her ‘Ælfric and Æthelred’, at p. 84. Keynes’ view, *Diplomas*, pp. 206-9, aligns with Godden’s. Pauline Stafford agreed with Keynes in her *Unification and Conquest*, p. 14, and Lawson cautiously so in ‘Archbishop Wulfstan’, at p. 572, n. 3.

³³³ *ASC* a. 1009: ‘Ða sume siðe hæfde se cyning hi fore gan mid ealre fyrde... 7 eall folc gearu wæs him on to fonne’.

things: the king's duty to be present at the head of the *fyrð*; how he governed the *witan*; and the extent of the leading men's (and the wider army's) loyalty to him, of which together the wider issue of English defeat or success in war was a function.

There could not be a bigger contrast between Edmund's and Æthelred's behaviour in the Æthelredian Chronicle. In 1015, when Eadric collected an army 'so did the ætheling Edmund', and they united; in 1016, Edmund 'began to gather the English army', 'rode to Northumbria to Earl Uhtred', they 'led an army into Staffordshire, Shropshire and to Chester, and they ravaged on their side'; Edmund fought the Danes at Penselwood, then led a second battle at Sherston, and collected the army 'for the third time', went to London, and relieved the citizens, sending the enemy into flight; he put the Danes to flight at Brentford, and then returned to Wessex and collected his army. Later in 1016 he collected his army 'for the fourth time', and put the Danes to flight. When they went into Mercia, he collected his army 'for the fifth time', but was betrayed at Ashington by Eadric, where Cnut had the victory. Edmund here is given the overwhelmingly active role, and, crucially, is always in the thick of it. Now, whether or not this constitutes an accurate portrayal of what battles were actually won by Edmund, or when the Danes actually fled, is irrelevant. What matters is that the Chronicler drew particular attention to Edmund's leadership, and to Æthelred's lack of it.

If one were to take the line that the Chronicler had actively manipulated the outcomes of battles in either Edmund's or Æthelred's reign and thus should not be taken seriously, it could not be argued that this was in order to portray the period from 991 to 1016 as an inexorable march towards defeat, because of the positive way in which Edmund is portrayed. It would instead have to be argued on the basis that the Chronicler was trying to make one king appear better or worse for reasons rooted in how they *dealt* with the threat, rather than simply whether they were ultimately defeated. This would then still lead us back to the conclusion that, whether or not the Æthelredian Chronicle's account is a completely accurate version of

events, whether not it was written from the perspective of defeat, it is a criticism of kings and their actions. We need to take seriously what it says about Æthelred's lack of leadership because of the crucial implications such criticism has for our understanding of what a king was expected to do in a time of war in order to maintain the loyalty of his leading men, and how this was ultimately linked to victory or defeat on the field.

Summary

Richard Abels remarked that Æthelred 'lacked Alfred's strategic vision'.³³⁴ This is undoubtedly true, but in itself was probably due to the fact that Æthelred simply had no idea what he was doing when it came to war and the defence of a kingdom. Æthelred was the first king in a long line of kings to not have been raised by a warrior-king father or uncle, in communion with war-seasoned ealdormen and thegns. Edgar's peaceful realm had afforded no opportunity to induct the ætheling into the art of war, and by the time the viking attacks restarted in earnest in the 990s, there remained alive no ealdormen or thegns to advise him who had been present in times of war, let alone in times of invasion by Danes.³³⁵ The fact that the reportedly 'bad' and conflicting counsel that was constantly being given to Æthelred was in fact probably due to everyone's relative ignorance of how to defend a kingdom has been alluded to but never focused on by historians.³³⁶

These unfortunate realities are however as far as one should go when attempting to free Æthelred of his ill-repute.³³⁷ Even without reference to the Chronicle's account of his reign,

³³⁴ Abels, 'Evolving strategies', at p. 84

³³⁵ This can be seen via reference to the tables outlining the careers of individual ealdormen and thegns in Chapter Two.

³³⁶ This idea was hinted at but not developed or supported in Damon, 'Advisors', at p. 75.

³³⁷ Insley has drawn a similar line in his 'England and the Atlantic', at p. 237: Æthelred 'seems to have mismanaged relationships between and within the aristocracy, to have been prey to particular elite factions, and to have failed spectacularly to generate a significant amount of support and loyalty from within his elite'. On this see also Brooks, 'Treason in Essex'.

we are faced with a cruel and insecure king who seems to have attempted to create new royal prerogatives when it came to the creation of loyalty amongst the secular *witan* just as he felt his authority amongst this group was being eroded by his military inability. Ryan Lavelle made an interesting remark about the possibility that when the vikings were seen as enjoying the king's *feorm*, or renders, from Sussex and Hampshire in 998, which by rights the king should have enjoyed, Æthelred could not be seen as full ruler by his men.³³⁸ This leads one to wonder whether as a result of Æthelred's failure to do what a king at war was meant to do – lead his men into battle – would have constituted enough justification in the leading men's eyes to start to act in their own interests rather than his.³³⁹ Whilst not strictly needed to gain an idea of Æthelred's strategies to secure loyalty from his leading men, the Chronicle helps to confirm the importance for a king in a time of war of doing battle alongside his men, and of linking this to the extent to which they remained loyal to him and his cause. The picture painted by the Chronicle is one where Æthelred was losing the confidence of these men. This in turn supports the conclusions, reached from a study of non-Chronicle sources, that he seems to have been attempting to make up for a loss of authority by finding new ways to exercise power over the secular *witan*. These were based on the cultivation of fear and rivalry, on ruthlessness and arbitrary favour, and on enforcement of loyalty rather than its cultivation through communities of interest.

³³⁸ Lavelle, 'Geographies of power', at pp. 208-9.

³³⁹ Cf. Janet Nelson's comments in 'Bad kingship' on the issue of *potestas* being the defining attribute of kings for Einhard, and the problems faced by kings who were so in name but not in power, esp. at pp. 5-8.

Conclusions

When we left Chapter Two, the big remaining question was what ruling strategies kings from Alfred to Æthelred had developed when it came to their lay elite. Chapter Two had just established as far as is possible the role of incentive in kings' approach to the loyalty of their leading secular men. It had shown how this was strategically deployed by kings in ways which problematise the received equation of 'land for loyalty' from any king's perspective, and vice versa from any magnate's. Yet not only did this investigation in and of itself reveal gaps in the deployment of incentive which hinted at the presence of other factors in kings' approaches to loyalty. This issue could also be approached from its other direction, namely, that it is separately worthwhile to ask the question of how kings acted to effect this in other ways than through incentive. We have a wealth of information from the period about how kings behaved, how they ruled, what they did, so to what extent might answers to our overarching questions lie in this type of evidence? The problem, of course, is that at no point are any connexions made explicitly in the sources between a royal action and the intent of affecting loyalty, or on the other hand, why an individual magnate may have been loyal in terms of the king's actions. Yet this lack does not diminish the importance of asking what behaviours would have been understood and designed by kings in order to affect the loyalty of the lay elite. The issue therefore becomes one of arguing for the significance of actions, and of identifying intent. Where in the surviving evidence of kings' actions and policies is manifested the goal of affecting the loyalty of the elite? This question's verso is then the extent to which surviving actions and policies can in fact be shown to be mechanisms used (partly or wholly) by kings to that end.

Working under the assumption that kings would have been at all times interested in optimising their relationship with their magnates because of how this would have been crucial

to securing their kingship and authority, and that the optimisation of this relationship would have been synonymous with the maximisation of the loyalty of these men, Chapter Three based itself in the analysis of royal interactions with these men, kings' management of the relationship, in order to answer the question above. This serves the double purpose of helping to identify the presence, or lack of (for each would be significant), any underlying principles in kings' approach to the matter of the loyalty of their men, and of offering new interpretations of the significance and purpose of familiar royal policies.

This chapter does not contain a comprehensive list of all the ways in which kings seem to have approached the issue of loyalty through their actions. We are probably only being given a very narrow window onto this issue by extant sources. Neither does this chapter pretend to show everything it is possible to know about this issue based on extant sources. This would not be realistic within the scope of this thesis. The question was how did kings act on the matter of their men's loyalty, and this chapter provides examples of this for each reign based upon the most prominent available examples of kings' interactions with their nobility. The significance of a royal action or policy relative to the topic of loyalty was assessed via an integrated consideration of historical context and the projected effect of said action or policy on the nobility. Rather than imposing thematic categories upon the whole period, the threads of given royal actions or policies have been picked up and put down as they appear or disappear in the sources themselves. This approach has made smooth comparisons across the period more difficult, but also avoids forcing a topically- and distributionally-heterogenous sourcebase into a homogenous framework.

It is yet possible within this approach to engage in comparisons, as shown by the discrete groupings of kings which were based upon the types of royal interactions with the nobility most readily visible in the sources for their reigns. Alfred and Edward were found probably to have deployed the act of fighting on the front as a method to cultivate the loyalty

of the secular elite, and potentially both to have used texts (Alfred the translations and the Chronicle, Edward the Chronicle) to cast themselves as the right kings for the moment and thus the ones worth the active loyalty of the aristocracy. Æthelstan, Edmund and Eadred can be shown to have had different approaches to the integration of magnates north of the Humber into the West-Saxon governmental apparatus, with a development away from principles of imposition towards those of negotiation reliant upon open communication corridors. Eadwig and Edgar both faced factionalism, but dealt with it differently: Eadwig sought to intermingle permanently, and to tie the identities of his lay elite to his kinship rather than to the power of ex-regents or incumbents. Edgar, like Æthelstan before him, may have travelled around his realm to meet men face-to-face, or at the least invited them in discrete groups to build these relationships. Although upon his accession to the kingdom of the English he worked with the established West-Saxon partners of kings, he eventually fulfilled his long-term vision of reinstating to prominence, and rewarding the loyalty of, his original Mercian support-base. Æthelred, a category of his own, should really be seen within that of Alfred and Edward for the contributions the analysis of his management of relationships makes to our understanding of the importance of warrior-kingship in the eyes of the nobility. For kings to lead their armies personally in times of strife was absolutely necessary in the eyes of the Æthelredian Chronicler. Æthelred's failure to do this was the root of the nobility's 'disloyalty', and thus by extension a significant driving factor in English defeat. This vindicates this chapter's initial assertions about the significance of this action in the sources for Alfred and Edward's reigns, and also helps us to see another development, the factionalism that expanded into the vacuum of Eadred's absence c.951-55 – also a time of military strife – for what it truly was: the harbinger of the nobility turning to their own interests and defences.

These are some of the ways in which these kings probably acted to cultivate the loyalty of their men. Whilst it is difficult to engage in macro-comparisons of this evidence unless

evidence survived of different kings acting in the same arenas, it is nonetheless possible to read into these diverse strategies the presence of an overarching common principle: the creation of communities of interest with the nobility. This manifested itself in Alfred's translations; Alfred's and Edward's *fyrð*-leadership; Æthelstan's use of the constituent parts and therefore magnates of Britain to cultivate belief in his kingship in the south; Edmund and Eadred with the Mercian and Danelaw magnates; Eadwig with his close attention to the south, his integration of inherited factions from Eadred's court; Edgar through his close attention to his Mercian – and potentially Northumbrian – magnates, thus probably demonstrating the wisdom and foresight Æthelstan lacked when it came to preventing future separatism from these areas. The only reign in which this is not the dominant impression is Æthelred's. This is not to say that Æthelred did not engage in this behaviour, only to say that it is nowhere near as readily visible as it is in the reigns of his predecessors. What his reign does teach us is that in times of war and invasion, it was crucial for this building of community to be done on the battlefield. Moreover, in order to retain the trust and dedication of his men, the king needed to be able to prove that he was the *right* king for the kingdom in that moment. He needed to keep loyalty to himself relevant and beneficial to the interests of the nobility in the context of their current troubles and ambitions, and this is what we can see kings doing throughout the period. Until, that is, King Æthelred encountered a situation in which he did not know how to be the king whom his elite needed.

Conclusion

Four years ago, I began the work for this thesis asking the question: what did loyalty to the king in Anglo-Saxon England mean? I have always found loyalty a profound and arresting trait in people. I consider it an important part of my own identity, and define myself largely through my loyalty to my friends, and to certain mentors I have had, both parental and academic. This is undoubtedly what drives my interest in this concept in an early English context, where the relief of loyalty in society was sharper than it is today. Whether within kin groups, from man to lord, from lord to king – loyalty was the glue that held society together. This quality seems to have held almost mystical value to contemporaries too. It is this feeling that was captured by the author of *The Wanderer*, the thoughts of whose narrator are dominated by longing for the companionship and belonging he felt when with his lord.³⁴⁰ *Beowulf*, a poem probably originating within the period under study and at the very least in circulation at this point, glorifies Wiglaf's dedication to his King Beowulf and what gave rise to it in Beowulf's own actions.³⁴¹ *The Battle of Maldon* has as its focus the honour that must drive one to fall with one's lord.³⁴² Loyalty, that value that would make one dedicated to an individual to the extent that their interests are placed paramount, sometimes even above one's own, and what produced it, captured the imagination of contemporaries. It is true that loyalty to the lord is a *topos* in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and thus, similarly to portrayals of feasting and the mead-hall in these texts, might 'perhaps bear some resemblance to contemporary society, but also conjure up a bygone heroic era, making it notoriously difficult to know where ideal might end and reflection of historical 'reality' begin'.³⁴³ But whilst the precise historical accuracy of the shape taken by the loyalty demonstrated in these poems is uncertain, what matters is the interest taken by

³⁴⁰ *The Wanderer*, esp. ll. 37-48.

³⁴¹ *Beowulf*, ll. 2631-68. For discussion of the poem's date of composition see p. 276 above.

³⁴² See 'The Battle of Maldon', ed. and trans. D. Scragg.

³⁴³ Roach, 'Hosting', at p. 36; see also Woolf, 'The ideal'.

contemporaries in the roots of the manifestation of such dedication: the lord's behaviour and management of the dynamic linking his followers.

Correspondingly, as I thought more about my project over the course of my doctoral study I realised that my initial question about 'what loyalty meant' was not one about the manner in which loyalty was demonstrated, but about why it was there in the first place, and what engendered it. I wanted to know what principles and policies kings applied in order to effect loyalty in their men, whether individually, or whether evolution over time was visible in these strategies, or trends visible within the contexts in which certain strategies were deployed. How was an interest in the loyalty of the lay elite manifested in kings' extant actions and behaviours? Because of the nature of the evidence available, which does not allow for precise identification of actions undertaken by kings to effect loyalty in their men, these questions needed to be approached in an indirect way: what principles and policies characterised extant evidence of kings' management of their relationship and interactions with their lay elite? Within this problematic, it is assumed that because of the absolute value of loyalty to kings, any instance in which they had to develop or manage their relationship with these men would have at least in part been done with an eye to achieving and strengthening their dedication to his cause. How can kings be seen attempting to optimise their relationship with their lay elite, and what can extant evidence reveal about the specifics of the mechanisms used to this end – ideological, material and other?

When I turned to the Anglophone historiography of the period, I found only partially satisfactory answers to these questions, although the issue was clearly one which had a hold upon historians' imagination of the period and upon their portrayals of events and relationships. When the matter of how the loyalty of the lay elite was achieved by kings is discussed explicitly in modern scholarship, it is almost always in (general) terms of oaths sworn to the king, and patronage in the form of land, office and movable wealth. These foci gave me points of

departure for the first two chapters of the thesis. The existence of Edmund's oath, and often the supposed existence of an oath of general loyalty in Alfred's *Domboc*, are used by scholars to gesture broadly at the foundational importance of oaths to the matter of loyalty to the king over the whole period. This was the impetus for Chapter One, which explored what evidence there actually is for the imposition of these oaths by kings onto their men, which then led to a more comprehensive search for evidence of how ideologies of power and authority were used by kings to achieve loyalty. Chapter One demonstrated that there is no surviving evidence for the formal administration of a general oath of loyalty by kings onto their followers before that of Edmund in 946. Indeed, that a willingness to dip into the ideological and practical power of the law in order to attempt to essentially demand loyalty, evidence of which can only be seen in Edmund's and Æthelred's reigns, might go hand in hand with the heavy influence of churchmen over said legislation (Oda over Edmund's Colyton code, Wulfstan's over Æthelred's codes from V Æthelred on) or, perhaps with real or imagined disaffection amongst the nobility. There was moreover no great emphasis in contemporary English sources on domestic oaths of loyalty to the king compared to what is found Carolingian sources. This coupled with an overview of surviving statements from the period concerning what the king's status actually entitled him to when it came to active (rather than passive) loyalty suggests that kings wanted to distance themselves from the idea that they were entitled, on the basis of their status, to the active loyalty of their men.

This conclusion prompts the question of how kings acted to achieve this aim, and so in Chapter Two, I looked for potential evidence of how kings dispensed rewards in the form of land and office for active service to themselves. When this matter is discussed by historians, the fact that kings granted bookland to laymen throughout the period is quoted as representing an equation in contemporary minds between the act of granting land to laymen and the objective of effecting their loyalty – again, across the period. But if one looks more closely at

the patterns of land-granting, the straightforwardness of this comes into question. Kings did not grant land to all laymen in the same way. They did so strategically, and thus if one wants to reference the 'land for loyalty' equation, then it is how kings used the land, the specific ways in which reward was dispensed, that should be referenced. Chapter Two presented a new method of looking at Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas, and showed that the manner in which kings dispensed land to laymen – both in terms of the location and size of the estate – was often commensurate with the kind of service they fulfilled for him, and the capacity and status each held in relation to the king and to their peers. This was true throughout the period. Practically, this means that committed service in positions of particular value to the king (other than that of ealdorman) was probably incentivised via the receipt of larger estates more generally proximate to the royal *iter*, and in the case of royal thegn, this was done throughout one's career. Conceptually, it means that the same prospect of reward was not available to everyone, that this may have been devised in order to make service to the king in certain capacities more attractive. The slow progression of men up the ranks of thegns, and their confidence that they would retain his position, were also probably intentionally developed by kings as an incentive for loyalty. Promotion to the office of ealdorman was never a guarantee, but frequently these were not the individuals who were leading the lists of thegns, suggesting these appointments were based upon factors other than long service and merit.

Despite the importance of incentive in the relationship between the king and his lay elite, there are enough examples of contexts in which evidence does not survive for the (conventional) granting of land but where commitment to the king continued, or in which evidence survives of revolt or dissent even when particular effort was made to grant land, for us to surmise that kings would have attempted to cement loyalty to themselves in other ways. Chapter Three sought to identify the evidence for kings' ruling strategies and of their management of their elite, and made a case for a range of actions that ought to be understood

as manifesting royal efforts to effect loyalty in their followers. These were: active leadership of the *fyrð* in war; the manipulation of assembly attendance and how this was taken down in witness lists; strategies of granting land to agents in more distant areas of the kingdom which lacked the king's regular presence; increased attention to itinerancy at the beginning of reigns troubled by factionalism; and the delayed introduction of one's own support group into the *witan* upon accession in order not to upset the loyalties of established partners and networks.

This thesis began with a quotation from Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, written in the final years of the tenth century: 'He [Eadwig] held the kingdom continuously for four years, and deserved to be loved'. This prompted the question: what made a king deserve to be loved? In one of the most recent and comprehensive treatments of the formation of the English kingdom, and the role and manifestation of West-Saxon kings' power at the heart of this development, George Molyneux also highlighted the pertinence of this issue: 'the question we now need to consider is how the Cerdicings induced other powerful people to recognise their superiority, attend their assemblies, and contribute to the advancement of their objectives'.³⁴⁴ This thesis has answered Molyneux's question in several ways, and in a more detailed and systematic fashion than has previously been attempted. Its goal was to offer wider context, over multiple reigns, of royal behaviour in relation to the lay elite in order to better approximate a more standardised appreciation of individual royal methods, and the significance of individual kings' actions and collective royal policies, within this wider context. Because we are dealing with what would often have been a very personal matter, the answer to the question of why men were loyal is in many ways irrecoverable. Much of why men were loyal to their king would probably have come from their discussions, from their interactions at the hunt or at feasts,³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ *Formation*, p. 63.

³⁴⁵ The evidence for the ways in which hunting and feasting would have affected the personal dimension of the relationship between the king and the lay elite is very sporadic, but a few discussions have highlighted the probable significance of these interactions to the relationship between the king and his agents: see for instance Roach, 'Hosting', and Gautier, 'Palais'.

their personal rapport – but we can still try to answer the question via the evidence that is available to us of what kings did. Due to its discontinuous nature, this evidence did not allow for the detection of any evolution in royal attitudes or strategies over the period, though more localised progression was visible in, for example, kings' approaches to their relationship with royal agents in Mercia and in Northumbria. If anything, it is clear that throughout the period it remained vitally important for kings to find ways of installing themselves in and amongst their men, whether that was by leading the *fyrð*, creating landed communities of royal thegns in the royal heartlands, innovating upon the significance of assemblies and their systems of attendance, or developing new ways to integrate Mercian and Northumbrian agents into the West-Saxon political apparatus.

It is important to ask about kings' approaches to maintaining relationships, as this would have been a crucial aspect of the method of rulership. Fundamentally, a king deserved to be loved by his men if he behaved (overtly) in ways which showed that he did not take that love for granted. Though he might have a right to remain in the position of king, the active loyalty of his men needed to be earned, and it could also be lost. This is in fact further cemented by the signs of Æthelred's insecurity when he realised he could not fill the roles which were necessary in a wartime context in order to ensure loyalty. It was a system that relied overwhelmingly upon the proactive action of the king, not upon notions that loyalty was naturally owed to him, and upon the application of consistency. This is most clearly visible in the patterns of land granting – both its location and its timing within individual thegns' careers – which persisted across the period. In this sense, whilst it can be shown that kings had an individualised approach to the management of their relationship with their lay elite, the evidence from the period does suggest English kings' systematised application of certain unified principles over time, and that these centred around notions of community, constancy and active leadership.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Ælfric of Eynsham, *Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, ed. P. Clemoes, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford, 1997)

Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, ed. M. Godden, EETS s.s. 5 (Oxford, 1979)

Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection, ed. J.C. Pope (London, 1967-8)

Lives of Saints, ed. W.W. Skeat, 4 vols., EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94, 114 (Oxford, 1881-1900; repr. 2 vols., Oxford, 1966)

Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, ed. A. Campbell, *The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London, 1962)

Annales de Saint Bertin, ed. F. Grat, J. Vielliard, S. Celemencet and L. Levillain (Paris, 1964)

Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin, ed. I. Williams and R. Bromwich (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1982)

Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, ed. W. H. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred, together with the Annals of St Neots, erroneously ascribed to Asser*, new imp. (Oxford, 1959)

trans. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth, 1983)

Attenborough, F. L. (ed.), *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922)

Augustine, *De dono perseverantiae*, PL 45: 993-1035

trans. J. A. Mourant, *Four anti-Pelagian writings: On Nature and Grace; On the Proceedings of Pelagius; On the Predestination of the Saints; On the Gift of Perseverance* (Washington, D.C., 2001)

B., *Vita S Dunstani*, ed. M. Winterbottom and M. Lapidge, *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, OMT (Oxford, 2012)

Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, OMT (Oxford, 1969)

The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. T. Miller, EETS, os 950-6 and 110-11 (London, 1890-8)

Beowulf, ed. R.D. Fulk, R.E. Bjork, J.D. Niles, *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finsburg*, 4th edn (Toronto, 2009)

Bethurum, D. (ed.), *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford, 1957)

Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae*, ed. L. Bieler, CCSL 94, 2nd edn (Turnhout, 1984)

- Consolatio philosophiae*, ed. R. Peiper, *Philosophiae Consolationis Libri Quinque* (Leipzig, 1871)
- The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Version of Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. M. Godden and S. Irvine, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009)
- Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Vita S Oswaldi*, ed. M. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St Oswald and St Egwine*, OMT (Oxford, 2009)
- Campbell, A. (ed.), *Charters of Rochester* (London, 1973)
- Capitularia Regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, MGH Legum sectio II, 2 vols. (Hanover, 1883-97)
- Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters VII-VIII (Oxford, 2000-1)
- Charters of Bath and Wells*, ed. S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters XIII (Oxford, 2007)
- Charters of Burton Abbey*, ed. P.H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters XI (Oxford, 2000)
- Charters of Christ Church Canterbury*, ed. N. Brooks and S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters XVII-XVIII (Oxford, 2013)
- Charters of Glastonbury Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters XV (Oxford, 2012)
- Charters of Malmesbury Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters XI (Oxford, 2005)
- Charters of New Minster, Winchester*, ed. S. Miller, Anglo-Saxon Charters IX (Oxford, 2001)
- Charters of Peterborough Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters XIV (Oxford, 2009)
- Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters V (Oxford, 1995)
- Charters of St Albans*, ed. J. Crick, Anglo-Saxon Charters XII (Oxford, 2007)
- Charters of the Northern Houses*, ed. D.A. Woodman, Anglo-Saxon Charters XVI (Oxford, 2012)
- Chronicon abbatiae Rameseiensis*, ed. W.D. Macray, Rolls Series 83 (London, 1886)
- Die Urkunden Arnolfs*, ed. P. Kehr, MGH Diplomata Regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum, 3 (Berlin, 1940)
- Die Urkunden Karls III*, ed. P. Kehr, MGH Diplomata Regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum, 2 (Berlin, 1937)
- Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi 25 (Hanover, 1911)
- Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. IV, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH: Epp. 6 (Berlin, 1925)
- Ermold, *In Honorem Hludowici Pii*, ed. and trans. E. Faral, *Ermold le Noir, Poeme sur Louis le Pieux et épitres au roi Pépin* (Paris, 1964)
- Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis*, ed. A. Bell, Anglo-Norman Texts 14-16 (Oxford, 1960)

- Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, ed. F. Rommel, with B. Judic and C. Morel, *Grégoire le Grand: Règle Pastorale*, SC 381-2 (Paris, 1992)
- Hierdeboec, ed. and trans. H. Sweet, *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, EETS, os 45 and 50 (London, 1871)
- Hincmar of Rheims, *De ordine palatii*, ed. T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH Fontes iuris Germanici antiquae in usum scholarum separatim editi 3 (Hanover, 1980)
- De regis persona et regio ministerio*, PL 125: 833-56
- Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, ed. T.J. South, Anglo-Saxon Texts 3 (Woodbridge, 2002)
- John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, ed. R.R. Darlington and P. McGurk, with J. Bray 3 vols (Oxford, 1995-)
- Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione regia*, ed. A. Dubreucq, *Jonas d'Orléans: Le Métier de Roi (De institutione regia)*, SC 407 (Paris, 1995)
- trans. R. W. Dyson, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract: the De Institutione Regia of Jonas of Orleans* (Smithtown, NY, 1983)
- Keynes, S., *An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c. 670-1066* (Cambridge, 2002)
- The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester*, EEMF 26 (Copenhagen, 1996)
- Kurze, F. (ed.), *Regionis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon*, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum 50 (Hanover, 1890)
- Liebermann, F. (ed.), *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Halle, 1903-6)
- Nithard, *Historiae*, ed. and trans. P. Lauer, *Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux* (Paris, 1964)
- Richer of Saint-Rémy, *Histoires*, ed. and trans. J. Lake (Cambridge, Mass., 2011)
- Robertson, A.J. (ed.), *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge, 1925)
- Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge, 1939)
- Roger of Wendover, *Flores historiarum*, ed. H.O. Coxe, 5 vols (London, 1841-4)
- Sedulius Scottus, *Liber de rectoribus christianis*, ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson (Woodbridge, 2010)
- Smaragdus, *Via regia*, PL 102: 931-70
- Soliloquies*, ed. T.A. Carnicelli, *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies* (Cambridge, MA, 1969)
- Symeon of Durham, *Historia regum*, ed. T. Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 2 vols. (London, 1885)

- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS A*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* 3, ed. J. M. Bately (Cambridge, 1986)
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS B*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* 4, ed. S. Taylor (Cambridge, 1983)
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS C*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* 5, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge, 2001)
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS D*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* 6, ed. G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge, 1996)
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS E*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* 7, ed. S. Irvine (Cambridge, 2004)
trans. D. Whitelock, D.C. Douglas, S.I. Tucker, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London, 1961)
- The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. D. Murphy (Dublin, 1896)
- The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131), Part I, Text and Translation*, ed. S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983)
- 'The Battle of Maldon', ed. and trans. D. Scragg, in *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Manchester, 1981)
- The Early Charters of Eastern England*, ed. C.R. Hart (Leicester, 1966)
- The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*, ed. C.R. Hart (Leicester, 1975)
- The Early Charters of Wessex*, ed. H.P.R. Finberg (Leicester, 1964)
- The Old English Version of the Heptateuch: Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis*, ed. S. J. Crawford (London, 1922)
- Whitelock, D. (ed.), *English Historical Documents c. 500-1042*, 2nd edn (London, 1979)
- Whitelock, D., Brett, M., and Brooke, C. N. L. (eds.), *Councils and Synods with Other Documents relating to the English Church I*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1981)
- William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum = The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998-9)
- Wulfstan of Winchester, *Vita S Æthelwoldi: The Life of St. Æthelwold*, ed. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991)
- Wulfstan of York, *Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical*, Schweizer altenglische Arbeiten 47, ed. K. Jost (Bern, 1959)

trans. A. Rabin, *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* (Manchester, 2015)

Secondary literature

- Abels, R.P., 'Bookland and fyrd service in late Saxon England' in S.R. Morillo (ed.), *The Battle of Hastings: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 1996), 57-77
- Abels, R.P., 'English tactics, strategy and military organisation in the late tenth century' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), 143-55
- Abels, R.P., 'Evolving English strategies during the Viking wars', *Journal of Medieval Military History* 15 (2017), 68-90
- Abels, R.P., 'Reflections on Alfred the Great as a military leader' in G.I. Halfond (ed.), *The Medieval Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honour of Bernard S. Bachrach* (Farnham, 2015)
- Abels, R.P., *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1998)
- Abels, R.P., *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1988)
- Abrams, L.A., 'Edgar and the men of the Danelaw' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 171-91
- Abrams, L.A., *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury: Church and Endowment* (Woodbridge, 1996)
- Airlie, S., 'Semper fideles? Loyauté envers les Carolingiens comme constituant de l'identité aristocratique' in R. Le Jan (ed.), *La Royauté et les élites dans l'Europe Carolingienne (début IXe siècle aux environs de 920)* (Villeneuve, 1998), 129-43
- Airlie, S., 'The aristocracy in the service of the state in the Carolingian period', in S. Airlie, W. Pohl, H. Reimitz (ed.), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 11 (Vienna, 2006), 93-112
- Airlie, S., 'The captains and the kings: the aristocracy in Charlemagne's reign' in J.E. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* (Manchester, 2005), 90-102
- Airlie, S., 'The palace of memory: the Carolingian court as political centre' in S.R. Jones, R. Marks, A.J. Minnis (eds.), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (York, 2000), 1-20
- Althoff, G., *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2004)

- Ammon, M., ‘‘Ge mid wedde ge mid a e’’: the functions of oath and pledge in Anglo-Saxon legal culture’, *Historical Research* 86 (2013), 515-35
- Bachrach, B.S., ‘Charlemagne’s health in ‘Old Age’: Did it affect Carolingian military strategy?’, *Mediaevistik* 32 (2019), 11-54
- Baines, A.H.J., ‘The Chetwode-Hillesden charter of 949’, *Records of Buckinghamshire* 24 (1982), 1-33
- Baker, H.J., *The Oxford History of the Laws of England: 871-1216* (Oxford, 2012)
- Baker, J. and Brookes, S.J., *Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age* (Leiden, 2013)
- Banton, N., ‘Monastic reform and the unification of tenth-century England’, *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982), 71-85
- Barrow, J.S., ‘Chester’s earliest regatta? Edgar’s Dee-rowing revisited’ *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), 81-93
- Barrow, J.S., ‘Demonstrative behaviour and political communication in later Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007), 127-50
- Barrow, J.S., ‘Friends and friendship in Anglo-Saxon Charters’ in J.P. Haseldine (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Stroud, 1999), 106-23
- Bartone, P.T. and Kirkland, F.R., ‘Optimal leadership in small army units’ in R. Gal and A.D. Mangelsdorff (eds.), *Handbook of Military Psychology* (Chichester, 1991)
- Bately, J., ‘Did King Alfred actually translate anything? The integrity of the Alfredian canon revisited’, *Medium  evum* 78 (2009), 189-215
- Bately, J., ‘Lexical evidence for the authorship of the prose psalms in the Paris Psalter’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1982), 69-95
- Bately, J.M., ‘Alfred as author and translator’ in N.G. Discenza (ed.), *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden, 2015), 113-142
- Bately, J.M., ‘Evidence for knowledge of Latin literature in Old English’, *Old English Newsletter* 16, 2 (1983), 62-78, repr. in P.E. Szarmach (ed.), *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture* (Kalamazoo, 1986), 35-51
- Bately, J.M., ‘King Alfred and the Old English translation of Orosius’, *Anglia* 88 (1970), 433-460
- Bately, J.M., ‘The Alfredian canon revisited: one hundred years on’ in R. Timothy (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conference* (Aldershot, 2003), 107-120

- Bately, J.M., 'The literary prose of King Alfred's reign: Translation or transformation?' in D.A. Oosterhouse and P.E. Szarmach (eds.), *Old English Prose: Basic Readings* (New York, NY, 2000), 3-27
- Bately, J.M., 'Those books that are most necessary for all men to know: the classics and late ninth-century England, a reappraisal' in A.S. Bernardo and S. Paul (eds.), *The Classics in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies* (Binghampton, NY, 1990), 45-78
- Bately, J.M., *The Old English Orosius* (London, 1980)
- Bates, D.R., 'The prosopographical study of Anglo-Norman royal charters' in K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: The Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 1997), 89-102
- Baxter, S., 'Lordship and justice in late Anglo-Saxon England: the judicial functions of soke and commendation revisited' in S. Baxter, C.E. Karkov, J.L. Nelson, D.A.E. Pelteret (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Aldershot, 2009), 383-420
- Baxter, S., 'The representation of lordship and land tenure in Domesday Book' in E.M. Hallam and D.R. Bates (eds.), *Domesday Book* (Stroud, 2001), 73-102
- Baxter, S., and Blair, J., 'Land tenure and royal patronage in the early English kingdom: a model and a case study', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 28 (2006), 19-46
- Baxter, S., *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007)
- Bernhardt, J.W., *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c. 936-1075* (Cambridge, 2006)
- Bethurum-Loomis, D., 'Episcopal magnificence in the eleventh century' in S.B. Greenfield (ed.), *Studies in Old English Literature in Honour of Arthur G. Brodeur* (New York, 1963), 162-70
- Bethurum-Loomis, D., 'Regnum and sacerdotium in the early eleventh century' in P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (eds.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), 129-45
- Bethurum-Loomis, D., 'Wulfstan' in E.G. Stanley (ed.), *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature* (London, 1996), 210-46
- Biggs, F.M., 'Edgar's path to the throne' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 124-42

- Blair, P.H., 'Some observations on the 'Historia Regum' attributed to Symeon of Durham' in P.H. Blair and M. Lapidge (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria* (London, 1984), 63-119
- Blair, P.H., 'The Northumbrians and their southern frontier' in P.H. Blair and M. Lapidge (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria* (London, 1984), 98-126
- Blake, N.F., 'The genesis of the Battle of Maldon', *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), 119-29
- Blanchard, M.E., 'A new perspective on family strategy in tenth- and eleventh-century England: ealdorman status and the church', *Historical Research* 92 (2019), 244-66
- Bovendeert, J., 'Royal or monastic identity? Smaragdus' *Via Regia* and *Diadema monachorum* reconsidered' in R. Corradini, R. Meens, C. Pössel, P. Shaw (eds.), *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Wien, 2006), 239-52
- Bredehoft, T.A., *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto, 2001)
- Breen, A., 'De XII abusiuis: text and transmission' in P. Ni Chathain and M. Richter (eds.), *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission* (Dublin, 2002), 78-94.
- Breeze, A.C., 'Edgar at Chester in 973: A Breton link?', *Northern History* 44 (2007), 153-57
- Brooks, N.P., 'Arms, status and warfare in late-Saxon England' in D. Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (Oxford, 1978), 81-103
- Brooks, N.P., 'The career of St Dunstan' in N. Ramsey, M. Sparks, T.W.T. Tatton-Brown (eds.), *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult* (Woodbridge, 1992), 1-23
- Brooks, N.P., 'The Fonthill letter ealdorman Ordlaaf and Anglo-Saxon law in practice' in S. Baxter, C.E. Karkov, J.L. Nelson, D.A.E. Pelteret (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Aldershot, 2009), 301-318
- Brooks, N.P., 'Treason in Essex in the 990s: the case of Æthelric of Bocking' in G.R. Owen-Crocker (ed.), *Royal Authority in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013), 17-28
- Brooks, N.P., Gelling, N.P., Johnson, D., 'A new charter of King Edgar', *Anglo-Saxon England* 13 (1984), 137-55
- Bührer-Thierry, G., '“Just anger” or “Vengeful anger”? The punishment of blinding in the early medieval West' in B.H. Rosenwein (ed.), *Angers Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 75-91
- Bullough, D.A., 'St Oswald: monk, bishop, and archbishop' in N.P. Brooks and C.R.E. Cubitt (eds.), *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (London, 1996), 1-22
- Bullough, D.A., 'The educational tradition in England from Alfred to Ælfric: teaching *utriusque linguae*', *La scuola nell'Occidente Latino dell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1971), 453-494

- Burrow, J.A., *The Poetry of Praise* (Cambridge, 2010)
- Campbell, J., 'Aspects of nobility and mobility in Anglo-Saxon society' in P.R. Coss (ed.), *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen* (Woodbridge, 2009), 17-31
- Campbell, J., 'Asser's *Life of Alfred*' in C.J. Holdsworth, T.P. Wiseman (eds.), *The Inheritance of Historiography 350-900* (Exeter, 1986), 115-35
- Campbell, J., 'Some agents and agencies of the late Anglo-Saxon State' in J.C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies: Papers read at the Novocentenary Conference of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, Winchester 1986* (Woodbridge, 1987), 201-18
- Campbell, J., 'The sale of land and the economics of power in early England: Problems and Possibilities', *Haskins Society Journal* 1 (1989), 23-38
- Campbell, J., 'What is not known about the reign of Edward the Elder' in N.J. Higham and D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London, 2001), 12-24
- Campbell, J., *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000)
- Carey, F.M., 'The scriptorium of Reims during the archbishopric of Hincmar' in L.W. Jones (ed.), *Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honour of Edward Kennard Rand: Presented upon the completion of his 40th year of teaching* (New York, NY, 1938), 41-60
- Chadwick, H.M., *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (New York, NY, 1905)
- Chaney, W.A., *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester, 1970)
- Chaplais, P., 'The royal Anglo-Saxon 'chancery' of the tenth century revisited' in H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis* (London, 1985), 41-51
- Charles-Edwards, T.M., 'Early-medieval kingships in the British Isles' in S. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London, 1989), 28-39, 245-8
- Charles-Edwards, T.M., *The History of Wales 1: Wales and the Britons 350-1064* (Oxford, 2013)
- Christie, N.J., 'Creating defended communities in later Saxon Wessex' in H. Herold and N.J. Christie (eds.), *Fortified Settlements in Early Medieval Europe: Defended Communities of the 8th-10th Centuries* (Oxford, 2016), 52-67
- Clark, G., 'The Battle of Maldon: a heroic poem' *Speculum* 43 (1968), 52-71
- Clayton, M., 'Ælfric and Æthelred' in J. Roberts and J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy* (London, 2000), 65-88

- Clayton, M., 'Ælfric and Æthelred' in J. Roberts and J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy* (London, 2000), 65-88
- Clayton, M., 'Ælfric's *Esther*: a *speculum reginae*?' in H. Conrad-O'Briain, A.M. D'Arcy, V.J. Scattergood (eds.), *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Learning and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer* (Dublin, 1999), 89-101
- Clayton, M., 'De duodecim abusivis: Lordship and kingship in Anglo-Saxon England' in S. McWilliams (ed.), *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis* (Cambridge, 2012), 141-63
- Clayton, M., 'Of mice and men: Ælfric's second homily for the feast of a Confessor', *Leeds Studies in English* 24 (1993), 1-26
- Clayton, M., 'The Old-English *promissio regis*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 37 (2008), 91-150
- Clayton, M., *Two Ælfric Texts: the Twelve Abuses and the Vices and Virtues: An Edition and Translation of Ælfric's Old English versions of De Duodecim Abusiuis and De Octo Vitiis et De Duodecim Abusiuis* (Cambridge, 2013)
- Clement, R.W., 'The production of the *Pastoral Care: King Alfred and his helpers*' in P.E. Szarmach (ed.), *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions* (Albany, NY, 1986), 129-52
- Colman, R.V., 'Hamsocn: its meaning and significance in early English law', *The American Journal of Legal History* 25 (1981), 95-110
- Craster, E., 'The patrimony of St Cuthbert', *The English Historical Review* 69 (1954), 177-99
- Cubitt, C., 'The politics of remorse: penance and royal piety in the reign of Æthelred the Unready', *Historical Research* 85 (2012), 179-92
- Dalton, P., 'Sites and occasions of peacemaking in England and Normandy', *The Haskins Society Journal* 16 (2005), 12-26
- Damon, J.E., 'Advisors for peace in the reign of Æthelred Unræd' in D.B. Wolfthal, *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2000), 57-78
- Davidson, M.R., 'The non-submission of the northern kings in 920' in N.J. Higham, D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London, 2001), 200-11
- Davies, W., *Acts of Giving: Individual, Community and Church in Tenth-Century Christian Spain* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 100-1
- Davis, R.H.C., 'Alfred the great: propaganda and truth', *The Journal of the Historical Association* 56 (1971), 169-82

- De Jong, M., 'Carolingian political discourse and the biblical past: Hraban, Dhuoda, Radbert' in C. Gantner, R. McKitterick, S.M. Meeder (eds.), *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 87-102
- Depreux, P., *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux (781-840)* (Sigmaringen, 1997)
- Devisse, J., *Hincmar et la loi* (Dakar, 1962)
- Devisse, J., *Hincmar, Archevêque de Reims 845-882* (Genève, 1975-6)
- Discenza, N., 'The authorised biographies of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius', given at the first annual symposium of The Alfredian Boethius Project, University of Oxford, July 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/boethius/Symposium2003.html>
- Discenza, N., *The King's English: Strategies of Translation in the Old English 'Boethius'* (Albany, NY, 2005)
- Dommelen, D.V., 'Boroughs and socio-political reconstruction in late Anglo-Saxon England' in H.J. Higham and M.J. Ryan (eds.), *Place-names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape* (Woodbridge, 2011), 225-40
- Downham, C., 'Eric Bloodaxe – axed? The mystery of the last Scandinavian King of York' *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 14 (2004), 51-77
- Downham, C., 'The chronology of the last Scandinavian kings of York, AD 937-954', *Northern History* 40 (2003), 25-51
- Duby, G., *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980)
- Dumville, D.N., 'A twelfth-century English translation of a tenth-century Latin official document?' *Federov Readings* 3 (2001), 195-215
- Dumville, D.N., 'Between Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peacemaker: Æthelstan, First King of England' in D.N. Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge, 1992), 141-71
- Dumville, D.N., 'The local rulers of Anglo-Saxon England to AD 927' in E.B. Fryde (ed.), *Handbook of British Chronology* (London, 1986), 1-29
- Dunbabin, J., 'West Francia: The Kingdom' in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History* III (Cambridge, 1999), 372-397
- Enright, M.J., 'Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf of Wessex: the alliance of 856 and strategies of royal succession', *Journal of Medieval History* 5 (1979), 291-302
- Ferro, K., 'King in the doorway: the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, AD 755' in *Acta: Proceedings of the SUNY Regional Conferences in Medieval Studies* 11 (1984), 17-30
- Fichtenau, H., *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, trans. P.J. Geary (Chicago, 1991)

- Fisher, D.J.V., 'Anti-monastic reaction in the reign of Edward the Martyr', *Cambridgeshire History Journal* 10 (1952), 254-270
- Foot, S., 'Bede's kings' in D.A. Woodman and R. Naismith (eds.), *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2018), 25-51
- Foot, S., 'Dynastic strategies: The West-Saxon royal family in Europe' in C. Leyser and D.W. Rollason (eds.), *England and the Continent in the tenth century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2010), 237-54
- Foot, S., 'Dynastic strategies: the West-Saxon royal family in Europe' in C. Leyser and D.W. Rollason (eds.), *England and the Continent in the tenth century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2010), 237-54
- Foot, S., 'The making of *Angelcynn*: English identity before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996), 25-50
- Foot, S., *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven, Conn., 2012)
- Frakes, J.C., *Fate of Fortune in the Early Middle Ages: The Boethian Tradition* (Leiden, 1988),
- Freeman, E.A., *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, its causes and its results*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1879)
- Fruscione, D., 'Beginnings and legitimation of punishment in early Anglo-Saxon legislation from the seventh to the ninth century' in N. Marafioti and J.P. Gates (eds.), *Capital and Corporal Punishment in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2014), 34-47
- Gallagher, R., 'Latin acrostic poetry in Anglo-Saxon England: reassessing the contribution of John the Old Saxon', *Medium Ævum* 86 (2017), 249-274
- Gillingham, J.B., 'Thegns and knights in eleventh-century England: who was then the gentleman?', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995), 129-54
- Glenn, J.K., *Politics and History in the Tenth-Century: The Work and World of Richer of Reims* (Cambridge, 2004)
- Gneuss, H., "'The Battle of Maldon' 89: Byrhtnoth's 'ofermod' once again' in K.O. O'Keefe (ed.), *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings* (New York, NY, 1994), 149-72
- Gneuss, H., *Ælfric of Eynsham: His Life, Times and Writings* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2007)
- Godden, M.R., 'Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon kingship', *The English Historical Review* 102 (1987), 911-15
- Godden, M.R., 'Ælfric's *Saints' Lives* and the problem of miracles', *Leeds Studies in English* 16 (1985), 83-100
- Godden, M.R., 'Biblical literature: the Old Testament' in M.R. Godden and M. Lapidge (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1991), 206-26

- Godden, M.R., 'Did King Alfred write anything?', *Medium Ævum* 76 (2007), 1-23
- Godden, M.R., 'Experiments in genre: the saints' lives in Ælfric's Catholic Homilies' in P.E. Szarmach (ed.), *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts* (Albany, NY, 1996), 261-87
- Godden, M.R., 'King and counsellor in the Alfredian Boethius' in V. Blanton and H. Scheck (eds.), *Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach* (Tempe, Ariz., 2008), 191-208
- Godden, M.R., 'Prologues and epilogues in the Old English Pastoral Care and their Carolingian models', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110 (2011), 441-73
- Godden, M.R., 'Stories from the court of King Alfred' in S. McWilliams (ed.), *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis* (Cambridge, 2012), 123-40
- Godden, M.R., 'The player-king: identification and self-representation in King Alfred's writings' in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), 137-52
- Godden, M.R., 'The relations between Wulfstan and Ælfric: a reassessment' in M. Townend (ed.), *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference* (Turnhout, 2004), 353-74
- Goldberg, E.J., '“More devoted to the equipment of battle than the splendour of banquets”: frontier kingship, martial ritual and early knighthood at the court of Louis the German', *Viator* 30 (1999), 41-78
- Goldberg, E.J., *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict Under Louis the German 817-876* (Ithaca, NY, 2006)
- Goldsmith, M.E., *The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf* (London, 2013)
- Gretsch, M., 'Historiography and literary patronage in late Anglo-Saxon England: the evidence of Æthelweard's *Chronicon*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 41 (2012), 205-48
- Gretsch, M., *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge, 1999)
- Grierson, P., 'Grimbald of St. Bertin', *The English Historical Review* 55 (1940), 529-61
- Grinda, K.R., 'The myth of Circe in King Alfred's Boethius' in D.A. Oosterhouse and P.E. Szarmach (eds.), *Old English Prose: Basic Readings* (New York, NY, 2000), 237-65
- Guillot, O., 'La fides prêtée à l'empereur Louis le Pieux par les grands laïques, à l'épreuve de l'épisode du Rotfelth (fin juin 833)', in W. Falkowski, Y. Sassier (eds.), *Confiance*,

- bonne foi, fidélité: la notion de 'fides' dans la vie des sociétés médiévales (Vie-XVe siècles)* (Paris, 2018), 99-136
- Gwara, S.J., *Heroic Identity in the World of Beowulf* (Leiden, 2009)
- Hadley, D.M., 'Hamlet and the princes of Denmark: lordship in the Danelaw, c.860-954' in D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards (eds.), *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Turnhout, 2000), 107-32
- Hadley, D.M., 'Viking and native: re-thinking identity in the Danelaw', *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002), 45-70
- Hannig, J., *Consensus Fidelium. Frühfeudale Interpretationen des Verhältnisses von Königtum und Adel am Beispiel des Frankenreiches*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 27 (Stuttgart, 1982)
- Hart, C.J.R., 'The *Codex Wintoniensis* and the king's haligdom' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to Professor H.P.R. Finberg* (Reading, 1970), 7-38
- Hart, C.J.R., 'The ealdordom of Essex' in K. Neale (ed.), *An Essex Tribute: Essays Presented to Frederick G. Emmison as a Tribute to his Life and Work for Essex History and Archives* (London, 1987), 57-84
- Hart, C.J.R., 'The early section of the Worcester Chronicle', *Journal of Medieval History* 9 (1984), 251-315
- Hart, C.J.R., *The Danelaw* (London, 1992)
- Harvey, P.D.A., 'Rectitudine Singularum Personarum and Gerefa', *The English Historical Review* 108 (1993), 1-22
- Haslam, J., 'King Alfred and the Vikings: strategies and tactics, 876-886 AD' *ASSAH* 13 (2005), 122-54
- Haslam, J., 'The Burghal Hidage and the West-Saxon burhs: a reappraisal', *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016), 141-82
- Higham, N.J., *The Death of Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud, 2000)
- Hill, D., *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981)
- Hill, J., 'Ælfric: his life and works' in H. Magennis and M. Swan (eds.), *A Companion to Ælfric* (Leiden, 2009), 35-66
- Hill, J., 'Monastic reform and the secular church: Ælfric's pastoral letters in context' in C. Hicks (ed.), *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium* (Salford, 1992), 103-117

- Holt, J.C., 'Politics and property in Early Medieval England', *Past and Present* 57 (1972), 3-52
- Hooper, N.J., 'Anglo-Saxon warfare on the eve of the Conquest: a brief survey' in R.A. Brown (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies* 1 (Woodbridge, 1979), 84-93
- Howard, I., 'Promoting royal authority in Anglo-Saxon England: the making of Edmund Ironside' in G.R. Owen-Crocker (ed.), *Royal Authority in Anglo-Saxon England* BAR British series, (Oxford, 2013), 29-36
- Hudson, J.G.H., 'The Making of English Law and the varieties of legal history' in S. Baxter, C.E. Karkov, J.L. Nelson, D.A.E. Pelteret (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Aldershot, 2009), 421-32
- Hudson, J.G.H., *The Oxford History of the Laws of England 871-1216* (Oxford, 2012)
- Hyams, P.R., *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England* (Ithaca, NY, 2003)
- Innes, M.J., 'People, places and power in Carolingian society' in M.D. Jong and F.C.W.J. Theuws (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), 397-438
- Innes, M.J., *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400-1000* (Cambridge, 2000)
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Assemblies and charters in late Anglo-Saxon England' in P.S. Barnwell and M. Mostert (eds.), *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), 47-60
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Charters, ritual and late tenth-century English kingship' in J.L. Nelson, S. Reynolds, S.M. Johns (eds.), *Gender, Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford* (London, 2012), 75-90
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Charters, ritual and late tenth-century English kingship' in J.L. Nelson, S. Reynolds, S.M. Johns (eds.), *Gender, Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford* (London, 2012), 75-90
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Collapse, reconfiguration or renegotiation? The strange end of the Mercian kingdom', *Reti medievali* 17 (2016), 231-249
- Insley, C.L.G., 'England and the Atlantic archipelago: from Alfred to the Norman Conquest' in S. Mossman (ed.), *Debating Medieval Europe: The Early Middle Ages c. 450-1050* (Manchester, 2020), 226-63
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Kings and lords in tenth-century Cornwall', *The Journal of the Historical Association* 98 (2013), 2-22

- Insley, C.L.G., 'Politics, conflict and kinship in early eleventh-century Mercia', *Midland History* 25 (2000), 28-43
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Rhetoric and ritual in late Anglo-Saxon charters' in M. Mostert and P.S. Barnwell (eds.), *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2011), 109-121
- Insley, C.L.G., 'The family of Wulfric Spott: an Anglo-Saxon Mercian marcher dynasty?' in D. Roffe (ed.), *The English and their Legacy 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams* (Woodbridge, 2012), 115-28
- Insley, C.L.G., 'Where did all the charters go? Anglo-Saxon charters and the new politics of the eleventh century', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 24 (2002), 109-27
- Irvine, S.E., 'The Alfredian prefaces and epilogues' in N.G. Discenza (ed.), *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden, 2015), 143-70
- Irvine, S.E., 'Ulysses and Circe in King Alfred's Boethius: a classical myth transformed' in J.M. Toswell and E.M. Tyler (eds.), *Studies in English Language and Literature: 'Doubt Wisely' Papers in Honour of E.G. Stanley* (London, 1996), 387-401
- Janowitz, M., and Shils, E., *Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II* (Chicago, 1948)
- Jayakumar, S., 'Eadwig and Edgar: politics, propaganda, faction' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 83-103
- Jayakumar, S., 'Reform and retribution: the 'anti-monastic reaction' in the reign of Edward the Martyr' in S. Baxter, C.E. Karkov, J.L. Nelson, D.A.E. Pelteret (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Aldershot, 2009), 337-52
- Jayakumar, S., 'Some reflections on the 'foreign policies' of Edgar the Peaceable', *The Haskins Society Journal* 10 (2011), 17-37
- John, E., 'War and society in the tenth century: the Maldon campaign', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (1977), 173-95
- John, E., *Land Tenure in Early England: A Discussion of Some Problems* (Leicester, 1960)
- John, E., *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies* (Leicester, 1966)
- Jonsson, K., 'The pre-reform coinage of Edgar – the legacy of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms' in B. Cook and G. Williams (eds.), *Coinage and History in the North Sea World AD 500-1250: Essays in Honour of Marion Archibald* (Boston, 2005), pp. 325-46
- Jost, K., 'Wulfstan und die angelsächsische Chronik', *Anglia* 47 (1923), 105-123
- Jurasinski, S.A., 'Violence, penance, and secular law in Alfred's mosaic prologue', *The Haskings Society Journal* 22 (2010), 25-42

- Kaske, R.E., 'Sapientia et fortitudo in the Old English Judith' in L.D. Benson and S. Wenzel (eds.), *The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honour of Morton W. Bloomfield* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1982), 13-29
- Kelly, S.E., 'Anglo-Saxon lay society and the written word' in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), 23-50
- Kempshall, M.S., 'No Bishop, no king: the ministerial ideology of kingship and Asser's *Res Gestae Aelfredi*' in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds.), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), 106-27
- Kern, F., *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages: The Divine Right of Kings and the Right of Resistance in the Early Middle Ages* (New York, NY, 1956)
- Keynes, 'The Fonthill letter' in K. Reichl and M. Korhammer (eds.), *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1992), 53-97
- Keynes, S., 'A conspectus of the charters of King Edgar, 957-975' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 60-82
- Keynes, S., 'A tale of two kings: Alfred the Great and Æthelred the Unready', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 36 (1986), 195-217
- Keynes, S., 'Alfred and the Mercians' in M.A.S. Blackburn and D.N. Dumville (eds.), *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century* (Woodbridge, 1998), 1-45
- Keynes, S., 'Alfred the Great and the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' in N.G. Discenza (ed.), *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden, 2015), 13-46
- Keynes, S., 'An abbot, an archbishop, and the Viking raids of 1006-7 and 1009-12', *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007), 151-220
- Keynes, S., 'Church councils, royal assemblies and Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas' in G.R. Owen-Crocker and B.W. Schneider (eds.), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2013), 17-184
- Keynes, S., 'Crime and punishment in the reign of King Æthelred the Unready' in I.N. Wood and N. Lund (eds.), *People and Places in Northern Europe 500-1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer* (Woodbridge, 1991), 67-81
- Keynes, S., 'Edgar "rex admirabilis"' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 3-59
- Keynes, S., 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons' in N.J. Higham and D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London, 2001), 40-66

- Keynes, S., 'England c.900-1016' in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History III* (Cambridge, 1999), 456-484
- Keynes, S., 'Koenwald' in M. Lapidge, J. Blair, S. Keynes, D.G. Scragg (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1999), 273-5
- Keynes, S., 'Re-reading King Æthelred the Unready' in D.R. Bates, J.C. Crick, S.M. Hamilton (eds.), *Writing Medieval Biography, 750-1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, 2006), 77-98
- Keynes, S., 'Royal government and the written word in late Anglo-Saxon England' in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), 226-57
- Keynes, S., 'The 'Dunstan-B' charters', *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994), 165-93
- Keynes, S., 'The additions in Old English' in B. Nicolas (ed.), *The York Gospels: A Facsimile* (London, 1986), pp. 81-99
- Keynes, S., 'The burial of King Æthelred the Unready at St Pauls' in D. Roffe (ed.), *The English and their Legacy 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams* (Woodbridge, 2012), 129-48
- Keynes, S., 'The declining reputation of King Æthelred the Unready' in D. Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready* (Oxford, 1978), 227-253
- Keynes, S., 'The historical context of the Battle of Maldon' in D. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Manchester, 1981), 81-113
- Keynes, S., 'The massacre of St Brice's Day (13 November 1002)' in N. Lund (ed.), *Beretning fra Seksogtyvende Tvaerfaglige Vikingsymposium* (Højberg, 2007)
- Keynes, S., 'The Vikings in England c.790-1016' in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), 48-82
- Keynes, S., 'The West-Saxon charters of king Æthelwulf and his sons', *The English Historical Review* 109 (1994), 1109-1149
- Keynes, S., *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' (978-1016): A Study in their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1978)
- King, A., *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford, 1967)
- Kirby, D.P., *The Earliest English Kings* (London, 1991)
- Kleinschmidt, H., 'The Old English annal for 757 and West-Saxon dynastic strife', *Journal of Medieval History* 22 (1996), 209-224

- Konshuh, C., 'Fighting with a *lytle werode*: Alfred's retinue in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' in I. Afanasyev, J. Dresvina, E.S. Cooper (eds.), *The Medieval Chronicle* (Amsterdam, 2015), 95-118
- Koziol, G.G., *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: The West-Frankish Kingdom (840-987)* (Turnhout, 2012)
- Kramer, R.D., 'Order in the church: understanding councils and performing ordines in the Carolingian world', *Early Medieval Europe* 25 (2017), 54-69
- Kritsch, K.R., 'Fragments and reflexes of kingship theory in Ælfric's comments on royal authority', *English Studies* 97 (2016), 163-85
- Lake, J.C., *Richer of Saint-Rémi: The Methods and Mentality of a Tenth-Century Historian* (Washington DC, 2013)
- Lambert, T.B., 'Theft, homicide and crime in late Anglo-Saxon law', *Past and Present* 214 (2012), 3-43
- Lambert, T.B., *Law and Order in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2017)
- Lapidge, M., 'Æthelwold as scholar and teacher' in B.A.E. Yorke (ed.), *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence* (Woodbridge, 1988), 89-117
- Lapidge, M., 'John the Old Saxon (fl. c. 885-904)' in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52277>), accessed 10 July 2021.
- Lapidge, M., 'Some Latin poems as evidence for the reign of Æthelstan', *Anglo-Saxon England* 9 (1981), 61-98
- Lapidge, M., 'The Hermeneutic style in tenth-century Anglo-Latin literature', *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975), 67-111
- Larson, L.M., *The King's Household in England Before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, 1904)
- Latouche, R., *Richer: Histoire de France 888-995* (Paris, 1930-37)
- Lavelle, R., 'All the king's men? Land and royal service in eleventh-century Wessex', *Southern History* 26 (2004), 1-37
- Lavelle, R., 'Geographies of power in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: The royal estates of Anglo-Saxon Wessex' in A. Jorgensen (ed.), *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Turnhout, 2010), 187-220
- Lavelle, R., 'Royal control and the disposition of estates in tenth-century England: reflections on the charters of King Eadwig', *The Haskins Society Journal* 23 (2011), 23-50
- Lavelle, R., 'The 'Farm of One Night' and the organisation of royal estates in late Anglo-Saxon Wessex', *The Haskins Society Journal* 14 (2003), 53-82

- Lavelle, R., *Alfred's Wars: Sources and Interpretations of Anglo-Saxon Warfare in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2010)
- Lawson, M.K., 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the homiletic element in the laws of Æthelred II and Cnut' in A.R. Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway* (London, 1994), 141-64
- Le Jan, R., 'Continuity and change in the tenth-century nobility' in A.J. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), 53-68
- Le Jan, R., *Famille et Pouvoir dans le Monde Franc (VIIs-Xe siècle)* (Paris, 1995)
- Leneghan, F., 'Royal wisdom and the Alfredian context of Cynewulf and Cyneheard', *Anglo-Saxon England* 39 (2010), 71-104
- Leneghan, F., *The Dynastic Drama of Beowulf* (Woodbridge, 2020)
- Lestremau, A., 'Basileus Anglorum: La prétention impériale dans les titulatures royales à la fin de la période Anglo-Saxonne', *Médiévales* 75 (2018), 197-226
- Lewis, C.P., 'Edgar, Chester and the kingdom of the Mercians 957-959' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 104-23
- Leyerle, J., 'Beowulf the hero and the king', *Medium Ævum* 34 (1965), 89-102
- Leyser, C., Rollason, D.W., Williams H., (eds.), *England and the Continent in the Tenth-Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison 1876-1947* (Turnhout, 2010)
- Leyser, K.J., 'Ottonian Government', *The English Historical Review* 96 (1981), 721-53
- Leyser, K.J., 'The Anglo-Saxons 'at home'' in D. Brown, J. Campbell, S.C. Hawkes (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 2 (Oxford, 1981), 237-42
- Leyser, K.J., 'The Ottonians and Wessex' in K.J. Leyser and T. Reuter (eds.), *Communications and Power in the Middle Ages 1: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries* (London, 1994), 73-104
- Locherbie-Cameron, M.A.L., 'Byrhtnoth and his family' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), 253-62
- Loyn, H.R., 'Gesiths and thegns in Anglo-Saxon England from the seventh to the tenth century', *The English Historical Review* 70 (1955), 529-49
- Loyn, H.R., 'The imperial style of the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings', *The Journal of the Historical Association* 40 (1955), 111-15
- Loyn, H.R., 'The term 'Ealdorman' in the translations prepared at the time of King Alfred', *The English Historical Review* 68 (1953), 513-25
- Loyn, H.R., *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England 500-1087* (London, 1984)

- Lund, N., 'King Edgar and the Danelaw', *Medieval Scandinavia* 9 (1976), 181-95
- M. Gretsche, 'The Benedictine Rule in Old English: a document of Bishop Æthelwold's reform politics' in K. Reichl, H. Sauer, M. Korhammer (eds.), *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1992), 131-58
- Mack, K.R., 'Changing thegns: Cnut's conquest and the English aristocracy', *Albion* 16 (1984), 375-88
- MacLean, S., 'Insinuation, censorship and the struggle for late Carolingian Lotharingia in Regino of Prüm's Chronicle', *The English Historical Review* 124 (2009), 1-28
- MacLean, S., 'Shadow kingdom: Lotharingia and the Frankish world c. 850-1050', *History Compass* 11 (2013), 443-457
- MacLean, S., *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire* (New York, NY, 2003)
- Maddicott, J.R., 'The oath of Marlborough 1209: fear, government and popular allegiance in the reign of King John', *The English Historical Review* 126 (2011), 281-318
- Maddicott, J.R., *The Origins of the English Parliament 924-1327* (Oxford, 2010)
- Manning, 'Morale, cohesion and esprit de corps' in R. Gal and A.D. Mangelsdorff (eds.), *Handbook of Military Psychology* (Chichester, 1991), 453-70
- Marafioti, N., 'Punishing bodies and saving souls: capital and corporal punishment in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Haskins Society Journal* 20 (2008), 39-57
- Marafioti, N., 'Seeking Alfred's body: royal tomb as political object in the reign of Edward the Elder', *Early Medieval Europe* 23 (2015), 202-28
- Martindale, J., "'His special friend?'" The settlement of disputes and political power in the kingdom of the French (tenth- to mid-twelfth century)', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995), 21-58
- Martindale, J., 'Charles the Bald and the government of the kingdom of Aquitaine' in D. Ganz, M.T. Gibson, J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Charles the Bald, Court and Kingdom: Papers Based on a Colloquium Held in London in April 1979* (Oxford, 1981), 109-135
- Matthews, S., 'King Edgar and the Dee: the ceremony of 973 in popular history writing', *Northern History* 46 (2009), 61-74
- McClure, J., 'Bede's Old Testament kings' in P.C. Wormald, D.A. Bullough, R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), 76-98

- McCormick, M., 'The liturgy of war in the early Middle-Ages: crisis, litanies and the Carolingian monarchy', *Viator* 15 (1984), 1-23
- McKinnell, J.S., 'On the date of the Battle of Maldon', *Medium Ævum* 44 (1975), 121-36
- McKitterick, R., 'The oaths of Strasbourg 842 and their implications in the light of recent scholarship' in J. Sonntag, C. Zermatten (eds.), *Loyalty in the Middle Ages: Ideal and Practice of a Cross-Social Value. Essays in Honour of Gert Melville* (Turnhout, 2015), 141-60
- McKitterick, R., *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, 2008)
- McNamee, M.B., 'Beowulf – an allegory of salvation?', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 59 (1960), 190-207
- Meens, R., 'Politics, mirrors for princes and the Bible: sins, kings and the wellbeing of the realm', *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 345-57
- Molyneaux, G., 'Why were some tenth-century English kings presented as rulers of Britain?', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 21 (2011), 59-91
- Molyneaux, G., *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015)
- Morrish, J., 'King Alfred's letter as a source of learning in England in the ninth century' in P.E. Szarmach (ed.), *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions* (Albany, NY, 1986), 87-107
- Morrison, S., 'Lytle werede: an Old English literary motif?' in C. Stevanovitch (ed.), *L'articulation langue-littérale dans les textes médiévaux Anglais II* (Nancy: AMAES, 2005), 103-17
- Naismith, R., 'The land market and Anglo-Saxon society', *Historical Research* 89 (2016), 19-41
- Neidorf, L., *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (Cambridge, 2014)
- Nelson, J.L., '“A king across the sea”: Alfred in continental perspective' in J.L. Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald and Others* (Ashgate, 1999), 45-68
- Nelson, J.L., 'Bad kingship in the earlier Middle Ages' in J.L. Nelson, *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages: Charlemagne and Others* (Aldershot, 2007), 1-26
- Nelson, J.L., 'Dhuoda' in P.C. Wormald and J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2007), 106-20
- Nelson, J.L., 'How Carolingians created consensus' in W. Kalkowski and Y. Sassier (eds.), *Le monde Carolingien: Bilan, perspectives, champs de recherches. Actes du colloque*

- international de Poitiers, Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale 2004* (Turnhout, 2009), 67-82
- Nelson, J.L., 'Inauguration rituals' in J.L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early-Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 283-307
- Nelson, J.L., 'Kingship and empire' in J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political thought c.350-c.1450* (Cambridge, 1988), 211-52
- Nelson, J.L., 'Le partage de Verdun' in M. Gaillard, M. Margue, A. Dierkens, H. Pettiau (eds.), *De la mer du Nord à la Méditerranée: Francia Media, une region au Coeur de l'Europe c.840-1050* (Luxembourg, 2011), 241-54
- Nelson, J.L., 'Legislation and consensus in the reign of Charles the Bald' in J.L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early-Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 91-116
- Nelson, J.L., 'On the limits of the Carolingian renaissance' in J.L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early-Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 49-67
- Nelson, J.L., 'Peers in the early Middle Ages' in P.A. Stafford, J.L. Nelson, J. Martindale (eds.), *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds* (Manchester, 2001), 27-46
- Nelson, J.L., 'Reconstructing a royal family: reflections on Alfred from Asser' in I.N. Wood and N. Lund (eds.), *People and Places in Northern Europe 500-1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer* (Woodbridge, 1991), 47-66
- Nelson, J.L., 'Ritual and reality in the early medieval ordines', *Studies in Church History* 11 (1975), 41-51
- Nelson, J.L., 'Rulers and government' in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History III* (Cambridge, 1999), 95-129
- Nelson, J.L., 'The earliest surviving English *ordo*: some liturgical and historical aspects' in B. Tierney and P.A. Linehan (eds.), *Authority and Power: Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on his Seventieth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1980), 29-48
- Nelson, J.L., 'The first use of the second Anglo-Saxon *ordo*' in J.S. Barrow (ed.), *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks* (Aldershot, 2008), 117-26
- Nelson, J.L., 'The second English *ordo*' in J.L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 361-74

- Nelson, J.L., 'Trust and mistrust in the time of Charlemagne' in W. Falkowski, Y. Sassier (eds.), *Confiance, bonne foi, fidélité: la notion de 'fides' dans la vie des sociétés médiévales (Vie-XVe siècles)* (Paris, 2018), 87-98
- Nelson, J.L., 'Wealth and wisdom: the politics of Alfred the Great' in J.L. Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald and Others* (Ashgate, 1999), 31-52
- Neville, J., 'Redeeming Beowulf: the heroic idiom as marker of quality in Old English poetry' in V. Millet (ed.), *Narration and Hero: Recounting the Deeds of Heroes in Literature and Art of the Early Medieval Period* (Berlin, 2014), 45-70
- Niles, J.D., 'Maldon and mythopoesis' in J.D. Niles, *Old English Heroic Poems and the Social Life of Texts* (Turnhout, 2007), 203-252
- O'Gorman, D., 'Mutilation and spectacle in Anglo-Saxon legislation' in N. Marafioti, J.P. Gates (eds.), *Capital and Corporal Punishment in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2014), 149-64
- O'Keefe, K.O.B., 'Body and law in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998), 209-32
- O'Keefe, K.O.B., 'Heroic values and Christian ethics' in M.R. Godden and M. Lapidge (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1991), 107-25
- Odegaard, C.E., 'Carolingian oaths of fidelity', *Speculum* 16 (1941), 284-96
- Orchard, A., *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Toronto, 2003)
- Ortenberg, V., 'The king from overseas': why did Æthelstan matter in tenth-century continental affairs?' in C. Leyser and D.W. Rollason (eds.), *England and the Continent in the tenth century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2010), 211-36
- Pagan, H.E., 'The pre-reform coinage of Edgar' in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2008), 182-210
- Parsons, D.N., 'Anna, Dot, Thorir ...: counting Domesday personal names', *Nomina: Journal for the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland* 25 (2002), 29-52
- Parsons, M.P., 'Some scribal memoranda for Anglo-Saxon charters of the 8th and 9th centuries' in *Hans Hirsch dargebracht als Festgabe zu seinem 60. Geburtstag von seinen Kollegen, Mitarbeitern und Schülern* (Wien, 1939), 13-32

- Pelteret, D.A.E., 'Anonymous historian of Edward the Elder's reign' in S. Baxter, C.E. Karkov, J.L. Nelson, D.A.E. Pelteret (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Aldershot, 2009), 319-336
- Powell, T.E., 'The 'three orders' of society in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994), 103-32
- Pratt, D.R., 'Persuasion and invention and the court of King Alfred the Great' in C.R.E. Cubitt (ed.), *Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages: The Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference* (Turnhout, 2003), 189-221
- Pratt, D.R., 'Problems of authorship and audience in the writings of King Alfred the Great' in P.C. Wormald and J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2007), 162-91
- Pratt, D.R., 'The illnesses of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 39-90
- Pratt, D.R., 'The voice of the king in 'King Edgar's establishment of monasteries'', *Anglo-Saxon England* 41 (2012), 145-204
- Pratt, D.R., 'Written law and the communication of authority in tenth-century England' in C. Leyser and D.W. Rollason (eds.), *England and the Continent in the tenth century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2010), 331-50
- Pratt, D.R., *The Political Thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge, 2007)
- Rabin, A., 'Archbishop Wulfstan's 'compilation on status' in the *Textus Roffensis*' in B.R. O'Brien, B. Bombi (eds.), *Textus Roffensis: Law, Language and Libraries in Early Medieval England* (Turnhout, 2015), 175-92
- Rabin, A., 'Capital punishment and the Anglo-Saxon judicial apparatus: a maximum view?' in N. Marafioti and J.P. Gates (eds.), *Capital and Corporal Punishment in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2014), 181-200
- Rabin, A., 'Witnessing kingship: royal power and the legal subject in the Old English law' in G.R. Owen-Crocker and B.W. Schneider (eds.), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2013), 219-36
- Rabin, A., *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York* (Manchester, 2015)
- Reuter, T., 'Assembly politics in Western Europe from the eighth century to the twelfth' in P.A. Linehan, J.L. Nelson (eds.), *The Medieval World* (London, 2003), 432-50
- Reuter, T., 'Nobles and others: the social and cultural expression of power relations in the Middle Ages' in A.J. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), 85-98

- Reuter, T., 'The making of England and Germany, 850-1050: points of comparison and difference' in A.P. Smyth (ed.), *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, 1998), 53-70
- Reynolds, A., *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford, 2009)
- Reynolds, S., 'What do we mean by 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Anglo-Saxons?''', *Journal of British Studies* 24 (1985), 395-414
- Reynolds, S., *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994)
- Reynolds, S., *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300* (Oxford, 1984)
- Richards, M.P., 'The laws of Alfred and Ine' in N.G. Discenza (ed.), *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden, 2015), 282-312
- Roach, L., 'A tale of two charters', in D.A. Woodman and R. Naismith (eds.), *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2018), 234-56
- Roach, L., 'Hosting the king: hospitality and the royal iter in tenth-century England', *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), 34-46
- Roach, L., 'Law codes and legal norms in later Anglo-Saxon England', *Historical Research* 86 (2013), 465-86
- Roach, L., 'Penitential discourse in the diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready'', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 64 (2013), 258-76
- Roach, L., 'The privilege of liberty in later Anglo-Saxon England' in S.T. Amber, N.C. Vincent (eds.), *Magna Carta: New Approaches* (Woodbridge, forthcoming)
- Roach, L., *Æthelred the Unready* (New Haven, Conn., 2016)
- Roach, L., *Forgery and Memory at the End of the First Millenium* (Princeton, 2021)
- Roach, L., *Kingship and Consent in Anglo-Saxon England, 871-978: Assemblies and the State in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2013)
- Roberts, J., 'The Old English vocabulary of nobility' in A.J. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), 69-84
- Roffe, D., 'From thegnage to barony: sake and soke, title, and tenants-in-chief', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1990), 157-76
- Rollason, D.W., *Northumbria 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom* (Cambridge, 2003)
- Rosenwein, B.H., 'The family politics of Berengar I, King of Italy 888-924', *Speculum* 71 (1996), 247-89
- Rumble, A.R., *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester: Documents Relating to the Topography of the Anglo-Saxon and Normal City and its Minsters* (Oxford, 2002)

- Runciman, W.G., 'Accelerating social mobility: the case of Anglo-Saxon England', *Past and Present* 104 (1984), 3-30
- Sassier, Y., 'Fidélité au roi: Abbon de Fleury, Fulbert et Yves de Chartres', in W. Falkowski, Y. Sassier (eds.), *Confiance, bonne foi, fidélité: la notion de 'fides' dans la vie des sociétés médiévales (Vie-XVe siècles)* (Paris, 2018), 179-92
- Sawyer, P.H., 'The charters of Burton Abbey and the unification of England', *Northern History* 10 (1975), 28-39
- Sawyer, P.H., 'The last Scandinavian kings of York', *Northern History* 31 (1995), 39-44
- Sawyer, P.H., 'The royal *tun* in pre-Conquest England' in P.C. Wormald, D.A. Bullough, R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), 273-99
- Schmidt, G.D., 'Unity and contrasting kingships in Beowulf', *Concerning Poetry* 17 (1984), 1-11
- Schneidmüller, B., 'Konsensuale Herrschaft. Ein essay über formen und konzepte politischer ordnung im Mittelalter' in P.J. Heinig, S. Jahns, H.J. Schmidt, R.C. Schwinges, S. Wefers (eds.), *Reich, Regionem und Europa in Mittelalter und Neuzit. Festschrift für Peter Moraw* (Berlin, 2000), 53-87
- Senecal, C., 'Keeping up with the Godwinesons: in pursuit of aristocratic status in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 23 (2001), 251-66
- Sheppard, A.J., *Families of the King: Writing Identity in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto, 2004)
- Shippey, T.A., 'Boar and badger: an Old English heroic antithesis', *Leeds Studies in English* 16 (1985), 220-39
- Shippey, T.A., 'Wealth and wisdom in King Alfred's preface to the Old English 'Pastoral Care'', *The English Historical Review* 94 (1979), 346-55
- Simpson, L., 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert episode in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*: its significance for mid-tenth-century English history' in G. Bonner, D.W. Rollason, C.E. Stancliffe (eds.), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge, 1989), 397-411
- Sisam, K., *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953)
- Smith, J.M.H., '*Fines imperii*: the marches' in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II* (Cambridge, 1995), 169-89
- Smyth, A.P., *Scandinavian York and Dublin: The History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms*, 2 vols., (Atlantic Highways, NJ, 1979)

- Sonntag, J., Zermatten C. (eds.), *Loyalty in the Middle Ages: Ideal and Practice of a Cross-Social Value. Essays in Honour of Gert Melville* (Turnhout, 2015)
- Stafford, P.A., 'Kinship and women in the world of Maldon: Byrhtnoth and his family' in C. Janet (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* (London, 1993), 225-35
- Stafford, P.A., 'Political ideas in late tenth-century England: charters as evidence' in P.A. Stafford, J.L. Nelson, J. Martindale (eds.), *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds* (Manchester, 2001), 68-82
- Stafford, P.A., 'Political women in Mercia, eighth to early tenth centuries' in M.P. Brown, C.A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London, 2001), 34-49
- Stafford, P.A., 'The Reign of Æthelred II: a study in the limitations on royal policy and action' in D. Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (Oxford, 1978), 15-46
- Stafford, P.A., 'Succession and inheritance: a gendered perspective on Alfred's family history' in R. Timothy (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conference* (Aldershot, 2003), 251-64
- Stafford, P.A., 'The 'Farm of One Night' and the organisation of King Edward's estates in Domesday', *The Economic History Review* 33 (1980), 491-502
- Stafford, P.A., 'The king's wife in Wessex 800-1066', *Past and Present* 91 (1981), 3-27
- Stafford, P.A., *After Alfred: Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and Chroniclers, 900-1150* (Oxford, 2020)
- Stafford, P.A., *Gender, Family and the Legitimation of Power: England from the Ninth to early Twelfth Century* (Aldershot, 2006)
- Stafford, P.A., *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989)
- Stancliffe, C.E., 'Oswald, 'most holy and most victorious King of the Northumbrians'' in C.E. Stancliffe, E. Cambridge (eds.), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stanford, Calif., 1995), 33-83
- Stanley, E.G., 'Beowulf: lordlessness in ancient times is the theme, as much as the glory of kings, if not more', *Notes and Queries* 52 (2005), 267-81
- Stanley, E.G., 'On the laws of King Alfred: the end of the preface and the beginning of the laws' in M.R. Godden, J. Roberts, J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1997), 211-21
- Staw, B.M., Sanderlands, L.E., Dutton, J.E., 'Threat-rigidity effects in organisational behaviour: a multilevel analysis', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 26 (1981), 501-24

- Stenton, F.M., 'The south-western element in the Old English Chronicle' in D.M. Stenton (ed.), *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford, 1970), 106-115
- Stenton, F.M., *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1947)
- Stenton, F.M., *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton*, ed. D.M. Stenton (Oxford, 1970)
- Stenton, F.M., *The First Century of English Feudalism 1066-1166* (Oxford, 1979)
- Stone R. and West C. (eds.), *Hincmar of Rheims: Life and Work* (Manchester, 2015)
- Stone, R., 'Kings are different: Carolingian mirrors for princes and lay morality' in F. Lachaud, L. Scordia (eds.), *Le prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières* (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2007), 69-86
- Stone, R., *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2012)
- Story, J.E., *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c.750-870* (Aldershot, 2003)
- Strayer, J.R., *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, NJ, 1970)
- Stubbs, W., *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*, vol I, 6th edn (Oxford, 1897)
- Swanton, M.J., *Crisis and Development in German society 700-800: Beowulf and the Burden of Kingship* (Göppingen, 1982)
- Syrett, M., 'Drengs and thegns again', *Saga Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research* 25 (2000), 243-71
- Szarmach, P.E., 'Ælfric's *Judith*' in M. Fox and M. Sharma (eds), *Old English Literature and the Old Testament* (Toronto, 2012), 64-88
- Szarmach, P.E., 'Augustine's *Soliloquia* in Old English' in N.G. Discenza (ed.), *A Companion to Alfred the Great* (Leiden, 2015), 227-255
- Taylor, A., 'Lex scripta and the problem of enforcement: Anglo-Saxon, Welsh and Scottish law compared' in F. Pirie and J. Scheele (eds.), *Legalism: Community and Justice* (Oxford, 2014), 47-75
- Tengvick, G., *Old English Bynames* (Uppsala, 1983)
- Thacker, A.T., 'Peculiaris Patronus Noster: The saint as patron of the state in the early Middle Ages', in J.R. Maddicott, D.M. Palliser (eds.), *The Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell* (London, 2000), 1-24

- Thompson-Smith, S., 'Marking boundaries: Charters and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' in A. Jorgensen (ed.), *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Turnhout, 2010), 167-86
- Thomson, R.M., *General Introduction and Commentary in William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum, The History of the English Kings II* ed. R.M. Thomson (Oxford, 1999)
- Thornton, D.E., 'Edgar and the eight kings AD 973: *textus et dramatis personae*', *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), 49-79
- Tolkien, J.R.R., 'The homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's son', *Essays and Studies* 6 (1953), 1-18
- Townend, M., *Scandinavian Culture in Eleventh-Century Yorkshire* (Kirkdale, 2007)
- Treschow, M., 'King Alfred's scholarly writings and the authorship of the First Fifty Prose Psalms', *The Heroic Age* 12 (2009)
- Treschow, M., 'The prologue to Alfred's law code: instruction in the spirit of mercy', *Florilegium* 13 (1994), 79-110
- Trousdale, A.A., 'Being everywhere at once: delegation and royal authority in late Anglo-Saxon England' in G.R. Owen-Crocker and B.W. Schneider (eds.), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2013), 275-96
- Ullmann, *The Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London, 1961)
- Upchurch, R.K., 'A big dog barks: Ælfric of Eynsham's indictment of the English pastorate and witan', *Speculum* 85 (2010), 505-33
- Vincent, N.C., 'Shall the first be last? Order and disorder amongst Henry II's bishops' in T.W. Smith (ed.), *Authority and Power in the Medieval Church c.1000-1500* (Turnhout, 2020), 287-316
- Wainwright, F.T., 'North-West Mercia, AD 871-924', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire* 94 (1942), 3-55
- Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., *Early-Germanic Kingship* (Oxford, 1971)
- Ward, G., 'Lessons in leadership: Constantine and Theodosius in Frechulf of Lisieux's *Histories*' in C. Gantner, R. McKitterick, S.M. Meeder (eds.), *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 68-86
- West, C., *Reframing the Feudal Revolution: Political and Social Transformation Between Marne and Moselle, c.800-c.1100* (Cambridge, 2013)
- White, S.D., 'Feuding and peace-making in the Touraine around the year 1000', *Traditio* 42 (1986), 195-264

- Whitelock, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Homilist and statesman', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 24 (1942), 25-45
- Whitelock, 'The dealings of the kings of England with Northumbria in the tenth and eleventh centuries' in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins* (London, 1959), 70-88
- Whitelock, D., 'Some charters in the name of King Alfred' in M.H. King (ed.), *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*, vol I (Collegeville, Minn., 1979), 77-98
- Whitelock, D., 'The authorship of the account of King Edgar's establishment of the monasteries' in J.L. Rosier (ed.), *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt* (Gravenhage, 1970), 125-36
- Whitelock, D., 'The Old-English Bede', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48 (1962), 57-90
- Whitelock, D., Ker, N.D., Rennell, F.J.R.R. (eds.), *The Will of Æthelgifu: a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript* (Oxford, 1968)
- Whitelock, D., *Some Anglo-Saxon Bishops of London* (London, 1975)
- Whitelock, D., *The Beginnings of English Society* (London, 1952)
- Wickham, C., 'Consensus and assemblies in the Romano-Germanic kingdoms: a comparative approach' in V. Epp, C.H.F. Meyer (eds.), *Recht und Konsens im frühen Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2017), 389-424
- Wickham, C., *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005)
- Wickham, C., *Problems in doing comparative history* in P. Skinner (ed.), *Challenging the Boundries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* (Turnhout, 2009), 5-28
- Wilcox, J., 'The wolf on shepherds: Wulfstan, bishops and the context of the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*' in D.A. Oosterhouse and P.E. Szarmach (eds.), *Old English Prose: Basic Readings* (New York, NY, 2000), 395-418
- Williams, A., 'A bell-house and a burh-geat: lordly residences in England before the Norman Conquest' in C. Harper-Bill, R.E. Harvey (eds.), *Medieval Knighthood: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference 1990* (Woodbridge, 1992), 221-40
- Williams, A., 'An outing on the Dee: King Edgar at Chester, AD 973', *Medieval Scandinavia* 14 (2004), 229-43
- Williams, A., 'Land and power in the eleventh century: the estates of Harold Godwineson', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 3 (1981), 171-87, 230-34

- Williams, A., 'Princeps Merciorum Gentis: the family, career and connections of Ælfhere, ealdorman of Mercia 956-83', *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1982), 143-72
- Williams, A., 'Some notes and considerations on problems connected with the English royal succession, 860-1066', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 1 (1979), 144-67, 225-33
- Williams, A., *Kingship and Government in pre-Conquest England: c.500-1066* (London, 1999)
- Williams, A., *The World before Domesday: The English Aristocracy 900-1066* (London, 2008)
- Williams, G., 'Military and non-military functions of the Anglo-Saxon burh, c.878-978' in J. Baker, S.J. Brookes, A. Reynolds (eds.), *Landscapes of Defence in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2013), 129-64
- Wood, M., "'Stand strong against the monsters': kingship and learning in the empire of King Æthelstan' in P.C. Wormald and J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2007), 192-217
- Wood, M., 'Brunanburh revisited', *Saga Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research* 20 (1978), 200-17
- Wood, M., 'The making of King Æthelstan's empire: an English Charlemagne?' in P.C. Wormald, D.A. Bullough, R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), 250-72
- Woodman, D.A., "'Athelstan A' and the rhetoric of rule', *Anglo-Saxon England* 42 (2013), 217-48
- Woolf, A., 'Eric Bloodaxe revisited', *Northern History* 34 (1998), 189-93
- Woolf, A., *From Pictland to Alba: 789-1070* (Edinburgh, 2007)
- Woolf, R., 'The ideal of men dying with their lord in the *Germania* and in *The Battle of Maldon*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 5 (1976), 63-81
- Wormald, P.C., "'Engla lond': the making of an allegiance', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994), 1-24
- Wormald, P.C., 'Æthelred the lawmaker' in D. Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (Oxford, 1978), 47-80
- Wormald, P.C., 'Archbishop Wulfstan: eleventh-century state-builder' in M. Townend (ed.), *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference* (Turnhout, 2004), 9-27
- Wormald, P.C., 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the origins of the gens Anglorum' in P.C. Wormald, D.A. Bullough, R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), 99-129

- Wormald, P.C., 'Giving God and king their due: conflict and its regulation in the early English state', *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo, secoli IX-XI* (Spoleto, 1997), 549-90
- Wormald, P.C., 'Lex scripta and verbum regis: legislation and Germanic kingship, from Euric to Cnut' in P.H. Sawyer, I.N. Wood (eds.), *Early-Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), 105-38
- Wormald, P.C., 'On þa wæpnedhealf: kingship and royal property from Æthelwulf to Edward the Elder' in N.J. Highams and D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London, 2001), 264-79
- Wormald, P.C., 'Quadripartitus' in G. Garnett, J.G.H. Hudson (eds.), *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy. Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt* (Cambridge, 1994), 111-47
- Wormald, P.C., 'The strange affair of the Selsey bishopric, 953-963' in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds.), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), 128-41
- Wormald, P.C., *Papers Preparatory to the Making of English Law* (London, 2014)
- Wormald, P.C., *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford, 2001)
- Yorke, B.A.E., 'Æthelwold and the politics of the tenth century' in B.A.E. Yorke (ed.), *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence* (Woodbridge, 1988), 65-88
- Yorke, B.A.E., 'Edward as ætheling' in N.J. Highams and D.H. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London, 2001), 25-39
- Yorke, B.A.E., *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990)
- Zeller, B., 'Writing Charters as a public activity: the example of the Carolingian charters of St Gall' in M. Moster, P.S. Barnwell (eds.), *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2011), 27-37

Unpublished theses consulted

- Banton, L.N., *Ealdormen and earls in England from the reign of King Alfred to the reign of King Æthelred II*, unpublished DPhil thesis (University of Oxford, 1981)
- Beaudoin, I.P., 'Conceptions of loyalty in Richer of St Remi's *Historiae*', unpublished MPhil thesis, (University of Cambridge, 2016)

Blanchard, M.E., 'The Late Anglo-Saxon Royal Agent', unpublished DPhil thesis (University of Oxford, 2016)

Internet Resources

Patrologia Latina – accessed online at <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>

Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England – accessed online at <https://pase.ac.uk/>

Sawyer catalogue – accessed online at <https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/about/index.html>

The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources – accessed online at <http://www.dmlbs.ox.ac.uk/web/welcome.html>

The Dictionary of Old English – University of Toronto Centre for Medieval Studies – accessed online at <https://doe.artsci.utoronto.ca/>

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – accessed online at <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>

Appendix: Tables of attestation of laymen in the reigns of Kings Alfred to Æthelred

NB: For the nine tables of attestations in this appendix, please see files attached individually in the ‘further documents’ folder. They cannot be viewed properly in a continuous PDF or Word document. I recommend viewing them on a computer screen where it is possible to zoom in.

A few notes on the tables of attestation

These tables are not a direct copy of Keynes’ *Atlas*, but are heavily based upon this text. They contain some of my own alterations concerning which thegn of a common name probably was the beneficiary to a grant. I have not altered any of the records of attestations themselves in relation to Keynes’ work, though in the footnotes to the thegn tables in the text of the thesis (Chapter Two) I propose many new interpretations of the attestation patterns of individuals with a common name (e.g. Wulfric, Ælfsige, etc); where can be located the beginnings and endings of multiple men’s careers, etc. These tables should be read in conjunction with the work I have done in Chapter Two of the thesis.

Outright forgeries have been omitted but spurious charters have still been included. These tables only include royal diplomas.

Legend (from Keynes’ *Atlas*, p. 2)

- Green boxes: when the thegn of that row was the beneficiary of a surviving charter
- Ben/bn: ‘beneficiary’ of the charter in question
- Bracketed number, [00]: the attestation has been ‘emended’ in some way (e.g. correction of a garbled form, or an obvious error)
- A number in angle brackets, <00>: the attestation is clearly impossible at the given date

- Dots in lieu of a number as attestation, e.g. [.]: the mention of a person in the text of the charter, or his occurrence in a context where it is not possible to designate his attestation by means of a number
- No entry in box for date of issue of charters: This indicates that the charter's date of issue could be anytime in the reign in question
- Terms such as *prop.*, *k.k.*, *amic.*, indicate the capacity in which an individual attested a charter, if this were specified in the document