Visual Images of Late Anglo-Saxon Kings and Kingship

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VISUAL IMAGES OF LATE ANGLO-SAXON KINGS AND KINGSHIP

by

Kevin L. Glick

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Kevin L. Glick
The role of ideology in the creation of tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon visual representations of Anglo-Saxon kings is the focus of this study. This study assesses Anglo-Saxon images in manuscripts and on coins, seals, and textiles produced during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Each image included depicts Anglo-Saxon kings who ruled during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The thesis begins with a discussion of the term ideology and a historical introduction to the political developments in rulership and monasticism that influenced images of kings. The thesis covers each art form separately, examining what evidence exists, what problems exist in dealing with this type of evidence, and what the evidence conveys about Anglo-Saxon ideology. While each medium investigated presents very different technical obstacles and modes of expression, all of the images share the characteristic that they influenced the ideology of the late Anglo-Saxon king in some way. Beyond that fact, this author concludes that Anglo-Saxon monastic figures, particularly those involved in the reform movement, influenced the creation of the images, and the audiences' perception. Although not all images were created to intentionally persuade an audience, each used some degree of intensifying or diminishing persuasion.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will analyze the role of ideology in the creation of tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon visual representations of Anglo-Saxon kings. These visual representations helped shape the image of a king. These images reflected reality in some fashion, but simultaneously managed to alter this reality into an ideal. It is this author’s hypothesis that ecclesiastical ideologies altered the visual imagery used to illustrate the ideal characteristics of a prosperous Anglo-Saxon king. The following study considers the major monastic statesmen of the tenth- and eleventh-century monastic reform movement, including Dunstan, Æthelwold, Oswald, Ælfric, and Wulfstan, and examines their roles in presenting ideal images of the kings. Ideologies, used on behalf of both the Church and State, influenced the practical and theoretical position of the king. A study of the images of Anglo-Saxon kings will demonstrate development of the ruler theology and an increased power and prestige of late Anglo-Saxon royal government.

Before one can begin such a study, one must include some introductory material regarding the methodology of the study. The following pages will include a section describing this author’s working definition of the term ideology. A qualification of the material included in the study will then follow. The introduction also will include an overview of the current state of research on the particular fields of study represented and a statement about what additional research needs to be done.

First and foremost, one needs to have a working definition of the term ideology.
Such is not an easy task. This study will look at how the word originated, how the word changed through its early history, and how modern scholars disagree on the word’s exact meaning. This process will develop a working definition of the term ideology for use in this thesis.

By examining the origin of the word ideology, one identifies the roots *ideo-* and *-logy*. The root *ideo-* derives from the Greek *i̯ dé a*, meaning look, semblance, form, or configuration. The root *-logy* derives from Greek also. In Greek, *logi a* (Medieval Latin *-logia*) means those which have the sense of saying or speaking. Combining the meanings of the roots develops one possible definition for the term ideology: ideas or images which have the sense of saying or speaking. Originally, ideology simply meant the scientific study of ideas or images. However, words ending in the suffix ‘ology’ commonly assume the meaning of the item studied rather than the science of studying that item. This was the case for ideology. Not long after its creation, ideology came to represent systems of ideas or images.

The historic change in the meaning of the term ideology leads to a significant problem with defining the word today. A problem arose from the fact that the French ideologues first attempted to employ ideology as a science of ideas free from the

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1Terry Eagleton, in an essay attempt to define ideology wrote that, “Nobody has yet come up with a single adequate definition of ideology....To try to compress this wealth of meaning into a single comprehensive definition would thus be unhelpful even if it were possible.” Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (New York: Verso, 1991), 1.

influences of consciousness. Unfortunately, the ideologues based their theories upon a certain set of assumptions about the world. The ideologues were not working purely scientifically. They were imposing 'ideological' assumptions upon their "scientific" findings. Ideologues acted as representatives for the revolutionary bourgeoisie. The use of ideology served as a means for this class to rise to power. An individual might alter all ideas to serve one's own needs. Because the ideologues were members of a revolutionary class, Napoleon accused them of supporting ideas or doctrines that were detrimental to the state. As a result, ideology became a derogatory term used to describe one as unscientific, unscholarly, or tainted by illogical assumptions. The early history of ideology branded the term with a negative connotation that some associate with it even today. Few people would characterize their own beliefs to be ideological, because most individuals believe their views to be objective. This thesis will not define ideology with a negative meaning.

Since the first use of the term ideology, there has been much debate and discussion regarding the term's precise meaning. I will make no attempt to trace the entire history of how scholars applied ideology. Instead, I will discuss some of the current theories regarding ideology. I will also attempt to establish a working definition of ideology for the following study.

One cannot easily describe the current opinion on establishing a single definition

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Ibid., 64.

for ideology. Scholars currently propose many meanings for the word, and not all are compatible with one another. Some of the current meanings, as listed by Eagleton, include: the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life; a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group; ideas which legitimate a dominant political power; false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power; systematically distorted communication; action-oriented sets of beliefs; and the conjuncture of discourse and power.\footnote{Eagleton, \textit{Ideology: An Introduction}, 1–2.} Even the most commonly held definition cannot suffice. Commonly, the word ideology implies, “judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas which distorts a person’s understanding.”\footnote{Ibid., 3.} This definition concludes that some people objectively observe while others subjectively perceive. The problem is that perception influences all understanding in some way.

The argument above suggests that perception always alters images and ideas. That does not mean that all ideas are ideological in nature. Some scholars offer that ideology is the structure of values and interests that inform any representation or reality.\footnote{W. J. Thomas Mitchell, \textit{Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 1.} Ideology does not pertain to all belief systems. Ideologies must be associated with power in some way, especially political power. In fact, the most widely accepted definition of ideology is, “the study of the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations
of domination." Yet ideology is not necessarily only associated with the dominant political group. In fact, some scholars have proposed that ideologies are oppositional in nature, belonging to non-dominant powers. Other scholars have looked for a more neutral definition of 'dominant' ideology. Martin Seliger describes ideology as: "sets of ideas by which men [sic] posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such actions aim to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order." More recently, Christopher Flood has advanced this neutral version of 'dominant' ideology. Any political discourse may include ideology. Flood completely describes ideologies in the following manner:

Ideologies serve any political group in the pursuit of its objectives. An ideology may legitimate the established political and social order as well as the existing distribution of wealth, power, and status. It may promote acceptance of present authority, and hence stability, because people do not need to be coerced when they feel a sense of political obligation. However, ideology is also a weapon of contestation and opposition.

This neutral definition successfully clarifies the meaning of ideology and illuminates how ideology operates in regard to the political and social world. This is how ideology will be

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12 Ibid., 19.
defined in the following thesis.

Besides articulating a working definition, I wish to discuss some issues that further explain how one should understand ideology for this study. First, some scholars hold a different view of how ideology operates. As John B. Thompson points out, a reflection on language and verbal communication has influenced the theories of ideology. Theorists have concentrated on how ideas move in the social world as utterances.\(^\text{13}\) A prime example of this thinking, as it pertains to late Anglo-Saxon imagery, is Dolores Frese’s article on the Byrhtnoth Tapestry.\(^\text{14}\) Frese discusses the imagery on the tapestry as a "text" or "verbal artifact". I believe that this method of understanding ideology is too simple. The movement of ideas verbally through language is just a portion of the different ways that ideas exist and disseminate. Thomas Mitchell points out that a wide variety of types of images exist, which he categorizes into five different groups.\(^\text{15}\) Verbal images are metaphors and descriptions that a literary critic studies. Mental images are dreams, memories, and ideas that psychologists study. Optical images are mirrors and projections that belong in the study of physics. Graphic images are pictures, statues, and designs that art historians study. Finally, perceptual images are sense data and appearances that effect and alter all of the other categories. Mitchell explains that the concept of ideology derives from a notion of mental entities, or ideas, that provide the materials of thought.

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Understand these ideas as images—as pictorial graphic signs imprinted or projected on the medium of consciousness. One must study all images, whether conceptual, verbal, or graphic, in a unified manner.

In exploring the role of ideology in the visual representations of late Anglo-Saxon kings, I do not wish to limit the study to images that serve as propaganda. Propaganda refers to a deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and behave in a desired way. The emphasis of propaganda is on a conscious, methodical, and planned attempt to persuade a large target audience for the benefit of those creating the propaganda. Propaganda conveys an ideology. I do not want to limit this inquiry only to the conscious gestures of patrons. Also, this study will not be concerned with the size of an audience, whether large or small. Ideology also does not limit itself to methodical and planned actions. Ideology can affect the creation of images on a subconscious level. Also, it is not important to consider the effectiveness of the persuasion. This thesis is concerned primarily with means—with persuasive methods—not with ends.

The persuasive methods that this thesis will examine are the devices or strategies by which ideology operates. Although many ideological strategies exist, this thesis will concentrate on the most prominent ones. These strategies are: unification, accommodation, rationalization, legitimation, universalization, representation, naturalization, dissimulation, and association. Association is the process of linking in memory or

16 Ibid., 159.

imagination with another idea. Dissimulation is concealing or obscuring domination and
the interests of the dominant.\textsuperscript{18} Naturalization is the process of rendering beliefs natural
and self evident, identifying them with society's common sense.\textsuperscript{19} Representation
encourages one to obey the ruler, because the ruler is working on behalf of the subjects
of rule. There can be either a perception of belonging or a perception of a charismatic
representation.\textsuperscript{20} Universalization is the process by which a group projects its own values
and interests to represent all people. The group shows these particular values to be the
only rational ones.\textsuperscript{21} Legitimation is the process of a ruler securing consent for his
authority.\textsuperscript{22} Rationalization is the process of masking the motives of a particular idea in
the form of an argument that is acceptable on the grounds of logic and ethics.\textsuperscript{23}
Accommodation proposes that the current state of affairs is more acceptable to those
ruled than the possibility of an alternate ruler.\textsuperscript{24} Unification is the strategy that coheres the
fragmented identity of a group in order to impose a certain feeling of solidarity or


\textsuperscript{19} Eagleton, \textit{Ideology: An Introduction}, 58.


\textsuperscript{21} Eagleton, \textit{Ideology: An Introduction}, 56.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 54.


\textsuperscript{24} Therborn, \textit{The Ideology of Power}, 95.
This thesis will examine these ideological strategies in the visual images of late Anglo-Saxon kings. I will present and explain each strategy, as each one becomes discernable, for its significance to the particular image. The study will examine who is proposing what idea to whom, with what intent, and with what result. This process will entail, to some degree, enlisting Hugh Rank's schema for analyzing persuasive communication. Rank explains that all communication involves intensifying or downplaying on some level. The proponent is intensifying either its own good qualities, or intensifying others' bad qualities, downplaying its own bad qualities, or downplaying others' good qualities. However, ideologies are very complex, and classifying them into particular categories can be very difficult. Ideologies may incorporate varying degrees of each category simultaneously.

The previous section has described a working definition of ideology and outlined the manner in which this study will consider ideological strategies used in visual images of late Anglo-Saxon kings. Next I will qualify the material included in the study and provide an overview of the current state of research on the particular fields of study represented as well as a statement about what new work needs to be done.

This study will consider Anglo-Saxon images in manuscripts and on coins, seals,

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and textiles produced during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Each image included depicts Anglo-Saxon kings who ruled during the tenth and eleventh centuries. I will not consider more public forms of art, such as sculpture, wall paintings, and stained glass. These art forms may present images of kings, but do not present any images of late Anglo-Saxon kings and therefore are not useful in this study.

The first evidence that qualifies under the parameters established above is an illuminated manuscript. The first illuminated manuscript image of a late Anglo-Saxon king dates to soon after 934. This image was to serve just as a preview of what was to develop in the latter half of the century. In the other three media covered below (coins, seals, and textiles) this study will consider surviving evidence that dates from after Edgar’s accession to the throne in 959.

This thesis will address each visual art form separately. Each section will examine what evidence exists, what problems exist in dealing with this type, and what the evidence conveys about ideology as discussed above. In the consideration and commentary on the visual evidence it will be necessary to employ information supplied by written evidence to understand the imagery fully. Studying the entirety of the evidence through a multi-disciplinary method will contribute a greater understanding of the late Anglo-Saxon definition of kingship, as well as an understanding of the political ideology of the men who supported the king.

While scholars have presented most of the primary evidence in some facet, the

analysis has not considered what images of late Anglo-Saxon kings tell about the theoretical definition of the king as promoted by the monastic reformers of the tenth and eleventh century. It is imperative that a scholar who wishes to pursue a study of late Anglo-Saxon kingship study and understand all of history’s auxiliary disciplines, including art history, sigillography, numismatics, and archaeology. Many scholars have been unable to synthesize evidence from the areas outside pure historical study. Such a synthesis is necessary for a full understanding of Anglo-Saxon political ideology.

Percy Ernst Schramm, a scholar who studied many aspects of Germanic kingship, was the first twentieth century scholar to study the concept of Anglo-Saxon kingship. Unfortunately, only one of his many works focuses on Anglo-Saxon kingship.28 Anglo-Saxon royal history came into its own following the lead of F. M. Stenton.29 Building largely upon the foundation that Stenton had established, scholars over the next fifty years developed their field while diverging on two separate paths.30 The first group, sometimes called “political sociologists,” concentrates its study with the power and capabilities of the king from time to time. In this area “perceptions of the late Anglo-Saxon state have

been deeply and irreversibly influenced by the work of James Campbell.31 He showed that kings effectively governed and economically advanced England during the late Anglo-Saxon period. The second school of thought was concerned with the study of the sacred king, along the model of the works of Margaret Murray and William Chaney.32 These scholars emphasize the role of religion and the Church in controlling the image of the king. The most important scholar to study in this area recently is Janet Nelson. Her work on coronations, ruler imagery, and connections between England and Continental rulership that influenced it has contributed a great deal to the study of Anglo-Saxon kingship.33 Her work signals the recent beginning of a more multi-disciplinary approach to the subject. Yet, no other scholar has successfully followed Nelson’s work. We need more efforts toward establishing a comprehensive study of Anglo-Saxon kingship.


Because historians have not yet developed multi-disciplinary studies synthesizing evidence from all of the areas covered in this study, I will summarize the research in each of the separate fields of study. There was a revival of Benedictine monasticism in Anglo-Saxon England during the tenth century, led by the efforts of Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald. In the last century, many Anglo-Saxon literary and historical scholars have studied the history of these monastic statesmen and the reform movement. Dunstan is the single monastic figure to whom scholars have devoted the most study, beginning with the work of the nineteenth century Constitutional historians. Scholars such as J. A. Robinson, David Knowles and Douglas Dales have reconstructed Dunstan's life and career based primarily upon later hagiographic sources. While Dunstan received a great deal of initial attention, Æthelwold has become a popular figure to study as well, although there is still not a modern full-length biography of him. Robinson, Knowles, and to some extent Barbara Yorke have attempted appraisals, even though Æthelwold seems to be


overshadowed by Dunstan in both Robinson’s and Knowles’s works. More studies have examined Æthelwold because scholars have been able to recognize him as the author the *Regularis Concordia*.

Many twentieth-century scholars have attempted to classify exactly how active Benedictine monasticism was in England in the period before the tenth-century reform movement. There had been Benedictine monasticism in England prior to the tenth century, but the Benedictines were only one order among many that existed. After all of the modern scholarly work, it seems almost impossible to know the exact level of Benedictine activity, and it is not significant to do so here. One instead ought to question the possible motives for reform and the tools used to advance that reform.

Only a few images of Anglo-Saxon kings survive to the modern period as compared to other contemporary cultures, such as Ottonian Germany. One of the explanations for this lack of surviving evidence is the Norman destruction of Anglo-Saxon art treasures. This happened for a variety of reasons. Norman conquerors had such a disdain for Anglo-Saxon art, which they deemed as the workings of an inferior English

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race, that they felt it necessary to destroy it. Others destroyed art simply to make money by selling off its precious elements. Pieces were broken apart or melted down to separate their precious stone or metal content. Besides the issue of deliberate human destruction, it is problematic that the media used for this imagery, especially manuscripts, seals, and textiles, were very fragile and subject to the natural process of decay. Unfortunately, the sparsity of surviving material has led a few scholars to avoid such studies, postulating that a lack of evidence is proof enough that the Anglo-Saxons did not produce images of kings to exemplify ideal types. Scholars seem to believe that Anglo-Saxon kings did not have the capabilities to undertake political persuasion. One scholar writes:

> England did produce its share of political thought on the monarchy, but because much that has survived was written in the vernacular it has not been as well studied as much of the continental material. In the proems and introductions to the codes of laws, in occasional reflections in charters and wills, and in homiletic writings, comments were made on the principles and practices of monarchy and of all Christian authority.

Fortunately, a few scholars have undertaken the studies of Anglo-Saxon ruler images. Schramm’s massive study of images on seals, on coins, in manuscripts, and other art objects told him much about ruler images. Before Schramm, scholars considered pictures or portraits to be realistic portrayals of people. He showed that, in most instances, pictures were not supposed to carry unique individual features. The images instead were

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significant as evidence for the "idea of the state."\textsuperscript{41}

That "pre-existing images and traditions of illustrations were of considerable importance in determining the Anglo-Saxon illustrator's approach to his task and in defining his visual vocabulary"\textsuperscript{42} is taken as common knowledge among scholars of Anglo-Saxon art. Yet it is also known that even when Anglo-Saxon illustrators followed complete models as exemplars, they still made alterations to the images that they inherited. Why did alterations from exemplars occur? Sometimes the changes were deliberate, while other alterations were accidental.\textsuperscript{43} The simplest reason for changes was the varying levels of expertise between the workmanship of the model and that of the copyist. Sometimes unintentional omissions occurred as a result of copyists working in unfamiliar techniques.\textsuperscript{44} In respect to deliberate alterations, the question of how much early medieval art, especially manuscripts, reflects contemporary life has been one actively pursued by many scholars in the modern period. Many scholars have concluded that these medieval artists altered the Antique models that they used to suit contemporary fashions.\textsuperscript{45}

Their general argument can be summed up by Thomas Wright, one of the first scholars

\textsuperscript{41}Bak, "Medieval Symbology of the State," 40.


\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 11.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 11–13.

to argue this theory. He wrote, "It will be observed that the medieval artists, whatever
the subject they treated, represented faithfully and invariably the manner and fashions of
the day." An exhaustive survey of all of the images shows that most in the late Anglo-
Saxon period are derived from an exemplar of some kind, whether it be Roman,
Byzantine, Carolingian, or Ottonian. Copying from a model did not hold a stigma of
plagiarism or artistic incapability, but rather served to give the image a sense of validity.47
However, one should not confuse an alteration for contemporary fashion with a complete
change in rank of the person, such as the addition of or alteration of a crown. In this case,
one must view the alteration as a deliberate departure from the original in an attempt to
change the overall message of the image.

In the field of numismatic research, scholars made great strides on the late Anglo-
Saxon period by the 1960's. Enough was discovered during this time to guide the
scholarship for the next thirty years. Guided by the pioneering work of F. M. Stenton,
scholars realized the institutional power that the numismatic evidence showed.48 Scholars
have published many small studies, each one focusing on a very limited aspect.49

46 Thomas Wright, Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages (London: Shaw,
1844), 27.

47 Martin O. H. Carver, "Contemporary Artefacts Illustrated in Late Anglo-Saxon

48 Henry Royston Loyn, "The Howard Linecar Lecture 1990, Numismatics and the
Medieval Historian: A Comment on Recent Numismatic Contributions to the History of

49 See, for example, Kenneth Jonsson, "The Coinage of Cnut," The Reign of Cnut:
However, no comprehensive study of late Anglo-Saxon coinage exists to this day.

While numismatists, or scholars specializing in the study of coins, have published a great deal of scholarship on Anglo-Saxon coins, historians and art historians have contributed very little to the study of coins and their portraits. Most have followed the all too simple belief that the designs on late Anglo-Saxon coins were very unoriginal and were direct copies, although not very good copies, of whatever Roman model was available at the time of minting. It is a misconception to believe that Anglo-Saxon coin image has no meaning. Early medieval coins do tend to reproduce many iconographic features found on classical models.\textsuperscript{50} However, it is significant that the coin types that Anglo-Saxons copied were not the most common or the most recently produced. There was an active process of choice between the many Roman types available.

The historical study of late Anglo-Saxon seals is meager. This is attributable to the fact that the only seals from the entire period that survived into modern times came from Edward the Confessor’s reign. The most important work on the subject was completed as part of Florence Harmer’s study of Anglo-Saxon writs. Before this work, some forged seals of Edward the Confessor, which were produced some time after the rise of William the Conqueror, were classified as surviving examples of an authentic Anglo-Saxon seal type. Harmer established the one surviving seal type known based upon surviving evidence. Several important works have appeared based mainly upon

\textsuperscript{50}Bak, “Medieval Symbology of the State,” 55.
these findings.

The study of late Anglo-Saxon textiles is centered primarily around the Bayeux Tapestry, possible the most popular piece of evidence presented in this study. It certainly appears to have the most colorful past of all the visual imagery examined. Although a great deal of scholarly (and not so scholarly) study occurred since the Bayeux Tapestry's "rediscovery" in 1720, it seems to have only one mention in text during the long period between its creation and 1720. While the scholars may not have considered the Tapestry a significant work of art from the time of its construction until the modern period, in the last two centuries scholars began considering it as one of the most significant medieval works of art for what it tells us about a successful conquest of a country that was unified under a powerful government. Both Napoleon, in 1830, and Adolf Hitler, during World War II, realized the propagandist value of the Tapestry and sought to tap into its insight as part of their preparations for invasions of England.51 The great number of studies completed in the last two centuries has led to different series of debates on questions that are difficult to answer. The most impassioned debates focused on the dating and patronage of the Tapestry. Many scholars have relied on the Tapestry as a definite historical source.52 Yet as long ago as 1957, researchers were warned by such scholars as F. M.


Stenton that the Tapestry’s imagery could not be taken at face value. It is clear that one should look at the Tapestry as a work of art, and not as a historical record, and approach its study along these lines.

The section above outlines the overall themes and parameters of this thesis, as well as a discussion and definition of ideology, and a review of the current state of research in the relevant scholastic disciplines. This thesis will consider visual representations of late Anglo-Saxon kings represented in illuminated manuscripts and on coins, seals, and textiles. The purpose is to show the kings’ images as ones that serve ideological functions marked by the assumptions, values, and goals of the monastic reformers and the kings who created the images. No primary material presented in this study is newly discovered. It is important, however, that no scholar has examined the role of ideology on the visual evidence in a multi-disciplinary fashion. This approach of study is the best way to develop a stronger understanding of the subject. It is my hope to undertake such a study in the pages that follow.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following chapter will trace the developments of late Anglo-Saxon kingship and the monastic reform movement. In order to understand how, why, and by whom manuscripts, coins, seals, and textiles were used to promote ideal images of late Anglo-Saxon kings and kingship, it is necessary to trace the political developments in the areas of rulership and monasticism. The study of late Anglo-Saxon kings and their ideologies can be difficult. Several different ruling families existed during the period, resulting in kings with very diverse cultural backgrounds. However, there was one element that bound the different ideologies together. All were influenced by the ideals that the monastic reform movement promoted.

It is important to note that the monarchy developed differently in Anglo-Saxon England than in other Western European countries of the time. Muslim, Magyr, and Viking invasions of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries altered the political life of Christian Western Europe. In many places on the Continent, political power became fragmented and decentralized out of a necessity to serve and protect a local sphere. In these areas, political power rested more in the hands of prominent local magnates rather than in the hands of a central government. England was the exception to this rule. In England, ninth-century Viking invasions initially managed to eliminate the opposition groups to West Saxon monarchy. Alfred the Great continued to consolidate political power. He organized and systemized the fortification of towns and developed a stronger
military, with a navy able to fight the Vikings on the sea. Alfred's response led later kings to continue to centralize government into an ever vitalizing monarchy. This development was the force that connected all of the kings who ruled between 959 and 1066. They all shared a wish to develop the definition and position of the Anglo-Saxon king in the manner established by Alfred the Great.

The power and prestige of the late Anglo-Saxon monarchy set England up as the heir to the Carolingian state. Just as the Carolingians had done before them, the Anglo-Saxons responded to external challenge by evoking a more vigorous exercise of central authority. The Anglo-Saxons seemingly inherited the Carolingian ideals of kingship. The transference of monarchical power and prestige, though a gradual process, occurred noticeably during the reigns of Alfred the Great and Charles the Bald. Both kingdoms had met at a crossroads. The English monarchical government was developing successfully upon the model of the Carolingians, while the West Franks were struggling to maintain their connection with the past. The royal government that later developed in England during Æthelred II's rule was one similar to what existed in late Carolingian West Francia. However, the tradition on the Continent was not able to keep the mon-


archy strong, especially in the case of the tenth- and eleventh-century Capetian kings. 57

Carolingian scholars had established four main components of effective and successful rulership. A ruler ought to maintain a close connection between the Church and State, with the king playing a more prominent role. A ruler ought to enlist the Church to help with bureaucratic duties necessary in the daily business of the government. It was the duty of the king to look after and protect the Church. Effective rulership was not only the responsibility of the king. Carolingian scholars felt the Church ought to seek an increasing sanctification of the king and his office. 58 Carolingian political theorists, most importantly Hincmar of Reims, had accepted the view that temporal authority was derived from God. This was the idea that the consecration of the king conveyed symbolically. Consecration conferred God’s grace upon the ruler. 59 Hincmar and other ninth-century political theorists developed the idea that the king ruled as Vicar of Christ. This important theory, which Anglo-Saxon monastic reformers adopted, altered the nature of kingship in two ways. First, the theory augmented the power and prestige that the king already had. Second, the king obtained his right to rule directly from God. Thus,


58 Loyn, Governance of Anglo-Saxon England, 82.

if one were to disobey the king, that person would be disobeying God Himself. Yet the Vicar of Christ theory somewhat limited what the king had the privilege to do. The king was serving as a representative of God on earth. The Carolingians in the ninth century clearly felt that the king had a definite responsibility to maintain the standards of the Church and to intervene in case the Church might fall into corruption. The king acted as God’s deputy in securing justice and peace for the Christian people.

The Church influenced these ideals of kingship in several ways. Often, visual and textual imagery elaborated model Christian kingship to the king himself. In these artistic and literary works, “biblical examples were freely used to exhort, admonish, or warn contemporary rulers.” The evangelizing element of the Carolingian Church transmitted the ideals of kingship in other ways, in order to alter the general perception of ideal kingship among the laity.

In the tenth century, Ottonian emperors greatly advanced the theoretical image of the ruler. The Ottonians developed a strong monarchy into an empire modeled after both Carolingian and Roman prototypes. While there were limitations to Ottonian power, the rulers actively promoted powerful images of kingship through art, especially through both manuscripts and seals.

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60 Ibid., 216–18.

61 Ibid., 260–73.


64 Nelson, “Kingship and Empire,” 221.
While Carolingian and Ottonian models did influence Anglo-Saxon imagery, the imagery did retain certain attributes inherent to England alone.\textsuperscript{65} The English expressed ideal regal qualities in different ways from the Continent, through writings in charters, sermons, and laws. The English advanced the notion that the king ought to bring about peace through the promulgation of law.\textsuperscript{66} This was indeed a departure from the Carolingian model. One of the major limitations to Carolingian royal authority had been the idea of individual law. Kings did not promulgate their own laws and enjoyed less authority over private legal interests.\textsuperscript{67}

Late Anglo-Saxon scholars developed a definition of rulership that concerned the king’s position within the English community of Christians as well as his authority over it. The development of Anglo-Saxon ideology became tied with the monastic reform movement that flourished in England during the tenth century. The ideological image of the king changed significantly depending upon the political power of the monastic reform movement and the major statesmen responsible for it.

The monastic reform movement traces its initial impulses back to the revival of religion and learning begun by Alfred the Great. Ideologically, concern with intellectual issues of the Continent became more and more important. Kings began to import a great deal of art and scholarship. The most prominent issue raised through this dissemination

\textsuperscript{65}Ibid., 239.
\textsuperscript{66}Ibid., 240.
\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., 225.
of information was the monastic reform movement, begun by Odo of Cluny and Gerard of Brogne. Continental reformers intended to unify monastic practice under one set of directions and regulations, the Rule of St. Benedict. English reformers originally focused on the same principles as Continental reformers, but the central issue became the elimination of lay overlordship over monasteries, or *saecularium prioritas*. At this time, the founder of a monastery retained the right to appoint the abbot from among his kin. The reformers wished to eliminate this control by local lay magnates.

At first, Continental reform had only a small impact on England. However, certain individuals began to take on the monastic profession in the first half of the century. The two most important figures to do so were Dunstan and Æthelwold, two members of the court of Athelstan. Both men established reformed monasteries, and by mid century the reform movement was underway. The reform movement's development owed much to its support by the king. Athelstan, Edmund, and Eadred all aided in securing monasteries that would following the Rule. In particular, Athelstan's use of clergy in the government of Wessex, his importing of foreign scholars, and his construction and reconstruction of monastic houses all enabled the blossoming of the reform process. Yet it was clearly Edgar's efforts that helped the movement to reach its height. Taught by Æthelwold,

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68 John, "King and the Monks," 171.

Edgar became very favorable to the movement after he ascended to the throne. Edgar granted reformed monasteries property and privileges.

The relationship between the king and the monastic reformers was definitely a reciprocal one. Edgar may have felt that he needed the Church to intercede on his behalf and to avoid the kinds of punishment that God had already inflicted upon the Anglo-Saxons, such as the Viking invasions. Also, he may have decided that he needed the Church’s support in winning the loyalty of all the people of the kingdom. However, the leaders of the reform movement also needed a powerful advocate for their cause, and they found that in Edgar. During Edgar’s reign, abbots commonly earned promotions to the office of bishop. These bishops wielded some judicial powers that previously had been retained within the realm of local secular magnates. This new judicial power served to help both the king and the monks, because a local secular magnate, who may have been a threat to the king’s power, gave way to an abbot who wished to expand the king’s central authority. Eventually these bishops became heads of hundreds, the principal Anglo-Saxon unit of local government. The best evidence of how the reform developed in England was the Regularis Concordia. The Prologue and Epilogue are the keys to understanding this work’s political significance. These sections show, that although this

70 John, “King and the Monks,” 159.


72 John, “The King and the Monks,” 175.

73 Dales, Dunstan, 46.
work drew largely from Continental ideas, it is starkly different, especially in the emphasis it places upon the duty of all of the monks to the king.\textsuperscript{74} The \textit{Concordia} stressed the elimination of \textit{saecularium prioritas} upon separate monasteries. Replacing powerful local magnates, the \textit{Concordia} gave power to the king. In effect, the \textit{Concordia} changed every reformed monastery in England into a royally controlled institution. Monastic reformers followed the example set by the Abbey of Fleury, which had a system similar to the \textit{Concordia}. At Fleury, abbatial elections were held as directed by the Rule of St. Benedict, under the control of the king.\textsuperscript{75}

The strength of the reform movement during Edgar’s reign carried over even after his death. The politically chaotic reign of Æthelred II did not significantly affect the prosperity of the Church. In fact, there was more need during the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut to support the Church in return for propagandist support from the Church. Individuals such as Ælfric and Wulfstan produced works such as sermons, homilies, laws, and saints’ lives to elaborate their views of Anglo-Saxon kingship. Monastic houses were more prolific at manuscript production and scholarly activity than they had been in the last century.\textsuperscript{76} Although he was a conqueror, Cnut did not change the face of the Church, wishing instead to use the mechanism that was already in place to help him achieve a greater sense of unity and stability. He sought to preserve the current state of affairs.

\textsuperscript{74}Stenton, \textit{Anglo-Saxon England}, 453.

\textsuperscript{75}John, “The King and the Monks,” 171–77.

\textsuperscript{76}Backhouse et al., \textit{The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art}, 15.
rather than to change. It was in Cnut's best interest to draw connections between his rule and successful or powerful English kings of the past. Cnut emphasized his similarities to Edgar rather than the traits of a foreign conqueror.

Yet, the tenth-century monastic reform movement did not effectively continue its momentum throughout the eleventh century. The reform movement had lost some momentum during Æthelred's reign and effectively ended with Edward the Confessor's accession. The influence of the Church over the secular realm entirely degenerated by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. By 1072, the Church needed a writ of William simply to maintain control over the legislation of their own ecclesiastical affairs. Yet, it is very difficult to explain exactly why the movement died out. It is known that fewer and fewer monks attained bishoprics during Æthelred II's and Cnut's reigns. The answer could be as simple as the devastation caused by the Viking invasions. The Vikings disrupted ecclesiastical organization the same way they disrupted many other English institutions. However, there is almost no written material from the period to construct conclusive studies of any particular monastic institution.

While the monastic reform movement did continue, the most prominent monastic figures of the movement managed to influence the images of kings for their own political

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77 Barlow, *The English Church*, 311.

78 Ibid., 274–76.

79 Cronenwett, "Basileos Anglorum," 130.

80 Barlow, *The English Church*, 314.
reasons. While one of the most significant principles of the reform movement was the elimination of *saecularium prioritas*, this did not mean that the monks completely opposed the aristocracy in all situations. The major spokesmen of monastic reform were all well-connected and some had considerable wealth at their disposal. It is most likely that Dunstan was of noble birth and had connections to the royal court early on. Dunstan’s ecclesiastical and political careers benefitted from his connections to King Athelstan. Dunstan’s uncle, Æthelhelm, anointed Athelstan king in 925 and introduced Dunstan to the king. Dunstan later lived at Athelstan’s court. Æthelwold also was most likely born into a noble family. The family’s noble structure is apparent from the amount of money that Æthelwold is reported to have spent in acquiring lands, privileges, and art work for his monasteries. No one outside of the nobility spent on such an extravagant level during this period. Oswald was born of a Danish family and was kin to two archbishops, Oda of Canterbury and Oskytel of York.

The wealth and social prominence of these monastic statesmen provided them with the opportunity to pursue exceptional educations. Both Dunstan and Æthelwold reaped the benefits of connections with Athelstan and his palace school while they were educated.

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at Glastonbury in their early years.\textsuperscript{84} There was a strong cultural and economic program under way at Athelstan’s court, following Alfred’s provision for a royal school. It drew heavily upon ninth-century Carolingian resources.\textsuperscript{85} These exceptional educational opportunities extended beyond the boundaries of England to include the significant scholarly movements of the Continent. Athelstan may have instilled this international feeling by furthering relations between Continental kingdoms and his own administration. Both Dunstan and Oswald learned about the movements of Continental monastic reform while they studied away from England. Dunstan did so because he was exiled from 956 to 957. He spent his time at St. Peter’s in Ghent that had been reformed only twenty years before. Oswald received his training in the Rule in Fleury, and because of this, his religious activities followed Continental ideological models more closely than either Dunstan’s or Æthelwold’s.\textsuperscript{86} Æthelwold himself expressed a great desire to study on the Continent, but King Eadred prevented him from doing so.\textsuperscript{87} Nevertheless Æthelwold’s later career included a scholarly attention to Continental models.\textsuperscript{88} Their educations were well-rounded ones, including training in all of the arts. Dunstan was skilled at music and art and was particularly interested, it seems, in secular poetry and in the songs and legends


\textsuperscript{85}Dales, \textit{Dunstan}, 18.

\textsuperscript{86}Stenton, \textit{Anglo-Saxon England}, 450; Hurt, \textit{Ælfric}, 20.

\textsuperscript{87}Graham, \textit{“Æthelwold.”}

\textsuperscript{88}Campbell, \textit{“Observations on English Government,”} 54.
of his people. This well-rounded education meant that these men understood the arts and how one might influence art’s meaning.

The wealth and social stature of these monastic statesmen also put them into positions where they had enough political power to influence the definition of kingship. Dunstan, in particular, was a major political force. “He crowned both Edward the Martyr and Ætrewold, attended each of Edward’s recorded councils, and attested every charter which Ætrewold is know to have issued up to the year of his own death.” However, Dunstan was prominent not only for the ideas he expressed at court, but also was especially significant for the ideas he expressed among the clergy in the monastic reform movement.

The monastic reformers were politicians and reformers who influenced the ideas and attitudes of prominent Anglo-Saxons. One of the most effective ways that these men could influence was by educating. Dunstan, perhaps the most influential monastic politician of the tenth century, sought to educate as he reformed. Dunstan reformed Glastonbury Abbey more as a school than as a convent. From the beginning, he sought to influence others’ beliefs. Although he may have intended to live there according to the

89Hurt, Æfric, 16.

90Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 450.


92Stubbs, Memorials of St. Dunstan, 9.
Rule, there is no evidence that he made significant strides toward changing the practice of those in attendance at Glastonbury. Dunstan was a conservative reformer, and he did not try to change things too quickly. He instead guided others toward a common goal through his example. Dunstan’s discipline was milder than that of Oswald and Æthelwold, possibly because he saw himself as more of a statesman than the others. Æthelwold’s appointment to the bishopric of Winchester in 963 marks the true beginning of the monastic reform movement in Anglo-Saxon England. His power was at an all time high once he became the king’s principal counselor. Oswald’s most remarkable achievement was the slow reformation of clerks serving at the cathedral of Worcester into a fully organized monastic community. It was the combination of Æthelwold’s and Oswald’s energy which carried the monastic revival to its influential height. Oswald was persistent and practical in his reform work, while Æthelwold supplied fervor and aggressiveness to the movement.

Æthelwold was the most effective educator among the tenth-century reformers. “Discipline was Æthelwold’s strength and his leadership and rigorism drew many to

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93Dales, Dunstan, 26.
94Hurt, Ælfric, 21.
95Dales, Dunstan, 66.
96Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 450.
97Ibid.
98Hurt, Ælfric, 21.
him. He established high standards of learning in the monasteries that he founded and personally instructed the monks of Abingdon and Winchester in the Liberal Arts. He was a scholar of Latin as well as the vernacular, and taught both Ælfric and Wulfstan the Cantor. These two men, in *vitae* of the saint, indicate that Æthelwold demanded high standards from those who were subordinate to him. Both men even mention a story of a monk who was forced to prove his unquestioning obedience by plunging his arm into a boiling cauldron. However, both men said that Æthelwold was fully supportive of those who followed the commands that he established. He instructed Edgar during the beginning of Eadwig’s reign. This would explain some of Edgar’s enthusiasm and why, upon Edgar’s accession, Æthelwold took the lead in reform.

The heirs to the prominence of Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald in the tenth-century were Ælfric and Wulfstan the Homilist as England entered the eleventh century. These men continued the movement of their predecessors, developing the intellectual skills driving the reform movement. Wulfstan’s and Ælfric’s careers mark the pinnacle of the reform movement’s attempt to teach and influence. Wulfstan and Ælfric saw the preceding century as a Golden Age of monastic scholarship and reform and yet they left more surviving writings than the tenth-century reformers had. Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald had not left a significant body of writing. Wulfstan and Ælfric studied Latin and

99 Dales, *Dunstan*, 42.

100 Stubbs, *Memorials of St. Dunstan*, cix.
had a vast knowledge of the important theological writings. Like Æthelwold before him, Ælfric understood his role as an educator, but Ælfric intended to broaden his audience and influence a greater segment of the population. Ælfric translated lives of saints and parts of the Old Testament in English vernacular. He created educational works like the Grammar to aid students in the study of Latin. Ælfric did have a "concern with addressing issues of contemporary relevance." Ælfric's intentions are evidenced in his actions and writings. He condensed and simplified the material that he used. Clemoes, using one of Ælfric's quotations to characterize the Anglo-Saxon scholar/teacher, says, "One must speak to laymen according to their measure of understanding so that they are not dismayed by the depth of meaning nor bored by the length."

Although the material relating to Ælfric's birth is sparse, it is known that he did not have the same advantage of being born into nobility that the tenth-century figures did. Yet, he did manage to receive some rudimentary Latin training as a child. An event that altered Ælfric's intellectual development came when he entered the monastic school at Winchester about 970, at a time when Winchester was the intellectual center of the reform

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102Lawson, *Cnut*, 220


Ælfric was not as involved in the political workings of government as his predecessors had been. He did not take part in public affairs. He did all of his work inside the confines of the monastery. There is little reference to him in contemporary historical writings. Nevertheless, Ælfric did perceive his role as a teacher who influenced many, including the king. Ælfric was not afraid to discredit the king’s actions in an effort to lead the king back to what Ælfric believed to be the proper course.

Wulfstan was a prominent politician, in the model of Dunstan and Æthelwold. Like these two men, Wulfstan was greatly influenced by the Carolingians, particularly in his quest for a more peaceful society. Political instability had beset England and Wulfstan attempted to rectify some of the problems by steering the monarchical government in directions he felt most prudent. A close advisor to both Æthelred II and Cnut, Wulfstan spent much of his time defining the king’s theoretical position. One of the most significant ways in which Wulfstan was able to promote his idea of the king was through his compilation of the laws for these two kings. These laws contain passages extolling characteristics of an ideal that the king ought to strive toward. Although the law was in theory coming from the king, Wulfstan managed to exert a great deal of influence upon changes to the law, especially if a change might benefit the king’s power.

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106 Ibid., 29.
110 Ibid., 208.
laws of Cnut are particularly important because they were fashioned so that Cnut might strive to be seen as an ideal English king rather than a conqueror. The laws describe some of the characteristics that were seen as ideal at that time. Just as in artistic media such as coins and manuscript illuminations, Cnut’s image was modeled after Edgar. Wulfstan had great respect for Edgar’s laws and he used II and III Edgar as models when he wrote Cnut’s laws. In addition to several laws, Wulfstan wrote the *Institutes of Polity*, a large work that describes the rights and duties of different levels of a Christian society. The initial section was devoted to the heavenly king and was followed by sections on the earthly king.

The monastic reform movement and the monastic statesmen who asserted the principles of that reform greatly affected the definition and position of late Anglo-Saxon kings. While the aim of the monastic reform was clearly ecclesiastical, the effect was political. Nowhere were the political implications more evident than in the *Regularis Concordia*. The *Concordia* unified the country under the leadership of the king. One cannot underestimate how the replacement of *saecularium prioritas* with royal *dominium* augmented and empowered the theoretical position of the king. A tradition that had existed in opposition to the king’s rule now gave way to a bastion of royal authority. This was a local political revolution that enhanced the development of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon monarchical centralization. This revolution set the ideology of late Anglo-Saxon kingship.

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Due in some way to this revolution, the king’s position reached its most powerful point during the reign of Edgar (959–75). The king’s new position of power and prestige was symbolized by Edgar’s extraordinary coronation at Bath in 973 and ensuing ceremony on the Dee near Chester.¹¹²

It was beneficial to the Church to support the position of the king. A strong and effective king could help the monasteries in several ways that a weak king could not. The king would be able to return the support given to him by granting new rights and privileges to the monasteries and by eliminating the controlling interests of local lay magnates. Promoting the power of the king had an even simpler benefit. The king would be in a better position to gather a force to defend the country from attack, thus maintaining the peace. Viking attacks had all but eliminated the contemplative tranquility of Anglo-Saxon monasteries. In theory, a more powerful king might bring about a more stable country, which might bring about a more prosperous monastery. Peace could mean prosperity, and peace an integral part of a Christian community. The responsibility of the king to maintain peace had been a characteristic of kingship ever since pagan times. To the Anglo-Saxons, the best way to establish peace and public order was through the implementation of law. Thus, a good Christian king was a king who established, held, and protected law.

As the king began to gain strength, he began to expand his area of activity throughout Britain. This broadening of the king’s efforts may have led to a slight deterioration of the influence of the monastic reformers upon the royal affairs during the

reign of Æthelred II. The heart of the reform movement was really in the South. The increase in the king’s area of activities may have necessitated different tactics such as awarding grants based on political connection.\textsuperscript{113}

Cnut greatly influenced how monastic reformers worked with the king to develop the image of the king. Rather than establish his own government in England, Cnut advanced the power and prestige of the monarchical government that already existed. This power and prestige allowed him to take control of the country effectively.\textsuperscript{114} Cnut’s circumstances allowed him to become a kind of test case for royal imagery. He wished to project himself as part of the royal dynasty rather than as a foreign invader. To project this image, Cnut commissioned monastic reformers. While Cnut was able to effect the ideas expressed, monastic reformers also influenced the image produced.

One monastic reformer was able to greatly influence the ideology of late Anglo-Saxon kingship. Wulfstan, during Cnut’s reign, wrote the \textit{Institutes of Polity} describing a hierarchical relationship by which power, and thus prosperity, transferred from Christ to the king and then to the people.\textsuperscript{115} Clearly influenced by Germanic tradition, Wulfstan stated that in order to be a prosperous king and have a prosperous country, one ought to be the protector and shepherd of the Church and its people; enact laws and vanquish evil.

\textsuperscript{113}Stafford, “Church & Society,” 29.

\textsuperscript{114}Loyn, \textit{The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England}, 81.

doers to maintain peace; and support the righteous. There are fifteen characteristics that are expounded for an ideal king. Eight characteristics are in support of lawful kingship. They are: truth (veritas), patience (patientia), liberality (largitas), good counsel (persuasibilitas), correction of the bad (correctio malorum), promotion of the good (exaltatio bonorum), moderation (levis tributi), and righteousness (equitas iudicii).116 Seven of the attributes are said to characterize a righteous king. They are: awe of God, cherishment of righteousness, humbleness before God, suppression of evil, charitability to the poor, protection and advancement of the Church, and equal justice for all. Another image that Wulfstan established in his writing was a throne supported by three pillars. These three pillars represented three social groups, the oratores, laboratores, and bellatores. The king's power was not absolute because it depended upon those groups. Similarly, BL Ms Cotton Tiberius A. III, fol. 2v depicts a throne with three sections representing the groups important to the king and his political power. Wulfstan also expressed the idea that kings should identify themselves with the suffering Christ.117

By the eleventh century, the kings of England had a new understanding of the importance of political maneuverings. Now it was just as, if not more, important to rule with one's mind as to rule by one's sword. Edward the Confessor understood well how


117Lawson, Cnut, 123, 134.
to manipulate those in power. Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England was now a powerful office, which supported the incumbent, whoever that might be. The major nobles worked more often together for a unified purpose under the direction of the king. Often most or all of the nobles witnessed charters together as a group. By bringing all nobles together the king increased the power of the monarchical government and at the same time decreased the power of separate local magnates and nobles. The system helped rulers like Edward who avoided pomp.

The ideals expressed through images of kings changed very little after the Norman Conquest. Instead William was able to use this authority of, and respect for, the king to strengthen his hold on the country better than the Norman idea of aristocratic freedom.

The chapter presented above has discussed the historical trends and political circumstances of kingship and monasticism in late Anglo-Saxon England. Political realities caused Anglo-Saxon kingship to develop differently than its Continental contemporaries. However, England did rise to assume the role of heir to the Carolingian state. Carolingian ideals influence Anglo-Saxon thinking about kingship and monasticism. The Continental model of monasticism influenced the monastic reform movement in England. The movement was aided by Anglo-Saxon kings. In turn, monastic reformers worked to

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118 Barlow, The English Church, 50.
119 Ibid., 311.
120 Ibid., 30.
support the kings. Particular figures involved in the monastic reform movement, such as Dunstan, Æthelwold, Oswald, Ælfric, and Wulfstan were also important political figures involved in the activities of the kings. The process of cooperation between monastic statesmen and the kings reached a pinnacle during the reign of Cnut. Cnut enlisted monastic reformers to create a complete and effective image of Cnut as king.
MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

The previous chapter discussed how the monastic reformation influenced the image of late Anglo-Saxon kingship. This chapter will discuss the first art form in which images of late Anglo-Saxon kings are shown. That art form is manuscript illumination. Ecclesiastical figures played a direct role in the creation of illuminated manuscripts, providing a forum to express ideas about Anglo-Saxon kingship.

While there are not a great deal of Anglo-Saxon manuscript images of actual rulers, the examples that do exist are very significant. Most of the Anglo-Saxon examples are frontispieces to their particular manuscript. The frontispiece of an Anglo-Saxon manuscript served as a pictorial preface to the text and set the stage for what was to be understood from the upcoming work. In an age where literacy was not an assumed trait, the task of the frontispiece was much more significant. Although it may have been simply reiterating the ideas expressed within the manuscript, the frontispiece was often the vehicle that expressed complex ideological concepts not necessarily in text.

This thesis begins the study of late Anglo-Saxon manuscript illuminations with images produced during Athelstan’s reign (924–39). It is during Athelstan’s reign that close relations between England and Germany assured that Continental monastic reform

movements were commonly known in England. Athelstan even secured the marriage of his half-sister to Otto I of Germany. From this point on there was a new reciprocal relationship in regard to cultural interchange between England and the Continent. The Anglo-Saxons had always been affected by Continental influence. But manuscript images of kings produced during Athelstan’s reign show that English artists were synthesizing these Continental influences with native tradition into a distinctive English style that was transmitted back to the Continent.

The earliest surviving example of a manuscript image of a late Anglo-Saxon king is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183, fol. 1r. (Figure 1) It is the frontispiece to a tenth-century copy of Bede’s _Life of St. Cuthbert_. The illumination contains two standing figures that fill most of the picture space. These figures, one of King Athelstan, the other of St. Cuthbert, are facing one another in front of an ecclesiastical building. In the center of the illumination, the king is shown standing with upper body leaning forward while reading an opened book that he appears to be offering to the saint. Athelstan is shown wearing a simple circlet crown with three prongs that are tipped in single pellets. He is wearing a short tunic with a shoulder clasp worn on his left shoulder and he holds the book with both hands.

This work was produced some time between 934 and 939. Athelstan promised


it as a gift in 934, but the manuscript was not delivered until some time thereafter.\textsuperscript{125} It is the earliest surviving presentation miniature native to England. There is a definite influence from Carolingian models. The depiction has stylistic connections with late Carolingian works such as the San Paolo Bible.\textsuperscript{126} However, it does seem as if a new

\textsuperscript{125}Cronenwett, "\textit{Basileos Anglorum}," 170.

\textsuperscript{126}Elżbieta Temple, \textit{Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900–1066} (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), 11.
English style has begun to develop at this point. The richness of the imagery was due to the ability of late Anglo-Saxon artists to synthesize classical models with their own native tradition. There are characteristics that make the frontispiece to CCCC MS 183 particularly Anglo-Saxon. The border around the image is of the foliage type, yet very animated and organic. The leaves and stems twist and turn into birds and lions.\textsuperscript{127} The figural style is very similar to the images of the enthroned Christ in the Athelstan Psalter, BL MS Cotton Galba A. xviii, fols. 2v and 21r. The body sizes, postures, and clothing representations are all similar in both works. The bodies are stocky with the heads and hands being larger than normal. The CCCC MS 183 image is considered a precursor of the Winchester style that would develop fully in the New Minster Charter of Edgar.\textsuperscript{128}

Athelstan influenced the creation of this image. He commissioned one of his own scribal artists, who produced the manuscript in Athelstan’s company, in southern England, probably at Winchester.\textsuperscript{129} The ideological techniques are intensifying, emphasizing Athelstan’s good qualities to the intended audience of monks. The depiction is very favorable to the king displaying the ideological strategy of charismatic representation. Athelstan was in a position to deserve such praise. By this time he had extended his supremacy outside Wessex to Mercia and Northumbria. He was king of England. Yet the ecclesiastical figures who helped shape this image felt it was important to emphasize how

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\textsuperscript{127}See page 48.
\textsuperscript{128}Backhouse et al., \textit{Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art}, 27.
\textsuperscript{129}Budny, \textit{Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College}, 163; Temple, \textit{Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts}, 38.
\end{flushright}
important they were to the king’s position. The saint raises his hand as a symbol of approval. Athelstan depended upon the Northumbrian church to help secure his position in the north. Legitimation depended upon the Church. Thus Athelstan is presenting a book to an ecclesiastical figure. The image attempts to unify the king and the Church as a coherent group. This is also an example of the technique of association. However, Athelstan is not simply presenting the book but reading from it. He is the medium that transfers knowledge between the divine world and the ecclesiastical realm. Athelstan is demonstrating both his personal devotion, and also his subservience to the saint.  

"The depicted act of reading, which stresses the king’s literacy, underlines Athelstan’s suitability as a ruler, for he is shown to be in accordance with his grandfather King Alfred’s emphasis on learning as a precondition of authority. In return for this act of humility, devotion and learning Athelstan receives the saint’s blessing."  

There is a late Anglo-Saxon image of Athelstan that does not survive to the present day. It is BL MS Otho B. ix. This book was one of the many valuable items in the Cotton collection that fire destroyed in 1731. This work was a Gospel book that Athelstan had promised, along with CCCC MS 183, when he visited St. Cuthbert’s shrine in 934. Fortunately there is an account of this work and the folio containing an

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130 Gameson, *Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 256.

131 Ibid.

132 Cronenwett, “*Basileos Anglorum,*” 170.
illustration of Athelstan that was written by Humphrey Wanley in 1705.133 According to Wanley’s account, the image illustrated the king crowned with a diadem and holding a scepter. He was kneeling before the enthroned St. Cuthbert. This work’s audience would have been similar to that of CCCC MS 183 and because the two manuscripts were produced about the same time and both under Athelstan’s patronage, one may assume that the ideologies presented were very similar. The diadem and scepter legitimized the power of the king, yet the king is again seeking legitimation from the Church. The proximity of the saint and the king represent association.

The second surviving manuscript image of a late Anglo-Saxon king is BL MS Cotton Vespasian A. viii, fol. 2v. (Figure 2) This image is a frontispiece to a charter of Edgar re-founding New Minster Abbey, Winchester. This illumination contains the images of eight figures within a large acanthus foliage border. Christ’s image occupies the top center of the picture space, inside a mandorla. Flanked on both sides of Christ are a group of four diademed angels. Below, at the bottom of the picture space, is an image of King Edgar flanked by the Virgin Mary on his left and St. Peter on his right. Edgar is shown in an unusual position: he is prostrate on the ground, submitting himself up to Christ above reminiscent of Ottonian manuscripts.134 Edgar, bearded, is wearing a lily,


or trefoil, crown. The crown, as a symbol, helped legitimize his reign. He is holding the charter in his left hand. His right hand is raised. King Edgar appears to be offering the charter to Christ above. The Virgin Mary is holding a palm in her right hand and a cross in her left and St. Peter, tonsured, is carrying a key in his right hand, and a book in his left.

This charter is unlike any other of its time. It is unusual that a charter such as this one would have contained such a frontispiece. This testifies to the importance of visual...
archetypes in late Anglo-Saxon culture. There is much else about the work that makes it unusual. Several factors might cause one to believe that this document was actually a liturgical document. The charter is much more luxurious than a typical charter. It is more like a liturgical document whose purpose was to be displayed in the church. The entire work is divided up into sections which begin with capitals. It covers subjects not normal for charters, such as the Creation, the Fall, and the Redemption. The text discusses Edgar expelling the wicked canons and replacing them with Benedictine monks. There is also a correlation drawn in the text of the charter between the position of the king and that of Benedict. “On the one hand, the king assumes the role of Christ the good shepherd who, according to John 10:11-12, defends the flock with his life in contrast to the hireling who deserts when the wolf approaches. On the other hand, the king assumes the role of the Christ-like abbot who is bound by the Rule’s commands, which specifically admonish the Abbot to imitate the good shepherd.”

The text of the charter may have been compiled by Æthelwold because, aside from Edgar’s attestation, Æthelwold’s is the longest and most elaborate. Edgar has a direct and special relationship with God, yet remains subordinate to Him as the king should be.

135 Gameson, Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church, 7.


The image establishes a visual hierarchy by the scale and placement of the figures. The king is in the center, directly beneath Christ, while the saints are much smaller and off to the edge of the image.\textsuperscript{139} Æthelwold's role in the creation of this work is significant. The imagery on the frontispiece represented how Æthelwold perceived the king's image.

The symbolism expressed in the text of the charter is important, because it affects the ideological image one perceives of the frontispiece image of the king. Most obvious of all symbols, the king is on the frontispiece in a scene usually reserved for religious figures. This demonstrates the association technique. The potential audience for a charter was more varied than the previous two manuscripts. Association between the king and Christ would have affected many audiences. The ideology is intensifying, because the symbols highlight Edgar's good characteristics. This imagery is very much related to the ideas of intercession and Last Judgment. In most examples of this artistic motif the saints, in this case Mary and Peter, normally intercede with God on behalf of a layman. The saints served as intermediaries between man and God. In the case of the New Minster Charter Edgar intercedes with Christ on behalf of man. Edgar is the figure who is directly below Christ and is the one who is facing Him. This technique is representation. Edgar's position may symbolize that he is interceding on behalf of the English Church. He would have done this by setting up and protecting the monasteries, an act that very much empowers the position of the king by comparing him to Christ, the King of kings. Edgar does what he can to protect the Church in England just as Christ protected heaven by

\textsuperscript{139}Deshman, "Benedictus monarcha et monachus," 224.
A third surviving manuscript image of a late Anglo-Saxon king is BL MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii, fol. 2v. (Figure 3) This image is from a mid-eleventh-century Christ Church, Canterbury copy of the Regularis Concordia, the monastic manual drawn up in Edgar’s reign. Three figures are seated on a large throne, or bench, sectionalized into three parts. The center figure is King Edgar. Seated and facing forward, similar to an “Enthroned in Majesty” pose, Edgar is shown bearded, wearing an ornate crown and a long full-length tunic. He is flanked on both sides by men wearing bishops’ vestments. The two figures most likely represent Dunstan, the figure wearing the archiepiscopal pallium, and Æthelwold. Both men were prominent at Edgar’s court as well as in the monastic reform movement. A long scroll drapes in front of all three of these main figures, with each supporting it by their hands. In the area below these figures is a tonsured monk kneeling.

The frontispiece symbolizes the image of authority, order, and unity. Several ideological strategies are noticeable, including unity, association, legitimation, and unification. Edgar, Dunstan, and Æthelwold are shown as a Trinity of God’s agents on earth. “They can share the same throne because all the worldly and spiritual powers they exercise derive from and reflect the same single heavenly source, Christ, the model of

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140Ibid., 225.

both kings and bishops."\textsuperscript{142} Although the primary purpose of this illustration may have been to show endorsement of the text, it also illustrated the benefits of the dual authority of the Church and State.\textsuperscript{143} Just as the three persons of the Trinity are meant to rule

\textsuperscript{142}Deshman, "Benedictus monarcha et monachus," 210.

\textsuperscript{143}Gameson, \textit{Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church}, 24.
The difficulty in separating the offices of Church and State in government have already been discussed above. In this period the two had joined forces for mutual protection and benefit. One could draw the conclusion that the monks were trying to relegate the king’s position to theirs or that they were trying to elevate the king’s position by adding their support. The latter seems more technically logical. The image is only employing techniques that intensify the king’s good qualities.

Edgar is not receiving the copy of the text from the two Church figures, but the one conveying these precepts to the monks. The imagery depicts the king similar to an abbot. Just as in the New Minster Charter, this image from the Regularis Concordia draws a correlation between Edgar and Benedict. Another image within this manuscript, that of Benedict defining his rule (fol. 117v) further supports the symbolic message. Benedict is enthroned in a similar fashion to Edgar and wearing a diadem, the Roman symbol of rulership. In the same respect Edgar’s clothing is unusual for a king and is much more similar to the clothing of Benedict. There is an assimilation of the position of king and abbot.

While the Regularis Concordia, most likely created by Æthelwold, was aimed at a monastic audience, the audience for the ideology expressed here may have included the

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144 Deshman, “Benedictus monarcha et monachus,” 207.
145 Ibid., 206.
146 Ibid.
king. This image establishes the same hierarchical system of governing and administering the “flock” that is evident inside the body of the text itself. According to the Regularis Concordia, the king rules as Christ, Abbot of abbots, and appoints certain other abbots to rule over the rest of the flock in his place.\textsuperscript{147} Stressing such a system was important to the monks, but monastic reformers would have wanted to stress such ideas to the king himself.

There is also a surviving manuscript depiction of the Danish King Cnut. It is BL MS Stowe 944, fol. 6r. (Figure 4) This image is another frontispiece, this time of the New Minster Register, produced around 1031. This illumination contains the images of seven figures within a plain border. The typical image of Christ in Majesty occupies the top center of the scene. Christ is flanked on his left by the Virgin Mary and St. Peter on his right. Mary holds a book in her right hand while the tonsured Peter holds keys in his left hand. The images of King Cnut and Queen Emma are of primary importance, and they are illustrated at the bottom of the picture presenting an altar cross to New Minster Abbey, Winchester. Cnut is bearded and standing upright, holding a very large altar cross in his right hand and a sword in his left hand. Just above Cnut, and just below Peter, is an angel who is pointing up toward Christ with his right hand and with his left hand is bestowing a lily or fleur-de-lys crown, with an arched top, upon Cnut’s head. Cnut is identified by the words CNVT REX written to either side of his head. Across from Cnut, Emma is wearing the same vestments as the Virgin. Emma’s right hand is extended

\textsuperscript{147}Ibid., 208.
toward the cross, but not touching it. Above her, and just below Mary, an angel is placing a veil upon Emma’s head. She is identified by the words ALFGYFV REGINA around her head, Ælfgifu being the name Emma had used officially since she had come

Figure 4. British Library MS Stowe 944, fol. 6r.
to England at the beginning of the eleventh century. The name is present in English documents Ælfgifu signs, and also in documents that make reference to her. It is likely that this name change occurred to connect her more with the English royal family. There were other women named Ælfgifu in the history of English royalty, including the wife of Edmund, Æthelred II’s grandmother. The figural drawing of the Stowe 944 image is vivid and animated. The long, firm strokes used in the composition of the folds of the clothing are in stark contrast to the uneasy zigzags of the hemlines. There is a spontaneous unplanned look to the gestures of Cnut and Emma.

Since this frontispiece was the only pictorial decoration of the whole book, the artist had to give the basic subject matter of the book. Cnut and Emma are seeking a direct relationship with God. The image depicts Cnut as the ideal English king. Rather than extolling his Danish characteristics and presenting his image as a conqueror, he is

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153 Gameson, *Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 21–22.

154 Ibid., 263.
instead extolling the characteristics that equate him with the most important English kings, like Edgar. Rather than fostering the artistic traditions of his homeland, he served instead as a patron to English art just as Edgar had. Cnut’s image here was meant to be an imitation of Edgar’s in the New Minster Charter. Cnut was asserting that he was the descendant and recipient of Edgar’s position as benefactor and protagonist of monastic reform.

The differences between the Stow image Edgar’s charter represent important ideological statements. The association of Cnut to Christ is much weaker than Edgar’s association. However, it is very important that the queen is pictured in the Stow image. Both the power of the king and queen are legitimized. The queen played an important role in legitimizing Cnut’s rule. She provided a clear connection to the last English king.

The manuscripts of Edgar’s and Cnut’s donation images had different purposes. Edgar’s image is on purple-dyed material comparable to Frankish or Ottonian portraits of rulers. Cnut’s image is a line drawing that reflects the monastic ideals of the creator and audience.

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155Ibid., 258.

156Gameson, Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church, 22; and Jan Gerchow, “Prayers for Cnut: The Liturgical Commemoration of a Conqueror,” in England in the Eleventh Century, Carola Hicks, ed. (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), 234–35.


158Ibid., 234.
Besides a simple emphasis upon his sameness with former kings, Cnut goes further. The artist begins to emphasize Cnut’s imperial qualities, similar to those of his Ottonian contemporaries. It may be significant that the lily or fleur-de-lys crown placed upon Cnut’s head seems to have an arched handle on the top. There are striking resemblances to the same feature in the Ottonian imperial crown. Cnut was the first Anglo-Saxon king to have seen this crown when he attended the coronation of Conrad II in 1027. Cnut’s “Quatrefoil” coin type (c. 1017–23) contains the image of the lily crown for the first time, but there is no arched handle. Cnut would have seen the arched crown after the time that this coin type had circulated. The crown’s presence in this work seems to be a deliberate reference to the imperial crown. Cnut viewed his kingship as imperial, over three realms.\(^{159}\)


\(^{160}\) Gerchow, “Prayers for Cnut,” 228.
Minster frontispiece therefore shows at least three iconographic elements which explicitly recall Ottonian models: the picture of the royal couple, the imperial crown, and the donation of the cross.\footnote{Ibid., 230.}

There is one last surviving manuscript image of a late Anglo-Saxon king that deserves some discussion, BL Additional MS 33241, fol. 1\textsuperscript{v}. (Figure 6) The image is the frontispiece to an eleventh-century copy of the *Encomium Emmae*, an account of the life

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure6.png}
\caption{B. L. Additional MS 33241. fol. 1\textsuperscript{v}.}
\end{figure}
frontispiece to an eleventh-century copy of the *Encomium Emmae*, an account of the life of Emma, queen to both Æthelred II and Cnut. A monk of St. Omer wrote the text for Emma around the time of the succession of her son Harthacnut in 1040. The illumination contains the images of four figures that stand within an archway with an opened curtain or tapestry. Two of the figures represent kings of late Anglo-Saxon England at young ages before their ascension to the throne. Yet the future kings are not the primary figures of the scene. Emma is seated in an “Enthroned in Majesty” pose on a throne that has an architectural form but no back or arms. “This is one of the earliest representations of a seated, secular royal figure.” The figural style instead closely represents depictions of the Virgin Mary. She is wearing a full-length tunic and either a closed crown or a crown that has a triangular arch on the top. The crown is jeweled and appears to have foliage leaves hanging on either side. Emma is accepting an opened book from a tonsured monk who is kneeling to her right. Also to her right are the figures of Harthacnut and Edward, her sons. Both men are standing and leaning toward Emma. They are visible only from the waist up because of their positions behind the monk. Both men wear long tunics similar to Emma’s. Harthacnut is wearing a crown similar to Emma’s, yet smaller and without foliage. He is holding the other end of the book with his right hand. Edward is wearing what appears to be either a large jeweled diadem or circlet crown.

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The overall purpose of the text was one of political propaganda. It attempted to augment Emma’s, as well as her son’s, political power by accentuating Cnut’s and Emma’s characteristics as good Christian rulers.\textsuperscript{164} This work shows the great political power that Emma exerted and also the need for the young king to align himself to her so that he might increase his political prestige and legitimize his rule.\textsuperscript{165}

There are clear connections between the crowns of Emma and Harthacnut shown here and the crowns worn by Cnut, in BL MS Stowe 944, fol. 6\textsuperscript{f}, and Edward the Confessor, in his “Bust Facing/Small Cross” and “Pyramids” type coins. Cnut and Edward the Confessor were asserting new levels of power for their rule. These kings wished to establish a ruling image similar to that of the Ottonian emperors. (see p.97 and p.98) By including the same lily crown, Emma asserted the same imperial prestige for her regency and the rulership of her sons.

While the subject of this image seems to be drastically different from other manuscript images of late Anglo-Saxon kings, the ideological strategies are similar. The image uses intensifying ideological strategies. Primarily, the imagery legitimizes Emma’s political power. The imagery also draws association with several ideals, including: the Virgin Mary, the imperial rule of the Ottonians, and the previous Anglo-Saxon kings.

What are some of the characteristics that all of these images of actual late Anglo-Saxon kings in manuscript illuminations have in common? Most significantly, all of these illuminations present powerful images of the rulers, each image portraying the king

\textsuperscript{164}Lawson, \textit{Cnut}, 55.

\textsuperscript{165}Stafford, \textit{Queen Emma and Queen Edith}, 4.
favorably. The persuasive ideas expressed in all of the illuminated manuscript examples presented used intensifying strategies. Each image legitimizd the power and prestige of the king. While some images employed different ideological techniques, each image relied on the technique of association to persuade audiences comprised mostly of clergy. All of the images present the king as spiritual, connected to God in a special way that also connects him with the men of monastic orders. Prominent monastic statesmen not only influenced the character of the imagery, but also appear in some of the images. This influence was possible because reforming monks were active advisors at the royal courts. Both the king’s realm and the heart of the reform movement were centered at Winchester. Another reason that these monks were able to influence the imagery was because they resided at the institutions most heavily financed by the king for artistic expression. One can see in the imagery a definite attempt by the monks to establish an ordered hierarchy of rule that was favorable to the Church. All of these images assert religious and Christological superiority over temporal authority. It was only through God and His Church that the king acquired power to rule the kingdom. Thus, the king needed to emphasize his relationship with God in order to gain credibility and/or power. In the next chapter, the king will gain credibility and power by taking control of production of coins. The king will then be able to assert a powerful image of himself.

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166 Gameson, *Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 25.

COINS

The previous chapter discussed images of late Anglo-Saxon kings in illuminated manuscripts. Only a few examples exist, and those that do have similar ideological characteristics. All used intensifying strategies of association and legitimation to reach the target audience of church figures. While there are very few manuscript examples to study, there is no question that there is ample material to study in the field of coinage, or numismatics. In addition, coin-imagery has the potential to influence the ideology of a much greater audience than manuscript illumination. However, the ideological implications are similar for coins and manuscripts.

The hundred years of Anglo-Saxon numismatic evidence between Edgar’s reform and the Norman Conquest has been called “one of the showpieces of medieval numismatics,” for its unusual detail and richness.\(^{168}\) During this period, the Anglo-Saxons were able to centralize and manage effectively a system of coinage under the direction of the king better than any other government of the time. The systematic regulation of coinage by the Anglo-Saxons testifies to the strength of the kings, as well as to an ability to propagate vigorously an ideal image of the king. It was the centralization of coin die-cutting that was so important. Once the king had control over the imagery stamped on the coin, he could effectively express a positive image of himself and his office. It seems

that late Anglo-Saxon kings understood how to express this image. From the time when
die production was centralized, most Anglo-Saxon coins presented images of the kings
under whom they were issued. These portraits of kings, which appeared on the obverse
side, had ideological significance.\(^{169}\) Kings for some time had used the imagery on coins
as vehicles of indoctrination. Offa may have been the first. Because of a technological
advance in coin minting, Offa had a larger surface upon which imagery could be placed.
Offa used this increased surface area to display an image of himself.\(^{170}\) However, Offa did
not have the capacity to control centrally the imagery on coins throughout the country.
For a king to take full advantage of coinage as an ideological tool, he must centralize the
production of coin dies. Only then could the king have complete ideological control.

From the beginning, Anglo-Saxon coinage drew its prototypes from third- and
fourth-century Roman imperial coins. The prototypes contained portraits of the emperors.
Engravers chose to emulate these Roman examples rather than simply produce derivative
copies of the most common Merovingian coins.\(^{171}\) Roman models were very significant
to the English psyche. These models were used by many early medieval European

\(^{169}\)Reginald Hugh Michael Dolley, "Coin-Portraits of Some English Kings and
Queens," Paper presented at the Ordinary Meeting of the Royal Numismatic Society, 18

\(^{170}\)Reginald Hugh Michael Dolley, "The Coins," in *The Archaeology of Anglo-
Saxon England*, David McKenzie Wilson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1976), 353.

\(^{171}\)J. P. C. Kent, "From Roman Britain to Saxon England," in *Anglo-Saxon
Coinage: Studies Presented to F. M. Stenton on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday*, 17
powers. Yet the Anglo-Saxons had remained much more faithful to the Roman prototypes than the rest of European coinage, which was influenced more by Arabic, Byzantine, Italian, and Frankish prototypes. "The characteristic late Roman diademed and draped bust remained a direct source of inspiration for a large majority of the royal heads of the late Anglo-Saxon series."172 (Figure 7) Anglo-Saxons did not retain the characteristics of Roman prototypes simply because Roman models were the only to survive. The Anglo-Saxons had seen other models, but they chose to follow Roman ones.

![Roman Coin Prototype](image)

Figure 7. Roman Coin Prototype.

The prestige that Anglo-Saxon England equated with Roman imperial authority was greater than in almost any other area in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Anglo-Saxons actively employed the use of images representing Roman regalia, most prominently headgear, as part of their reverence and regard for Roman imperial tradition. The inclusion of crowns and diadems in these images increased the royal legitimacy of the figure depicted upon the coin. The Roman emperors had established incredibly powerful positions over both the Church and the State. The attributes of royal authority that they

172Ibid., 13.
adopted reflected the emperor's status as vice-regent of Christ on Earth and equal of the Apostles. The emperor served as both defender of orthodoxy and commander-in-chief of the armies of the Empire. It was these attributes of power that the Anglo-Saxons wished to emulate in the image of their kings. The two most prominent articles of headgear depicted upon late Anglo-Saxon coins were the diadem and the stemma crown. The use of the diadem to denote dates back to the Persians in the sixth century B.C. During the reign of Diocletian, the diadem took on the appearance of a broad fillet that was tied at the back of the head so that tails hung down slightly. The stemma was a Roman circlet crown that had pendants, called *casaseistae*, hanging from the sides. These were strings of pearls or precious stones that hung from the circlet over the ears. This feature made a stemma into an imperial crown. At the same time, the Anglo-Saxons tended to avoid the use of the "Radiate Helmet" type coin because the helmet had pagan connotations. The radiate helmet conjured notions of the pagan god Phoebus Apollo, with his name signifying the radiate nature of the sun.

The laws of Æthelred II first present a legal declaration that there shall be one coinage throughout the king's realm. Æthelred was also one of the rulers under whom


174 Ibid., 2.

175 Ibid., 5.

176 Ibid., 8.

177 Dolley, "Coin-Portraits," vi.

portrait coins were produced. Most portraits show a crowned king, rather than a diademed one. There are very few differences between the entire series of coins that were issued in the reigns of Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig, and Edgar (up to the 973 reform). The rare portrait coins usually were produced only in East Anglia. In fact, the coinage of the minority periods of Edward the Martyr and Æthelred II attest to a relaxation of royal authority, especially in the area of coinage. The production of dies began to become more decentralized. This pattern continued until Edgar’s reform of 973.

The initial impulses toward the creation of images on coins that influenced the ideological image of the king began before the late Anglo-Saxon kings had assumed control over the production of coin-dies. Two coin types were produced during the period of Edgar’s reign prior to the 973 reform. These two types are the “Bust Crowned” and the “London Monogram” types.

The “Bust Crowned” type (959–c. 972/3) contains a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the right on the obverse side. (Figure 8) The king is shown with spiky hair wearing a simple three-pronged crown with each prong tipped with a pellet. The crown appears to have two diadem tails. The facial features are very sharp yet more naturalistic in the areas of the chin, jaw, and ear than any example since Æthelstan’s “Bust Diademed/Two-Line” coin that this may have been modeled after. There is an effective representa-

179Ibid., 36.

180Ibid.

tion of the drapery; less linear and more flowing than previous bust examples. EADGAR
REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a small cross patée.¹⁸²

The image of the circlet crown serves to legitimize Edgar’s rule.

The “London Monogram” type contains a portrait view of the king’s bust facing
to the right. (Figure 9) The king is shown with spiky hair wearing a diadem with tails. No

drapery is visible. EADGAR RE is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is the Monogram of London.\footnote{Ibid., 150 and Plate 12.} This coin type depicts a diadem, the second type of headgear most common to the images on coins of the late Anglo-Saxon kings.

In the period shortly after these two coins began circulating, the law of Edgar signaled the most significant change in Anglo-Saxon coinage, the centralization of coin die-production. Law III Edgar 8 states that there is to be one coinage used throughout the king’s realm.\footnote{Robertson, \textit{Laws of the Kings of England}, 28–29.} This law suggested that the government ought to recall coinage from systematic circulation in order to reissue new works.\footnote{Reginald Hugh Michael Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, “The Reform of the English Coinage under Eadgar,” in \textit{Anglo-Saxon Coinage}, 156.} Why was coinage reformed? It may be that the king wished to assure that the quality of coins minted and circulated remain at a high level. The standards may have lowered over the years and the king could not effectively regulate a decentralized system. There are definite political reasons for the reformation. If the king was able to control the circulation of coins, he would be able to control the country’s economic climate more effectively. In addition, the king could strategically influence the ideological image of himself presented on the coins.\footnote{Loyn, “Numismatics and the Medieval Historian,” 31.} For the first time the king was in control of that imagery. As the understanding of this power developed, the number of crowned portrait coins that were issued was increased.\footnote{North, \textit{English Hammered Coinage}, 36.}
The first such coin was Edgar's “Reform Portrait” type (972/3–75). This coin contained a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 10) The king is wearing a diadem with prominent diadem tails. The features are very weakly fashioned except for the heavy lines of the back of the neck and the nose. EADGAR REX ANGLOR is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is small cross pattee.\footnote{Ibid., 149–50 and Plate 12.} This coin establishes the standard image for many successive coin types. The imagery is intensifying, legitimizing Edgar's rule by associating it with Roman rule.

![Figure 10. “Reform Portrait” Type.](image)

The coinage of Edward the Martyr continued where that of Edgar left off. Edward produced only one coin type during his short reign. The “Small Cross” type (975–78) contains a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 11) The king is wearing a diadem with tails. This imagery is very similar to Edgar’s “Reform Portrait” type. Written on the border of the obverse is EDWEARD REX. On the reverse is a small cross pattee.\footnote{Ibid., 157–58 and Plate 12.} This coin, by copying the previous issue, associates with the
traits of the previous king. It was vital for Edward the Martyr’s coins to follow the design of his father, Edgar. Edward was a minor and his early reign showed all the aspects of contested succession. It was necessary to maintain the same appearance of peaceful strength that Edgar had sustained. Outsiders might again consider England as easy quarry for raids. A small, politically powerful group led by Dunstan and Oswald backed Edward and wished to establish an aura of strength and legitimacy. The disputed succession also lead to a struggle between national and local powers. Monastic reformers supported a continued relationship with a powerful king, because powerful local lords were competing for secular control over monasteries. Also, because the group that backed Edward was prominent in the monastic reform movement, the group would have wished to associate

Edward with a king who aided the reform movement like Edgar.

Although some scholars remember Æthelred II as an ineffective king, his development of coin imagery is very significant. He managed to overcome an inauspici-

ocious beginning to produce nine different coin types that contained ruler images. Because Æthelred was a minor until about 984, at least the first two coin types produced during Æthelred’s reign would have been influenced by his mother and Bishop Æthelwold, the queen’s main clerical associate. The two coins designed during this period associate Æthelred with Edgar and enhance Æthelred’s character as a good Christian king. The first type was the “First Small Cross” type (978–c. 979). (Figure 12) It contained a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the left. The king is shown wearing a diadem with tails. Attached to the shoulder clasp are three pellets that are connected by curved lines. ÆTHELRED REX ANGLOR is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a small cross pattee. Again, this imagery mirrors Edgar’s “Reform Portrait” coin, claiming the characteristics of Edgar.

The “First Hand” type (c. 979–85) has a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the right. The king is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails. The shoulder clasp is

\[\text{Figure 12. “First Small Cross” Type.}\]

\[^{191}\text{Ibid., 16–17.}\]

\[^{192}\text{North, English Hammered Coinage, 158 and Plate 12.}\]
now located on the shoulder opposite the face and no longer has the pellets attached. 
ÆTHELRED REX AN is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is the image of the Hand of God flanked by the letters A (Alpha) and ω (Omega) on each side. The letters represent the earthly and divine kings. Modern scholars have asserted that the hand on this coin type, when considered with Æthelred’s “Agnus Dei” coin type, together represented the three symbols of the Trinity. This subject was represented in a greater spectrum of Anglo-Saxon works than in the rest of Europe at the time. There was a movement in England during this period concerning the private devotion to the Hours of the Trinity. The Trinity imagery depicted in Æthelred’s coins may have as a source the Trinity imagery on the gables of Arnulf’s ciborium in Munich. Such influence is difficult to prove, but if the Arnulf ciborium is a model for this imagery, then Æthelwold and the queen were asserting some level of power approaching that which the Ottonians enjoyed. Thoma mentions that the Ottonian emperors would have possessed the ciborium up to the time of Henry II. There were definite reasons for including the Hand of Providence on Æthelred’s coins. Æthelred needed to emphasize that Edward the Martyr’s death was God’s will and deflect any responsibility that might

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193Ibid.

194Wormald, “Late Anglo-Saxon Art,” 106.

195Ibid., 107.

be levied again him. The religious subject matter of this coin results from the people who influenced its production. Also, the images uses the strategy is one of diminishing ideology by obscuring Æthelred’s role in murder through dissimulation and rationalization.

The "Second Hand" type (c. 985–991) has a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the right. (Figure 13) The king is wearing a diadem with tails. The shoulder clasp is opposite the face. In front of the face is a trefoil scepter (resembling a clover leaf). ÆTHELRÆD REX ANG is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is the image of the Hand of God with curly curves on each side of the sleeve cuffs. The Hand is flanked on each side by the letters A and w which have pellets below them.

This coin presents the first image of a scepter in Anglo-Saxon coinage. The scepter was a symbol that had come to represent virtue in addition to royal and judicial authority since

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Roman times. Again, Æthelred may be obscuring his sinful responsibility in Edward’s death. The scepter was also used as a symbol of the king’s power and as a representation of equity and mercy during Edgar’s coronation in 973. There is extra significance in the fact that the scepter’s tip is in the shape of a trefoil. Trefoil imagery had been used as a symbol of imperial authority since the adoption of its usage by Constantine.

The “Benediction Hand” type (c. 991) has the same obverse imagery as the “Second Hand” type except that the trefoil scepter is changed to a cross. (Figure 14) On the reverse is the image of the Hand of God that is giving the sign of benediction (the invocation of blessing). The Hand is no longer flanked on each side by the letters A and Ó. Although a small alteration, the substitution of a cross for a trefoil scepter is clearly significant. The king is exerting a new Christian character in opposition to his separate imperial ruler character. There could be several reasons to express this new imagery. Most likely, this imagery was used to emphasize that Æthelred was chosen by God. Æthelred may have been attempting to reaffirm his support for the church and the monastic reform movement. He had devoted less support to churches in the early years of his personal rule. Also, the Viking attacks had begun to take a toll on England.


200 Ibid., 180.

201 Ibid., 36.


is the proposed date for the mythic *Battle of Maldon*. This may have influenced Æthelred's cross imagery.

The "Crux" type (991–97) contains a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 15) The king is in most cases bare-headed, but in some cases he is wearing a diadem with tails. In front of his face is a trefoil scepter. ÆTHELRAED REX ANGLOR is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is an intermediate small cross dividing the reverse into four quadrants with one letter of the word CRUX one in each quadrant.²⁰⁴ This image returns to the general appearance of Edgar’s coins, using the

intensifying strategies of association and legitimation.

The "Intermediate Small Cross" type (c. 997) has a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 16) The king is wearing a diadem with tails. The design of the imagery is very linear, with less modeling than earlier examples. ÆTHELRAÆD REX ANGL is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a small cross pattee.205 Again, this image identifies with Edgar's rule by associating with his coins. The technique is once again intensifying legitimation.

The "Long Cross" type (c. 997–1003) contains a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 17) The king is shown with spiky hair without a crown or diadem. ÆTHELRAÆD REX ANGLOR is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a long cross with each end tipped with three crescent shapes.206

The "Helmet" type (c. 1003–09) displays a portrait view of the king's bust facing

\[\text{Figure 16. "Intermediate Small Cross" Type.}\]

\[\text{205 Ibid.}\]

\[\text{206 Ibid.}\]
to the left. (Figure 18) The king is shown wearing a helmet which some scholars have called a radiate helmet, and what appears to be armor. AETHELRAED REX ANGLO is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a long cross voided. Each end is tipped with three crescent shapes. Behind the cross is a square with trefoils at the corners.\textsuperscript{207} This type is directly related to a Roman prototype.\textsuperscript{208} A Roman model lent legitimation to Æthelred’s reign, establishing an aura of power. Again, the technique of association is used. During the period in which this coin was minted, defense of the

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure17.png}
\caption{"Long Cross" Type.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure18.png}
\caption{"Helmet" Type.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{207}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{208}Kent, “From Roman Britain to Saxon England,” 14.
kingdom was the most important issue on the king’s mind and most of his actions were related to this intention. 209 Because defense of the kingdom was so important, Æthelred wears a helmet on his coinage. The helmet along with the armor demonstrated that the king was neither afraid nor incapable of leading the country into battle against the Danes. The masking of current problems is a diminishing ideological strategy. However, there is some evidence that Æthelred’s effort to establish an image of military prowess, strength, and leadership may not have been a diminishing ideological strategy. Æthelred may not have needed to diminish characteristics of a weak leader. He amassed several fleets at the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh century. Æthelred even led a drive to improve the armor worn by the army, which also explains the image of armor on the coinage. 210 The continued defense of several towns, especially London, serves as some testimony to Æthelred’s might, or at least a strong feeling of leadership.

The subsequent nine-year period was characterized by a great deal of political turmoil caused by fighting throughout the realm. While the fighting of 1009–16 raged, only one coin type was issued. Political turmoil evidently left the king powerless to issue a new coin. The “Last Small Cross” type coin was circulated throughout this period. 211 It even continued to circulate another year, maybe even two years, after Æthelred II had


already died. The “Last Small Cross” type (c. 1009–17) has a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 19) The king is shown wearing a diadem with tails. ÆTHELRÆD REX ANGLOR is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a small cross pattee.  

Figure 19. “Last Small Cross” Type.

The production of coins changed during Cnut’s early reign. The king’s central control over the die engraving sites necessary for coin production was dispersed to regional and local authorities. Cnut did not have as firm control over the industry as Æthelred had. Because Cnut’s connections to the sources of local power were not as strong as his predecessors’, he was not able to assert the same central control over coinage. However, Cnut understood that he needed to develop an aura of legitimacy around his rule. He was an alien who needed to convince others that he was a legitimate ruler. To accomplish this, Cnut strove to depict himself on coins in the manner of his predecessors, most importantly Edgar. Instead of imposing his own cultural mark upon

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212North, English Hammered Coinage, 159 and Plate 13.
the imagery, he allowed English culture to influence and change his imagery. During Cnut’s reign, we see for the first time the influence of the imagery of English coins upon other countries, especially Denmark and Norway.\(^{213}\)

Because of political instability, Cnut’s first coins do not appear until about 1017. The “Quatrefoil” type (c. 1017–23) has a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the left within a quatrefoil outline. (Figure 20) The king is wearing a lily crown (sometimes a radiate crown). On some rare occasions he is wearing a diadem with tails. Cnut REX ANGLORUM is written in the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a long cross voided, each end tipped with three crescent shapes. Behind is a quatrefoil with pellets at

![Figure 20. “Quatrefoil” Type.](image)

the apex of each cusp.\(^{214}\) It may be significant that this type is the first example of a crowned king since Edgar’s “Bust Crowned” issue of c. 959–72/3.\(^{215}\) Cnut is the first king to include the image of the lily crown on his coins. Cnut’s intentions seem to have


\(^{214}\) North, English Hammered Coinage, 167–68 and Plate 13.

been twofold. Cnut is overtly asserting his legitimacy to the English throne by making connections with Edgar. This is the same crown that Edgar is wearing in coins and manuscript illuminations. In addition, Cnut is asserting the imperial power and prestige of the Ottonians.\textsuperscript{216}

The "Pointed Helmet" type (1024–30) displays a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 21) The king is wearing a pointed cone-shaped helmet. There is a trefoil scepter in front of his face. The shoulder buckle is on the opposite side of his face. \textit{CNUT REX} is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with a pellet in the center. Each quadrant has a pellet in the center.\textsuperscript{217} It is possible that the "Pointed Helmet" type signals a renewed control over the production of coins. The number of moneyers dropped and the production of dies occurred in fewer

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\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{example_image.png}
\caption{"Pointed Helmet" Type.}
\label{fig:example}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{216} Gerchow, \textit{Prayers for King Cnut}, 227.

\textsuperscript{217} North, \textit{English Hammered Coinage}, 168 and Plate 13.
The changes introduced are significant. Cnut also included the image of the scepter. The scepter emphasized Cnut’s regality as a just king. The pointed helmet image helped symbolize Cnut’s military superiority. Cnut’s military was able to control three countries. England was the realm that was most important to Cnut, and thus the realm in which he needed to emphasize the greatest military strength. While the rest of the imagery is intensifying Cnut’s positive attributes by association and legitimation, the idea expressed here is accommodation. Cnut stresses that his military position is best for all people.

The “Short Cross” type (c. 1029–35/6) contains a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 22) The king is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails. There is a fleur-de-lys or trefoil scepter in front of his face. In one case the scepter may be a banner. The shoulder buckle is on the opposite side and has three pellets attached to it by lines to the clasp. CNUT REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with a circle enclosing a pellet in the center. This coin continues the ideals of the previous coin, yet alters the helmet, changing it into a Roman diadem.

The chaotic time during the reigns of Cnut’s son, Harold and Harthacnut, was marked by five different coin types over seven years. Kings, and their supporters,

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218Lawson, Cnut, 199–201.
219Higham, The Death of Anglo-Saxon England, 80–82.
220North, English Hammered Coinage, 168 and Plate 13.
understood the need to improve the king’s political position by establishing coin-imagery that benefitted the king. These coins would contain the only ruler images these turmoiled kings would leave behind.

Soon after Cnut’s death in November, 1035, Harold minted his first coins. Harold’s “Short Cross” type (1035) has a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 23) The king is wearing a diadem with tails. There is a scepter in front of his face. HAROLD RECX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a
small cross voided with a circle enclosing a pellet in the center.\textsuperscript{221} This coin was very similar to Cnut's last coin type for two reasons. Harold wished to connect himself with his successful father and Harold did not yet have the power to assert any new ideas. Thus, the imagery is intensifying and diminishing at the same time. Cnut had intended Harold to serve merely as regent while Harthacnut was attending to duties in Denmark; however, Harthacnut was unable to leave the unstable county to claim his throne in England.\textsuperscript{222}

Harold's "Jewel Cross" type (1036–38) contains a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 24) The king is wearing either a single- or double-banded diadem with tails. He is wearing a tunic that no longer has a shoulder clasp. HAROLD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a cross composed of four ovals united at their bases by two concentric circles enclosing a pellet.\textsuperscript{223} Established with

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{"Jewel Cross" Type.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{221}Ibid., 170.

\textsuperscript{222}Higham, \textit{The Death of Anglo-Saxon England}, 109–10.

\textsuperscript{223}North, \textit{English Hammered Coinage}, 170 and Plate 13.
the Oxford meeting concerning the succession to the throne, the "Jewel Cross" type was unique to the period of shared rulership between Harold, Harthacnut, and Emma. Because of this fact, the imagery does not present any strong ideas about the power of the king. The ideology does not match the power asserted in BL Additional MS 33241, even though the two images were created at roughly the same time.

Harold's "Fleur-de-lys" type (1038–40) contains a portrait view of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 25) The king is wearing a diadem with tails. He is wearing armor (two plates) and is holding a fleur-de-lys scepter in front of his face. HAROLD RECX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a long cross voided with a circle enclosing a pellet in the center. Each quadrant has either a fleur-de-lys or three pellets. Harold wanted to associate himself with the tradition of Anglo-Saxon kings as much as he wanted to associate himself with powerful military imagery. By 1038, Harold had expelled Emma and had assumed the kingship of all of England. He may have been

Figure 25. "Fleur-de-lys" Type.

224 Ibid., 171 and Plate 14.
asserting a new power in the addition of armor to this coin type. Additional, Harold was
involved in battles against the Welsh at this time.\footnote{Higham, \textit{The Death of Anglo-Saxon England}, 112–13.}

Harthacnut’s “Jewel Cross” type (1036) contains a portrait view of the king’s bust
facing to the right. (Figure 26) The king is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails.
HARTHACNUT R is written in the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a jeweled
cross.\footnote{North, \textit{English Hammered Coinage}, 171 and Plate 14.}

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\caption{“Jewel Cross” Type.}
\end{figure}

Again, because of the shared rulership issue, Harthacnut did not present any
strong ideological statements. Instead, this coin mimics his brother’s coin in mirror image.

Harthacnut’s “Arm-and-scepter” type (1040–42) contains a portrait of the king’s
bust facing to the left. (Figure 27) He is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails. A
shoulder clasp appears once again on the opposite side from the face. It has pellets that
are attached to it by strings or tails. The king’s hands are visible and he is holding a fleur-
de-lys scepter in his left hand. HARTHACNUT RE is written on the border of the
obverse. On the reverse is a quadrilateral form with pellets on each corner in addition to one in the center. Behind the quadrilateral is a short cross voided. This coin is very similar to Cnut’s “Short Cross” type. Harthacnut emphasized his legitimacy and connection to Cnut. Harthacnut had been gone from England for several years and his rule was not completely stable.

Overall, the coinage of Edward the Confessor signals a general change in the models that the king strove to emulate. Edward began to model his images more in the fashion of contemporary German and Byzantine emperors rather than in the fashion of the Roman prototypes employed by his predecessors. One can see a new usage of regalia that had been employed by the Ottonian emperors for years. Edward was definitely trying to exert a stronger position by modeling the strongest definition of a ruler at the time. However, this did not happen immediately. The early years of Edward’s reign were to

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227 Ibid.

228 Kent, “From Roman Britain to Saxon England,” 14.
some extent unstable ones. Edward needed to keep his actions conservative and to establish a strong connection with the two separate cultures that had been in power before him. It was because he was connected to both Danish and English ancestors that he was able to get through 1043 without civil war.\textsuperscript{229} The initial coin issues mimicked the imagery of Edward’s predecessors.

The “PACX” type (1042–44) contains a portrait of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 28) The king is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails. The shoulder clasp is opposite to his face and has pellets attached to it by strings or tails. A long pomme scepter, or sometimes a simple spear, is in front of the king’s face. EDWERD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with a circle in the center and with one letter of the word PACX in each quadrant.\textsuperscript{230} While this coin is modeled after its immediate predecessor, it is also important that the coin is

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure28.png}
\caption{“PACX” Type.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{229}Frank Barlow, \textit{Edward the Confessor} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 73.

\textsuperscript{230}North, \textit{English Hammered Coinage}, 179 and Plate 14.
modeled after Cnut's "Short Cross" coin type. These associations helped to legitimize Edward's rule.

The "Radiate/Small Cross" type (1044–46) contains a portrait of the king's bust facing to the left. (Figure 29) The king is wearing a radiate crown. EDWERD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a small cross pattee. This is one of the only types of Edward's coins which is obviously influenced more by Roman models than by German and Byzantine ones. It is most likely modeled after the same prototype as Æthelred's radiate helmet type. The use of this imagery in 1044 is very interesting. This was a chaotic year, particularly for the Church. The tenth-century monastic reform movement had ended. (see page 29) In many respects, the political gains that the reformers had made in areas like abbatial election were reversed. The saecularium prioritas that monks had fought against in the tenth-century were threatening to influence

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231 Ibid.

monasteries once again. Edward may have reissued the radiate crown image to claim some of the authority that Roman Emperors maintained over both civil and religious matters. At the same point, Æthelred’s “Radiate/Small Cross” type coin draws an association between Æthelred’s role in monastic reform to that of his predecessors.

The “Trefoil/Quadrilateral” type (1046–48) contains a portrait of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 30) The king is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails. A shoulder clasp is located on the opposite shoulder from his face. A pomme scepter or simple spear is in front of his face. EDWERD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a quadrilateral with pellets on each corner in addition to one in the center. Behind the quadrilateral is a short cross voided. The threat of a renewal of Viking attacks may have led Edward to return to the imagery of his early coins. He was not a military leader and had not yet developed strong connections to supporters in England. Rather than express some military prowess he could not back up, Edward

Figure 30. "Trefoil/Quadrilateral" Type.

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instead emphasized his regality and connection with his predecessors. Edward knew that housecarls had supported Harold in 1035–36 for the greater good of the English king. Edward wished to connect himself more closely to the tradition of those kings.\textsuperscript{234}

The "Small Flan" type (1048–50) has a portrait of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 31) This coin has a smaller overall size because it was struck on smaller flans.

![Figure 31. "Small Flan" Type.](image)

The king is wearing a diadem with tails. In some rare instances there is a scepter in front of the face. EDWERD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided.\textsuperscript{235} Little changes about the images of the king. Edward still did not have the capacity or ability to assert a stronger statement. This fact is further emphasized by a reduction in the overall size of the coin.

The "Expanding Cross" type (1050–53) contains a portrait of the king’s bust facing to the left. (Figure 32) He is wearing a double-banded diadem with tails (in some rare cases these tails are missing). There is a trefoil (sometimes pomme) scepter in front

\textsuperscript{234}Higham, \textit{The Death of Anglo-Saxon England}, 119–21.

\textsuperscript{235}North, \textit{English Hammered Coinage}, 179 and Plate 14.
of his face. EDWERD RE is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with expanding arms and with two circles in the center.\textsuperscript{236} The imagery has become somewhat stronger in this issue. Edward has a scepter and is wearing a more regal outfit. Perhaps Edward now felt more capable of asserting his legitimacy for rule.

The "Pointed Helmet" type (1053–56) has a portrait of the king’s bust facing to the right (often to the left). (Figure 33) The king is bearded and is wearing a pointed helmet. There is a shoulder clasp on the opposite side from the face. He is holding either a pomme, fleury, or cross scepter in his right hand (in the examples where he is facing to the right). EDWERD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with each limb ending with three crescents.\textsuperscript{237} This is the first type to show the Confessor bearded.\textsuperscript{238} The purpose of the helmet image is clear. Edward needed to emphasize his military strength at a time when England was so vulnerable. The

\textsuperscript{236}Ibid., 179–80 and Plate 14.

\textsuperscript{237}Ibid., 180 and Plate 14.

\textsuperscript{238}Ibid., 40.
return of Earl Godwine, and his naval standoff with the king, took the country to the brink of civil war. Godwine’s men refused to fight against their own countrymen, thus averting political chaos that would have left the country open to foreign aggression. While the refusal to fight may have saved the country, it was politically embarrassing to Edward. 239

At this time, he needed to associate himself with the war-like rule of Cnut.

From the 1050’s a complete change in the obverse imagery can be seen. The royal portrait becomes less formalized. Edward has begun a trend to associate less with the Roman models. 240 There are some very close parallels between the coins of the latter half of Edward the Confessor’s reign, especially the naturalistic bearded portraits, and Ottonian coins of the same period. 241 The complete change of imagery witnessed during the 1050’s, not William’s conquest of England in 1066, is the one fundamental divide

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that occurs in English coin imagery between the reform of 973 and the rule of Stephen.  

The “Sovereign/Eagles” type (1056–59) contains a front view of the king’s entire body. (Figure 34) The king is bearded, wearing a crown and a long tunic. The king is seated on a backless throne. The king holds a long scepter or spear in his right hand and an orb surmounted by a cross (or in one case an eagle) in his left hand. EADWARD REX ANGLORUM is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with an eagle in each quadrant. This type has a Byzantine prototype, that of a Byzantine gold solidus of emperor Justin II (565–78). (Figure 35) Byzantine artistic and cultural influences had been important in England since the Scandinavians brought goods from trade with Byzantine traders. The imagery of the Byzantine prototype is of a figure

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243North, English Hammered Coinage, 180 and Plate 14.


245Lawson, Cnut, 3–4.
(said to be a personification of Constantinopolis) holding a staff or spear in its right hand. The spear image seems to have confused the Anglo-Saxon engraver who changed it more into a long-handled ax with a long curved blade or a large knob at the end. On the Byzantine coin, the figure sets its foot on the edge of a ship. This image, in most cases, was not transferred to the Anglo-Saxon coins. The Byzantine figure has a turreted crown which was changed to match the crowns visible on Æthelstan, Edgar, and Cnut in Anglo-Saxon manuscript imagery. The image on this coin made a strong statement incorporating both intensifying and diminishing techniques to affect ideology. This coin type is similar to Edward’s seal except that the king’s head is turned to the left while he is facing forward on the seal. The coin imagery looked back to a Byzantine model, claiming the authority that the Byzantine Emperor had over the Church. The Byzantine Emperor was the leader of the Greek Orthodox faith, just as the Pope was the leader of the Roman Catholic faith. The techniques of legitimation and association are clear with the comparison to the Byzantine model. However, the imagery simultaneously diminishes

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246 Dolley and Jones, “A New Suggestion,” 222.
the ideals of a strong Church. The king is universalizing his own values as the values of the entire society.

The "Hammer Cross" type (1059–62) contains a portrait of the king’s bust facing to the right. He is bearded and wearing a crown. There is a trefoil scepter in front of his face. His shoulder clasp is on the same side as his face. EDWARD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a short cross voided with hammer ends and with a pellet in the center.247

The "Bust Facing/Small Cross" type (1062–65) contains a front view of the king’s bust. (Figure 36) The imagery is very linear and awkward. The king is wearing a crown. EADWERD REX ANG is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is a small cross pattee.248 This is the first example of a late Anglo-Saxon coin portraying the king’s

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247 North, English Hammered Coinage, 180–81 and Plate 14.

bust in a front view. The type is modeled after the solidi of The Byzantine emperor, Constans II (641–68). By copying another Byzantine coin, Edward the Confessor is further emphasizing the association to the power and prestige of the Byzantine emperors.

The “Pyramids” type (1065–66) contains a portrait view of the king’s bust facing to the right. (Figure 37) The king is bearded and wearing a crown. The top of the crown has a triangular shape. This top may be indicating a closed crown or perhaps the top is an arch like that of Cnut’s crown in BL MS Stowe 944. In some rare cases this crown is represented as a helmet. There are trefoil-tipped tails that may be attached to the crown or to a diadem that is being worn beneath the crown. There is a trefoil scepter in front of his face. EADWARD REX is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse there is a short cross voided with a pellet-tipped pyramid in each quadrant. The crown shown in this portrait can be compared with one displayed in a coin of Conrad II that

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\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{image}
\caption{“Pyramids” Type.}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[249] Kent, “From Roman Britain to Saxon England,” 12.
\item[250] North, *English Hammered Coinage*, 181 and Plate 15.
\end{footnotes}
Although Harold II Godwineson ruled for only a short time, he, or at least his supporters, knew how to employ the resources of coinage. Harold managed to recall Edward’s issue of the previous year and issue his own type which returned to the Roman diadem image. The “PAX” type of 1066 has a portrait view of the king’s bust. He is shown with a very thin beard and wearing a crown with tails similar to the “Pyramids” type. There is a trefoil scepter in front of his face. HAROLD REX ANGL is written on the border of the obverse. On the reverse is the word PAX between two lines. This type models itself directly from a first-century Roman coin. One can see the similarities most clearly in the figural style of the neck and facial features. The Anglo-Saxon engraver adds the diadem tails of fourth-century Roman tradition to the contemporary crown and scepter. There are definite connections between this type and Edward the Confessor’s “PACX” type. Harold’s “PAX” type coin was issued at the beginning of his reign as king, just as Edward the Confessor had issued his “PACX” type at the beginning of his reign.” (Figure 38) Harold was trying to assert the same legitimacy to be king that Edward had possessed. Harold’s assumption of the throne was a radical idea. He was the first Anglo-Saxon earl to assert a claim to the crown, and the first (excepting the


Danes Swein and Cnut) outside of Alfred's dynasty to become king.  

Figure 38. "PAX" Type.

It is interesting that a warrior, such as Harold, used peace as the theme of his only coin type. Harold may have been emphasizing his ability to keep the peace during such an unstable time. Harold most likely would have needed to de-emphasize his worldly military character and to emphasize a peaceful religious character. He had some problems with the Church because he had given Church lands to others. He was reported to have sworn false oaths. Also, Harold's Danish marriage was considered illegitimate by the Church.

There is no drastic change in the coinage following the 1066 conquest. William's "Profile/Cross Fleury" type (1066–68) also had a portrait view of the king's bust. (Figure 39) The king is show with a very thin beard and wearing a crown with tails similar to the "Pyramids" type. This was a virtual copy of the imagery of Harold's obverse except that William's clothing was slightly visible. WILLEMUS REX was written on the border of

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256 Ibid., 127.
the obverse. On the reverse was a cross fleury with a small ring in the center. After this slightly modified copy of the Anglo-Saxon models, William ends the process of modeling coin portraits upon Roman prototypes.

Figure 39. Profile/ Cross Fleury type.

The information presented above describes a continual process of growth and development of the use of images of kings on coins in tenth- and eleventh-century England. Unlike previous periods, kings were able to control this imagery effectively and use it as a political tool. Coins were an effective medium to present. By connecting that ideal to the king depicted, one might augment the stature of the king. The problem was that in the tenth century, coin-dies were manufactured independently by engravers throughout England. This meant that the imagery on coins changed from region to region, and that the king had little power to affect his public image. Edgar’s 973 centralization of coin-die production changed all that. The next ninety-three years of

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Anglo-Saxon rule witnessed an active and efficient policy of institutional control over coin imagery. Edgar initiated a centralization of the methods by which coin-dies were produced. By centralizing the process, the king was able to express the ideals he felt most important. Another major development at this time was the policy of periodic ruler-mandated recalls of all coins in order to produce new issues. This enabled each king to promote his own ideal characteristics as separate from or similar to his predecessor. Later, rulers would use this recall policy to produce different issues during their own reign, extolling different principles at different periods in time, depending on the political situation.

The iconic ruler portrait that was used throughout this period was one developed over time based upon Roman and Byzantine imperial models. Roman and Byzantine leaders represented the zenith of power and prestige to the Anglo-Saxons. Thus a connection between certain characteristics extolled by Roman and Byzantine rulers and the contemporary king could bolster his position. The image of the draped bust of the king shown in profile was the nucleus of the imagery used throughout the period. Slight deviations from the standard form represented important assertions about that particular figure. An emphasis was placed upon regalia that represented or symbolized particular ruler ideals.

The coins of Edgar and Edward the Martyr represent the king wearing a diadem and tails, a symbol of imperial rule dating back to the Persians. This was a significant assertion. These Anglo-Saxon kings had begun to assert that they were kings of all England, in the same way that an emperor ruled many kingdoms.
Æthelred II used coin imagery to improve his weak political image, producing nine different issues during his tumultuous reign. To the diadem image, Æthelred adds a trefoil scepter, representing his imperial virtue and judicial authority. In the next issue, the scepter is transformed into a cross distinguishing Æthelred’s Christian characteristics from his imperial ones. In later years Æthelred employed the imagery of a pagan helmet and armor to emphasize his strength in the face of foreign invaders.

Cnut used coinage differently than any of his predecessors. He needed to create a sense of coherence between his rule and that of his predecessors. Cnut, as a foreigner, used coin imagery to assert his place among the English kings of the past. He employs the use of a stemma, or lily crown, in reference to similar crowns pictured on Edgar. He also employs pointed helmet and diadem imagery, stressing his association to imperial rule. However, the decentralization of the production of coin-dies left Cnut less able to control the imagery on coins throughout the kingdom.

Harold and Harthchnut understood how coin imagery might help support a king’s public image. Between them, they issued five different coin issues in seven years. They abandoned the use of a crown in their coin imagery, wishing instead to return to the basic diadem symbol. The lack of a crown at this time might be a sign that they did not feel strong enough to assert such a symbol.

Edward charted a new course with his coinage. After several unstable years in which he employed coin imagery similar to his predecessors, he began to use German and Byzantine models instead of the Roman prototypes. Throughout the extent of his reign, Edward gradually incorporated certain items of imperial regalia into his coinage in the
hope that these images might help him to assert a stronger position.

Even Harold II Godwineson managed, in his very short reign, to produce coins in Edward’s tradition. Harold understood that a tenuous hold on the crown needed to be bolstered by projecting ideal images of the king. His “PAX” coin mimics the imagery of Edward the Confessor while attempting to assert the same regal legitimacy.

Anglo-Saxon kings depicted themselves on coins so effectively that William the Conqueror chose simply to continue the existing tradition, actually copying Harold II Godwineson’s obverse imagery.

Late Anglo-Saxon coins displayed a variety of ideological techniques owing to the broader audience that the coins reach and the fact that many coins were created. The persuasive images implemented both intensifying and diminishing strategies. This varience is what makes the study of late Anglo-Saxon coins so interesting. Even though coins, as a medium, were the single group that seemed to change the least, coins had the most varied ways to influence the ideological image of the kings.
SEALS

The previous chapter discussed coins, the medium with the greatest number of examples to be studied and the most varied strategies for influencing ideologies. The wax seal is the third medium which this thesis will discuss. This medium is the sparsest of all studied, but it is the one medium that can be connected most easily to the official business of the king. Rulers have used the seal ever since Roman times for the authentication of royal documents. Because seals are directly connected with the official business of the king, it will be difficult to prove any monastic influence upon the production of the images.

Several problems are encountered in the study of Anglo-Saxon seals. England lagged behind Frankish and Ottonian rulers in the use of seals. In England, the seal was not the primary method of authenticating documents. The authority of the document was verified by the names of the witnesses, which were accompanied by the sign of the cross. During the reigns of the Anglo-Saxon kings, the seal retained a purely secular significance and may not have been used only as a means of authenticating documents.\textsuperscript{259} Several of the pre-Conquest references to seals mention them as independent of the document itself. The seal may not have been authenticating the document being presented, but rather the


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presenter of the document. This independence of the seal from the document just served to increase its power as an ideological tool. Independent seals would be more portable than those attached to documents and would have enabled the imagery to impact a larger audience, similarly to coins. While documentary sources do speak about the use of seals, there is no surviving physical evidence in England from any time prior to the reign of Edward the Confessor. Yet it seems most likely that there were seals in use in England before Edward’s reign. However, there is no conclusive proof of what early Anglo-Saxon seals may have looked like or even that they existed at all. Some scholars believe that the royal seals that may have existed would have borne the image of the king in a similar fashion to coins of the time. Similarities between coins and seals are accounted for by the conclusion that seal matrices were often manufactured by coin die-engravers taking on outside work in between coin mintings. Other scholars believe that the imagery of Anglo-Saxon seals developed independently from coins, instead of following the precedents established by Ottonian emperors. All of the Ottonian emperors were depicted on seals. Otto III was the first to be depicted on his seal enthroned, crowned, holding a scepter, and an orb. This imagery became the standard which was

260 Ibid., 4.

261 Ibid., 3.


264 Rezak, “The King Enthroned,” 60.
adopted by Henry II, Conrad II, and Henry III respectively. It has been hypothesized that Cnut employed a two-sided seal to represent his dual rule in both England and Denmark. The imagery of this seal may have been copied from the seal of Conrad II, in the same way that Cnut’s reign was modeled as an imitation of Conrad’s reign and image. There is definitely evidence that Cnut supported artists in order to benefit his image. Besides coins (see p. 82), and the New Minster Register (see p. 48), Cnut supported the construction of a stone frieze in commemoration of his marriage to Emma. Only a panel survives from what appears to have been a very large frieze. There is some evidence to suggest that Harold II Godwineson’s great seal, although it has been lost, had its form preserved in the coronation of the Harold scene from the Bayeux Tapestry. Yet not too much should be said concerning these possible seals. They do not survive and their existence is almost entirely speculative.

One type of seal survives to the present day in two surviving authentic examples. These seals both represent one seal-type, the Great Seal of Edward the Confessor. These surviving examples have received much damage over the years and the


266 Harmer, Anglo-Saxon Writs, 97–101; Barlow, The English Church, 15.

267 Lawson, Cnut, 137.


269 Walker, Harold, 139.

270 One from Christ Church, the other from St. Denis.
outlines of the impressions are blurred. A fake seal of this type also survives. It is much more defined than the authentic seals, having been damaged less by the elements. Although this fake seal would have been constructed some time after Edward's death, it may be assumed that it was made to appear as similar to the authentic seals as possible. Thus, the fake seal may be used to help define the blurred elements of the authentic seals.

On Edward's seal, the king is facing the front in a full view. (Figure 40) He is shown with a full beard, wearing a crown, and sitting on a throne without arms or back. The king's tunic is draped long with a shoulder clasp on his right shoulder. On both sides the king holds in his hands the symbols of imperial power. On the obverse he has a long thin staff, spear, or scepter in his right hand and an orb in his left hand. On the fake seal, the element in Edward's right hand appears to be a trefoil-tipped scepter. On the reverse the king has another long thin staff, spear, or scepter in his right hand and a sword in his left hand. On the fake seal, the item in Edward's right hand appears to be a long staff with the shape of an eagle at the tip. O SIGILLVM EADWARDI ANGLORUM BASILEI is written on the borders of both sides. It is interesting that the seal uses the Greek, or Eastern imperial title basileus instead of the Latin, or Western title rex.271 On all of Edward the Confessor's coins he is referred to as rex or rex anglorum. The title is not new to the Anglo-Saxons, who had been using the term since the tenth century. However, the fact that Edward assumes this title for the first time is important. The seal legitimized Edward's image by associating with ideal characteristics of Byzantine imperial rule. The

image itself associates with Byzantine models in the manner of Edward’s “Sovereign/Eagles” coin type. The image also relies on Ottonian imperial models. Edward’s figural style is modeled upon portraits of Ottonian rulers. Also, the regalia that is discernible appears to be modeled after Ottonian imperial regalia. The association with imperial rule is definitely clear.

Figure 40. Great Seal of Edward the Confessor.

The seal is filled with images that symbolized the secular, spiritual, legal, imperial, military and hereditary elements thought to be important to a king at this time. The Anglo-Saxon seal, more than any of the other media discussed here, appears to be a direct descendant of Ottonian and Byzantine imperial models. Yet the appearance of the seal

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272 Barlow, The English Church, 16.
of Edward cannot simply be attributed to influence from Continental sources. The Anglo-Saxon court had maintained these same or similar contacts with the Continent for many years without this sort of seal developing from the relationship.\textsuperscript{273} The entire nature of the Anglo-Saxon seal was different from its Continental counterparts. The Continent had employed single-sided seals from the seventh century. The Franks used some metal seals that were attached with silk or hemp string. All of these examples would have been known to the Anglo-Saxons.\textsuperscript{274} The English, at least in the time of the Confessor, employed two-sided seals. There is a reason why this type of imagery was used at this time.

To Edward, this image symbolized the power that the king had gained in England. While many of the symbolic features of the seal were borrowed from Continental models, much of this seal was new. The use of the sword image is completely unprecedented in Western sigillography.\textsuperscript{275} The sword symbol may be a visual realization of the eighth-century theory of the two swords, expounding the secular and spiritual authorities both to be supreme within their own realm. Visually, the sword image was first represented in a Roman mosaic from the apse of the Lateran Palace. It is unlikely that Edward’s use of the sword image was any assertion of the king gaining some new power at this time. It is more probable that Edward, or his advisors, used this image to develop an aura of

\textsuperscript{273}Rezak, "The King Enthroned," 61.

\textsuperscript{274}Harmer, \textit{Anglo-Saxon Writs}, 93.

\textsuperscript{275}Rezak, "The King Enthroned," 64.
strength. Strength of the king meant stability in the kingdom. Perhaps most importantly, the sword is an entirely secular image. Edward may have been exerting his political power in place of the Church's power.

The section above discusses images of late Anglo-Saxon kings found on seals. This art form is the one most clearly connected with the operation of the king. It is also the art form that illuminates the end of the influence that the monastic reform movement held over the ideological image of the late Anglo-Saxon king. By the mid-eleventh century, when the Great Seal of Edward the Confessor was created, the monastic reform movement had lost its momentum. In addition, the monks lost the controlling influence that they had maintained over the office of the king. A new ideology was established here, one where the king is unencumbered by the strong influence of the monastic reformers. This ideology had a tremendous impact on later Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman kings. The next chapter discusses textile images of late Anglo-Saxon kings and one example influenced by Edward's Great Seal, The Bayeux Tapestry.
TEXTILES

This thesis discusses one last medium portraying pictorial imagery of late Anglo-Saxon kings. The Anglo-Saxons produced and decorated textiles that influenced perception of ideal figures. While the last chapter discussed the art form most easily connected to late Anglo-Saxon kings, the following chapter will present the art form that may be the most problematic for this study. Few Anglo-Saxon textiles survive and there is also very little written evidence describing the pictorial imagery of textiles that did not survive. In order to understand the significance of the textile evidence, it will be necessary to discuss these issues. However, the following chapter will also show that the Anglo-Saxons did have a significant history of producing textiles, including textiles that affected ideologies by illustrating ideal characteristics. Finally, two images of the Bayeux Tapestry will be presented. Together these two images show the final stage in the development of the Anglo-Saxon king’s image.

The study of textile evidence is hindered by the fact that almost no Anglo-Saxon textiles survive today. However, the paltry survival does not mean that textiles were not an important medium of expression for Anglo-Saxon artists. There is written evidence that textiles had for centuries been a significant part of the Anglo-Saxon artistic tradition.²⁷⁶ Decorative textiles were presented as gifts by benefactors, often kings, to

²⁷⁶For an introduction to the primary source material see: A. G. I. Christie, “Appendix I: Some Embroidery Workers and Purchases of Embroideries in Medieval
churches and monasteries that were important to them. Alcuin wrote that King Oswald of Northumbria, in the first half of the seventh century, presented wall-hangings to the churches that he had founded. These wall-hangings were described as silk interwoven with gold, similar to those found in Rome. This was an obvious allusion to the great abundance of Byzantine decorative silks that had been disseminated to the West and were common decorations of major churches in Rome, as well as along the pilgrim road toward the city. These hangings would have been known by Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, as they took it upon themselves to visit the churches that were decorated in this manner. Athelstan presented fine embroideries to the shrine of St. Cuthbert when he visited it in 934. Oswald, archbishop of York, contributed fine fabric hangings to Ramsey in the late tenth century. Although it is clear that textiles were produced, it is more difficult to ascertain any idea of the imagery that may have been evident on these pieces.


In addition to the lack of physical evidence that would help one to understand the imagery, there is the problem that writers did not discuss or describe the scenes or imagery that appeared on Anglo-Saxon textiles. There are a number of general references to the fact that wall hangings existed in Anglo-Saxon England. Mentioned in wills, chronicles, and saints' lives, descriptions of textiles were usually made only for the purposes of identification. It can be reasoned that early Anglo-Saxon wall hangings that hung in the ecclesiastical setting would have been styled after the Roman tradition. The imagery most likely presented miracle stories or Christian epic hero stories.\(^{281}\) It is impossible to know exactly what the imagery was because of the lack of descriptions, but the Anglo-Saxons would have seen these images in ecclesiastical settings when they visited Rome.\(^{282}\) The English understood the ideological impact that textile imagery held. The imagery of the wall hangings could alter the observer's perception of perfection. In order to become a hero, the observer needed to emulate the ideal characteristics of the hero pictured. In fact, one of the only references to the imagery on Anglo-Saxon hangings that exists from the entire pre-Conquest period speaks of miracles of Christ. In the reference, Æthelwulf describes decorations of a cell in the Abbey of Lindisfarne.\(^{283}\)

Heroic embroidery imagery not only existed in ecclesiastical settings. There is good

\(^{281}\)Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 130–32.

\(^{282}\)Ibid., 130.

\(^{283}\)ast alii rutilo condunt vexilla metallo, / que veneranda piii promunt miracula Christi “and others set up banners of shining metal, which present the revered miracles of the Holy Christ.” In Æthelwulf’s *De Abbatibus*, Alistair Campbell, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 50–51.
reason to believe that Anglo-Saxon hangings had long celebrated secular as well as ecclesiastical heroes in order to promote favorable behaviors. *Beowulf* describes gold-weavings on the wall of the mead hall.284 These weavings may have depicted heroic acts since *Beowulf* is a tale of deeds of prowess. The *Life of King Edward* mentions a woven sail that depicted the sea battles of noble kings.285 The *Liber Eliensis* gives a short reference to a gift of hanging embroidery by Ælfthæd to the church at Ely. The embroidery was given in memory of her husband Byrhtnoth and elaborates his heroic deeds.286 Although this embroidery does not survive, scholars have asserted that the embroiderers may have illustrated this embroidery with Byrhtnoth’s heroic deeds from the Battle of Maldon in the same way the Bayeux Tapestry illustrates the events from William’s conquest of England.287 Whatever the connection to the Battle of Maldon, it is significant that the Byrhtnoth Embroidery evidences a tradition of Anglo-Saxon epic textiles that builds to the Bayeux Tapestry. Dolores Warwick Frese describes this tradition as the feminine equivalent of the ideological poetry that men were creating at this time.288

The Anglo-Saxons may have created textiles that contained images of kings in order to guide the king’s actions toward an ideal or to alter the image of the king in the

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284 *Beowulf*, ll. 993–96.


288 Frese, “*Worda Ond Worca,*” 45–46.
minds of others. However, of the body of Anglo-Saxon textile work that survives, the
Bayeux Tapestry is the only hanging that exhibits narrative figural representations of
people from its own period.\textsuperscript{289} It is the only surviving textile that features images of
Anglo-Saxon kings.

The Bayeux Tapestry is a strip of linen made up of eight joined strips of different
lengths, embroidered with wool thread. The entire piece is about 63 meters long.\textsuperscript{290} There
has been much speculation regarding the creation date of the Tapestry. Opinions of when
the Tapestry was completed have ranged from 1066 to 1223, but the current scholarly
opinion is from 1066 to 1082.\textsuperscript{291} The Tapestry was commissioned by Odo of Bayeux as
a monument celebrating the Norman victory at Hastings.\textsuperscript{292} Yet, while the patron of the
Bayeux Tapestry was Norman, much evidence points to a strong Anglo-Saxon influence.
The master artist of the Tapestry was most likely an English monk who lived in
Canterbury and directed the work of English embroiderers.\textsuperscript{293} The embroiderers of Anglo-
Saxon England were known to have been unrivaled in eleventh-century Western

\textsuperscript{289}Budny, "The Byhtnoth Tapestry or Embroidery," 267.

\textsuperscript{290}Wilson, \textit{The Bayeux Tapestry}, 10.

\textsuperscript{291}Barclay, "The Bayeux Tapestry and Coins," \textit{Battle 1066} (London: J.M. Dent
and Sons, 1966), 8–15; Brown, \textit{The Bayeux Tapestry}, 30–32.

\textsuperscript{292}David J. Bernstein, \textit{The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry} (London: Weidenfeld

\textsuperscript{293}Ibid., 51–59.
Europe. While English women were known for their skill, there was no comparable
tradition of Norman embroidery before the Conquest. In addition, Norman royalty had
employed English needlewomen before. Some scholars believe that the Bayeux Tapestry even has a direct ancestor in Ælfflæd’s Byrhtnoth Tapestry. The illustration
of the Bayeux Tapestry has an English feeling, especially in its similarities to Anglo-Saxon artistic styles. Anglo-Saxon lettering and spelling forms appear in the inscriptions to the Tapestry. The artist was very familiar with English illuminated manuscripts that existed in Canterbury. Norman illumination did not produce large pictorial image cycles in the manner necessary for the Bayeux Tapestry. In addition, it has been argued that the overall program, including the borders and resourceful word-play in the Tapestry’s inscriptions, favors Anglo-Saxon claims to the throne. In order to understand the very

294 Dodwell, Pictorial Arts of the West, 10; Laing and Laing, Early English Art and Architecture, 159.
295 William and Matilda are known to have supported the embroiderer Leofgyth. See Dodwell, Anglo-Saxon Art, 65–78.
298 Bernstein, Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry, 39.
299 Ibid., 39–46.
300 Ibid., 46–50.
complicated meaning of the Bayeux Tapestry, one must accept that Anglo-Saxons created the Tapestry. In that light, the following section will discuss two images of Anglo-Saxon enthroned kings.

In the initial scene, the Bayeux Tapestry depicts Edward the Confessor in a full view facing forward. (Figure 41) The image shows the king with long beard, wearing a fleur-de-lys crown, and sitting on a throne without a back. The king holds in his left hand a short staff or scepter. The king’s right hand points to two figures standing to his right. The scene is set within a simple architectural structure, possibly representing the palace in Winchester. The words EDWARD REX are stitched above the image.

This image of Edward the Confessor is directly related to Edward’s image on his Great Seal and his “Sovereign/Eagles” coin type. In all of these images, the king is enthroned in a similar manner to Byzantine and Ottonian portraits of rulers. The king is unencumbered by the council of ecclesiastical figures. The symbolism continues the ideology established in the Great Seal. However, it is interesting that the king is described as rex rather than basileus, as the Great Seal describes him. There is a loss of prestige through this title change. The king does not have an imperial aura. This may be because Edward ruled several years before this image was created. The image does not stress Edward’s might and control over both Church and State. Instead, the image emphasizes Edward’s virtue, equity, and mercy with the inclusion of the scepter as the only piece of regalia. Thus, the king is just when he turns to Harold, on his right, and approves Harold as his successor. The message is that Edward approved of Harold’s succession as a strong ruler, not just as a weak old man on his death bed. It is difficult to classify the ideological
persuasion as either intensifying or diminishing. Overtly, the image appears to be intensifying by legitimizing Edward’s rule through association. However, the underlying

![Image: Bayeux Tapestry, Scene 1.]

Figure 41. Bayeux Tapestry, Scene 1.

...persuasion diminishes Williams’ legitimate claim to the English throne by emphasizing that Edward chose Harold instead. These actions are represented as rational and natural.

In scene 31 of the Tapestry, Harold is shown for the first time enthroned in majesty. (Figure 42) The king is seated upon a grand throne, much larger than the one...
that Edward sits upon. The image depicts Harold wearing a fleur-de-lys crown, holding a cross-nimbed orb in his left hand and a long scepter in his right hand. The king is flanked by three figures. On his left is a bishop, carrying the Eucharistic maniple. This figure is indicated as Archbishop Stigand. On Harold’s right are two men, one who appears to be offering a sword to the king. The scene is set within a large architectural structure. The words HIC RESIDET HAROLD REX ANGLORVM are stitched above.

In comparison with Edward’s image in the first scene, Harold’s image seems to

Figure 42. Bayeux Tapestry, Scene 31.
be entirely intensifying in its persuasive ideology. The strategies are both overt and underlying. First, Harold is majestically enthroned in a similar manner to Byzantine and Ottonian portraits of rulers. The king also holds two pieces of imperial regalia, the scepter and orb. Harold is wearing a fleur-de-lys crown. All of these symbols legitimize Harold’s rule through association with the imperial rule of the Ottonians. The three men surrounding Harold represent the three social groups of the fighting men, the work men, and the praying men. These groups, according to Wulfstan, represent the three pillars upon which the Anglo-Saxon throne rested. This symbolism legitimized Harold’s rule because Harold represented the interests of the English people. This is why the three figures seem to be anointing Harold. These figures also represent one of the ways that the Bayeux Tapestry appealed to both an English and a Norman audience. The Tapestry has several layers of meaning. A Norman audience might perceive this scene as an image of Harold’s coronation with Archbishop Stigand, of Canterbury. At the time, Stigand had been stripped of his jurisdiction by the Pope.302 But to the Anglo-Saxons, the Tapestry did not actually show the coronation and instead emphasized Harold’s valid claim to the throne. David Bernstein describes how the Tapestry artist rearranged the chronological order of the scenes preceding Harold’s enthroned image. Bernstein explains that the alternate order stresses Edward’s deathbed approval of Harold as successor.303 Harold did not seize the throne unjustly, but rather was given the throne justly by Edward and Anglo-


Saxon popular support.

The section above discusses Anglo-Saxon textiles and their historical tradition of affecting ideologies by illustrating ideal characteristics. While few examples survive today, textual evidence attests to their existence. Finally, the only surviving textile that features images of late Anglo-Saxon kings illuminates the final stage in the relationship of Anglo-Saxon monastic figures to the ideology of the images of Anglo-Saxon kings. Produced after the fall of the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasty, the Bayeux Tapestry was created by an Anglo-Saxon monk from Canterbury. Long after the monastic reformation had ended and when ecclesiastical figures no longer stood beside Anglo-Saxon kings in council, a monastic figure was able to influence the ideological image of the king one last time.
CONCLUSION

The pages above present a multitude of late Anglo-Saxon visual images of kings. The study includes several different art forms from which images of late Anglo-Saxon kings survive. While each medium studied presents very different technical obstacles and modes of expression, all of the images share the characteristic that they influenced the ideology of the late Anglo-Saxon king in some way. Beyond that fact, it can be claimed that Anglo-Saxon monastic figures, particularly those involved in the reform movement, influenced the creation of the images, as well as the audiences’ perception. Although not all images were created to intentionally persuade an audience, each used some degree of intensifying or diminishing persuasion.

The introduction described the definition of ideology that was used in this thesis. It stated that ideologies serve any political group in pursuit of its objectives. In most cases, the political group that ideological imagery served at this time were monastic figures. Monastic reformers wished to guide and support the king for their own benefit, as a strong, prestigious king meant a stable kingdom and peaceful monastic life. Also, a king who understood and accepted the ideals of the monastic figures would, in turn, support and foster the monks. However, there were examples of images in this study that benefitted the king without advancing the interests of monastic figures.

An ideology may legitimate the established political and social order as well as the existing distribution of wealth, power, and status. Ideology may promote acceptance of
present authority, and hence stability (dominant ideology), but ideology may also serve as a weapon of contestation and opposition. All but the last two images worked as dominant ideologies, promoting the present authority. In almost every case of dominant ideology, the images used the intensifying ideological methods of association and legitimation. Rationalization, accommodation, and representation techniques are also evident in these images. A few of the images use diminishing ideological methods to disguise particular faults or problems with the king’s rule. The last two images from the Bayeux Tapestry used the strategy of opposition, not by intensifying William the Conqueror’s faults, but rather by intensifying Harold’s legitimacy to be king.

Although there were only representations of contemporary Anglo-Saxon rulers found in illuminated manuscripts, these examples present powerful images of late Anglo-Saxon kings. All examples used the intensifying persuasive techniques of association and legitimation directed toward audiences comprised primarily of clergy. Prominent monastic statesmen are linked to each image and some are illustrated in the images. As a group, the manuscript illumination images support the concept that monks controlled the ideology of the king. At the height of the monastic reform movement, the reformers were able to express a monastic monarch ideology that urged the king to rule with the virtue and structure that the reformers considered ideal.

The largest group of images are found on coins. Coins, as a group, had the most varied ways to influence the ideological image of the king. During this period, kings were able to gain control over coin production and exploit its imagery. Most often, the images on coins presented the intensifying persuasive techniques of association and legitimation.
to connect kings to Byzantine, Ottonian, and English ideal models. Anglo-Saxons so successfully depicted themselves on coins that the similar techniques were continued by the Normans.

Seals, while being the medium with the least physical evidence of any studied here, are also the medium most closely associated with the official business of the king. Images from seals illuminate the diminished influence of monastic reformers upon the ideological image of the late Anglo-Saxon king. The monks had lost the controlling interest that they had maintained over the king. Hence, the king was able to exert a strong imperial image free from ecclesiastical influence.

The most problematic, but perhaps most interesting medium on which visual images of late Anglo-Saxon kings were portrayed is textiles. Only one example survives today, but there was a history of English textiles that illustrated ideal characteristics to influence ideologies. The Bayeux Tapestry signaled the final stage in the relationship between monastic figures and the ideological image of Anglo-Saxon kings. Created by an Anglo-Saxon monk, the Tapestry was able to support the image of the Anglo-Saxon king after the Norman Conquest had ended the Anglo-Saxon ruling dynasty.

Further study of the ideological impact of the imagery of Anglo-Saxon kings is warranted. On the specific topic of this thesis, one might wish to study the textual images of kings to further emphasize the direct influence monastic reformers had on the ideological images of kings. In this work, one should not ignore the role of saints' lives, coronation ordines, laws, sermons, or homilies. Additionally, scholars may undertake further study into the interrelations between Anglo-Saxon England and other Medieval
cultures, an area lacking in scholarly activity at present. Examining this interrelationship with a multi-disciplinary approach will provide an understanding of the ideology that influenced the development of the Medieval king.
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