

Doctoral Dissertation

**‘How the Corpse of a Most Mighty King...’
The Use of the Death and Burial of the English Monarch
(From Edward to Henry I)**

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Abbreviations

- ANS* *Anglo-Norman Studies* (formerly *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*).
- ASC C* *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 5, *MS C*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001).
- ASC D* *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 5, *MS D*, ed. G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996).
- ASC E* *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 7, *MS E*, ed. Susan Irvine (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004).
- ASC T* *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, tr. Michael Swanton (London: Phoenix Press, 2000).
- BT* *The Bayeux Tapestry*, intro. and commentary by David M. Wilson (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985).
- EHR* *English Historical Review*
- GND* William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, ed. and tr. Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992-5).
- GRA* William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and tr. R. A. B. Mynors, completed by R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- HA* Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and tr. Diana E. Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

- HE* Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and tr. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968-80).
- HN* William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella: The Contemporary History*, ed. Edmund King, tr. K. R. Potter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- HSJ* *Haskins Society Journal*
- HW* Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Historical Works*, tr. Jane Patrick Freeland, ed. Marsha L. Dutton (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005).
- JMH* *Journal of Medieval History*
- PL* *Patrologia Latina*

Introduction

Death in the Middle Ages, being both universal and specific, is still a ripe topic for investigation. Modern attitudes towards mortality have often hindered understanding of the issue. Scholars have frequently put aside or misread the role death played in medieval comprehension of the world.¹ To simplify: for the modern man, illness and/or infirmity leads to the doctor, which leads to cure or to removal from the workings of society – with death being far removed from daily existence; for the medieval, such signs were not seen as symptoms to be corrected, but an announcement to prepare the body and the soul for the ritual of death that would lead to eternal salvation.

Death in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is doubly ripe for study, owing to claims made by modern historians regarding this period. Philip Ariès, the trailblazer of scholarly research on death, regarded this period as when the long-held views on dying were ‘partially altered’.² The established belief, that the final location of a soul was to be judged at the Second Coming, gave way to an attitude that saw judgment occurring at the moment of death itself. The final moments of life changed from being a feature of time to being an assessment of a human being. This, perhaps, wasn’t the polarized change that Ariès claimed: the final reckoning was still an important event – the formal judgment of the soul – however death had removed the possibility for penance to alter the outcome. There appeared, quite clearly, a connection between death and judgment. The two destinations – Heaven or Hell – meant death was categorised into ‘good’ and ‘bad’. What determined a ‘good death’ was preparation – the dying person, after putting

¹ This neglect is examined in two works that deal with death in the Middle Ages: Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 1-2, and David Crouch, ‘The Culture of Death in the Anglo-Norman World’, in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the 12th-Century Renaissance*, ed. C. Warren Hollister (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 157-180 (157).

² Philip Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*, tr. Patricia M. Ranunt (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 27-28.

his or her earthly affairs in order, could be cleansed of their sins so they could join with God. ‘Bad death’ was the opposite: the end appeared so sudden – or unprepared for, owing to an ignoring of the portents – that the person was damned.³ This division, and what determined the two groups, was a construction that reflected social and religious attitudes. When recording and recounting the demise of an individual, details could be manipulated for didactic purposes. This was apparent in how the corpse was presented. If the cadaver appeared miraculously white like snow or milk and had a sweet smell (the odour of sanctity),⁴ it was evidence of a pure and holy life; the inversion to this paradigm would be immediately noticed as a sign of condemnation. As David Crouch noted, ‘the real dichotomy in the twelfth century was between whether one died an idealised and studied good death, or an unregenerate and impatient one’.⁵

This study intends to examine this dichotomy by examining the eleventh- and twelfth-century accounts of the death and burial of the rulers of England from 1066 to 1135. The choice of sources is easy to justify. The period saw a flowering of historical writing in the Anglo-Norman world,⁶ and the texts themselves appeared to contain ‘a drift towards a more realistic, even journalistic, reporting of deathbed scenes from the beginning of the twelfth century’.⁷ Given that appreciation of the form and original intention of these texts – teaching morals to their intended audience – is deepening,⁸ it was thought profitable to examine their relation to Bede’s claims for history.

³ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 33-50. For an illustration of a later period, see Gerhard Jaritz, ‘Der “gute” und der “böse” Tote. Zur zeichenhaften Visualisierung des Leichnams im Spätmittelalter’, in *Körper ohne Leben: Begegnung und Umgang mit Toten*, ed. Norbert Stefenelli (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 325-335.

⁴ For a contextualization of smell in the period, see Jean-Pierre Albert, *Odeurs de sainteté: la mythologie chrétienne des aromates* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1990).

⁵ Crouch, ‘Culture of Death’, 180.

⁶ The period is assessed in Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁷ Crouch, ‘Culture of Death’, 162.

⁸ A recent example being Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012).

Sive enim historia de bonis bona referat, ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur; seu mala commemoret de pravis, nihilominus religiosus ac pius auditor sive lector devitando quod noxium est ac perversum, ipse sollertius ad exsequenda ea quae bona ac Deo digna esse cognoverit, accenditur.

Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse, and himself with greater care pursue those things which he has learned to be good and pleasing in the sight of God.⁹

The use of history for pedagogical purposes – and the creation of models for the listener to imitate – has classical as well as Jewish and Christian origins that would have been known to the authors of the text this study discusses.¹⁰ Bede, however, was both frequently copied and much admired.¹¹ This examination into whether eleventh and twelfth century authors recorded ‘evil ends’ so that their audiences would ‘eschew what is harmful and perverse’ is intended to contribute to the re-evaluation of these texts.¹²

This study examines the differing accounts of the death and burials of successive rulers of England: Edward (d. 1066), Harold II (d. 1066), William I (d. 1087), William II (d. 1100), and Henry I (d. 1135). For a kingdom, the death of the ruler was an important event whose significance went beyond the individual. Unlike birth and baptism, where the individual owing to age had little say in the matter,¹³ or coronation and marriage, which were arranged and followed protocols, death could be prepared for but could also come quickly and so drastically alter the nature of the state.

⁹ Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and tr. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 2-3.

¹⁰ See, for comparison, Klaas Spronk, 'Good Death and Bad Death in Ancient Israel According to Biblical Lore', *Social Science & Medicine* 58 (2004): 987-995.

¹¹ From the Conquest to the 1130s, the production and circulation of historical manuscripts surged. These included Orosius, Eutropius, Justinus, Josephus, Eusebius, Victor of Vita, Paul the Deacon, and, seemingly the most copied, Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*. Richard Gameson, *The Manuscripts of Early Norman England (c. 1066-1130)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 36-37.

¹² Thanks to financial support from CEU and the Henrik Birnbaum Memorial Scholarship Fund, a preliminary study of the three Anglo-Norman rulers was published: James Plumtree, 'Stories of the Death of Kings: Retelling the Demise and Burial of William I, William II and Henry I', *Southern African Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21 (2011 for 2012): 1-30.

¹³ For a rare use of baptism in a historical narrative to express judgment on a ruler, see the account of Æthelred foudling a baptismal font when a baby (possibly following from a legend connected to Constantine V, 'Copronymus'), see *GRA* 268.

Death therefore provided for those who documented such events an encapsulation of the ruler in regards to how he viewed his kingdom and (possibly) how his kingdom viewed him. By examining the different accounts of their deaths, we can see how their demise was received and understood. Though earlier kings could have been selected, these five have been chosen in order to examine possible developments in the historiography of this period. For a similar reason, this thesis could have selected the death and burials of other people – such as important (and less important) monastic figures,¹⁴ participants of the court,¹⁵ or deaths of other members of royal families who could have inherited the kingdom (such as potential successors, like Henry's son William Adelin, killed in the White Ship disaster,¹⁶ and William I's offspring killed in hunting accidents,¹⁷ and those passed over, like Robert Curthose and his son William Clito¹⁸). Instead, by focusing solely on the five selected rulers, it is possible to see clearly how the death of this key social group was regarded and used in the historiography.

Modern scholarship has dealt with the death of the monarch in a variety of ways. This study does so differently while building upon previous works. Two of the monarchs whom this study examines are dealt with in articles differing widely in intent. Perhaps typical of Anglophone scholarship is C. Warren Hollister's article on the

¹⁴ Two contrasting examples of death – the wayward monk Ansered and the leper Ralph – in *HE* I, 28, 40, 44, 46, show Orderic using deaths to reiterate monastic values.

¹⁵ For an examination of how Henry's courtiers prepared themselves for death, see David Crouch, 'The Troubled Deathbeds of Henry I's Servants: Death, Confession, and Secular Conduct in the Twelfth Century', *Albion* 34 (2002): 24-36. For a monastic response to a sudden death of a troublesome son of a monarch (who was not to inherit the kingdom), see Thomas Callahan Jr, 'Sinners and Saintly Retribution: The Timely Death of King Stephen's Son Eustace, 1153', *Studia Monastica* 18 (1976): 109-117.

¹⁶ For a study of how the sources depict the event, see Michael Evans, *The Death of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Press, 2007), 93-105. For a reading that the disaster was deliberate, see Victoria Chandler, 'The Wreck of the White Ship: A Mass Murder Revealed?', in *The Final Argument: The Imprint of Violence on Society in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 179-194.

¹⁷ *GRA*, 504; *HE* III, 114.

¹⁸ *HA*, 482; *HE* VI, 374-378.

surprise death of William II, which attempts to determine what occurred in the New Forest when the monarch was slain.¹⁹ This, to use Richard Southern's apt phrase, uses the sources 'as quarries of facts that require to be sifted and purified in order'.²⁰ By contrast, the German scholar Dietrich Lohrmann in his study of the death of Henry I noted the differences in the accounts, examining the outpouring of literature rather than trying to isolate the actual event.²¹ Other scholars have looked at a broader pattern, focusing on the deathbed scenes. John Gillingham has examined their role in English history from 1066 to 1216, focusing on the problems of succession.²² Scott Waugh has also looked at the deathbeds, noting the generic qualities in the texts and the repetitive behaviour of the monarchs (and their audiences) as they approach their death.²³ While these articles are finely argued, the focus solely on 'organised' deaths removes the important issue of how a violent demise was depicted. Given that two of the five monarchs this study examines were killed either in battle (Harold) or while hunting (William II), and that two more became ill either during (William I) or after (Henry I) a military engagement, the influence this had on the historiography is overlooked.

Broader book-length studies of the death of English rulers exist with the same title: *The Death of Kings*. The first, by Clifford Brewer, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Surgeons, attempts to provide a medical diagnosis for all monarchs from William I

¹⁹ C. Warren Hollister, 'The Strange Death of William Rufus', *Speculum* 48 (1973): 637-653

²⁰ R. W. Southern, *History and Historians: Selected Papers of R. W. Southern*, ed. R. J. Bartlett (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 11. See also Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, 149: "the general tendency of Anglophone scholarship in particular to treat historical narratives from the Middle Ages as depositories of facts rather than sources for the history of thought".

²¹ Dietrich Lohrmann, 'Der Tod König Heinrichs I. von England in der mittellateinischen Literatur Englands und der Normandie', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 8 (1972): 90-107. Compare however the method of Harmut Jericke, *Begraben und vergessen? Tod und Grablege der deutschen Kaiser und Könige*, 2 vols (Leinfelden-Echterdingen: DRW-Verlag, 2005-2006).

²² John Gillingham, 'At the Deathbeds of the Kings of England, 1066-1216', in *Herrscher- und Fürstentestamente im westeuropäischen Mittelalter*, ed. Brigitte Kasten (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2008), 509-530 (512-513).

²³ Scott Waugh, 'Royal Deathbed Scenes in Medieval England', in *Death at Court*, ed. Karl-Heinz Spieß and Immo Warntjes (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 117-134 (121).

to Victoria (including, erratically, Cromwell).²⁴ This enjoyable read however is problematic. In addition to the omissions that would have brought doubt to his profession (such as George V, given a lethal injection of morphia and cocaine by his doctor), Brewer repeatedly notes the awkward character of such an enterprise owing to the nature of the sources. The second book to have the title by Michael Evans is greatly different in form and interest.²⁵ Selecting the traditional Anglophone dates for the start and end of the Middle Ages (the deaths of Harold Godwinson and Richard III), Evans examines reoccurring themes in chapters that are arranged thematically. He makes pertinent points regarding the question of succession, the role of the cadaver, and how the death was ‘read’ by those who recorded the histories. As with the contrast between Hollister and Lohrmann, there is a divide between the desire for ‘hard facts’ and the drive to understand mentalities. This study, by narrowing the period and examining the sources to determine how they were intended to be read, follows the former, but also examines how the sources themselves, as custodians of written culture and memory, perceived and recorded the death of these rulers.

Chapters have been arranged around a single monarch, rather than thematically or around sources. Within these chapters, the sources are dealt with chronologically, to show and emphasise the changes or continuations in the presentation of a ruler’s death. Each chapter is intended to stand alone, but can be read in succession to note reoccurring patterns and differences. In various forms, it is possible to sometimes see how the monarch wished for their death and burial to be regarded, how the latter were viewed by contemporaries, and how the image of the kings’ demise was altered by

²⁴ Clifford Brewer, *The Death of Kings: A Medical History of the Kings and Queens of England*, (London: Abson, 2000).

²⁵ Evans, *Death of Kings*.

successive authors.²⁶ Though this study concerns death, it is also about the act of recording, and the methods and rationale of the historiography of the period, and understanding the mentalities of the era.

²⁶ For clarity and to avoid confusion, the location attached to an author's name (i.e. 'Malmesbury') is used when confusion could occur with the name of a monarch.

1. 'Joyfully Taken Up to Live With God'²⁷

The Altered Passing of Edward

The death of King Edward in 1066 was one of the most significant events in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman writing and hagiography. After a long and predominantly peaceful reign, Edward appears to have suffered a stroke and died,²⁸ leaving no clear inheritor of the kingdom of England. His marriage to Edith, a member of the House of Godwin, had been problematic owing to disputes with her family,²⁹ and had produced no offspring. Three rival claimants emerged – Edward's brother-in-law Harold Godwinson, Edward's distant relative William, Duke of Normandy, and Harold Hardrada – after the deceased monarch was buried at Westminster Abbey, an establishment he had patronized and had rebuilt in the Romanesque (and predominantly Norman) style.³⁰

This chapter examines four distinct elements in the depiction of Edward's death and burial. These are the subjects of distinct subchapters. The first examines depiction of 'two deaths', one recording the event and the other recasting Edward's death in a manner that the author deemed desirable (or profitable) for their own interests, within the same near-contemporary source. The texts examined are the MS C of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, with its poem 'The Death of Edward' (copied in MS D),³¹ and the *Vita Ædwardi Regis qui apud Westmonasterium Requiescit*. The second concerns the

²⁷ *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster*, ed. and tr. Frank Barlow (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 83.

²⁸ Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 247.

²⁹ Edith's position is neatly examined by Pauline Stafford in 'Edith, Edward's Wife and Queen', in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 119-138.

³⁰ On the style of the rebuilt abbey, see R. D. H. Gem, 'The Romanesque Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey (With a Reconstruction by W. T. Ball)' *ANS* 3 (1981): 60.

³¹ *ASC D*, xlvi: 'For 1065 and 1066 there are three versions of the Conquest, with D seeming to combine C and E'.

problematic depictions of Edward's death and burial in Sulcard's *Prologus de Construccione Westmonasterii* and in the Bayeux Tapestry. The penultimate subchapter discusses Osbert of Clare using Edward's corpse in his *Vita beati Eadwardi Regis*, and the last examines the contrasting depictions present in writings of more familiar authors of the period (Eadmer, Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon).

Studying the accounts of Edward's death and burial furthers comprehension of the reception of Edward by later audiences. Meticulous scholarship in the twentieth century revised our understanding of the historical King Edward by stripping him of the otherworldly saintliness his posthumous character accumulated. Though his final illness was sudden, later accounts portrayed him 'dying the exemplary death of a saint'.³² It should be noted that Godwin, whose earlier death at the monarch's dinner table was used by later chroniclers to pour scorn on his life, was, like Edward, subjected to a fatal stroke.³³ By examining the changing depictions, it is possible to see how Edward and his legacy were regarded.

1. 1. The King's Two Deaths in MS C and the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*

The earliest contemporary sources for Edward's death are the MS C of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, that was later copied and slightly amended in MS D of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and the *Vita Ædwardi Regis qui apud Westmonasterium Requiescit*. MS C was a 'live' chronicle, with entries added each year rather than copied by a later historian (until it ended abruptly in 1066),³⁴ and the latter vita has been dated to c.

³² Victoria Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 51.

³³ Frank Barlow, *The Godwins: The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (London: Pearson, 2002), 67, and *Edward the Confessor*, 247; Scott Waugh, 'The Lives of Edward the Confessor and the Meaning of History in the Middle Ages', in *The Medieval Chronicle III: Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle Doorn/Utrecht 12-17 July 2002*, ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 200-218.

³⁴ The distinction between 'live' and 'dead' is from Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 29-30; a 'dead' chronicle is one copied at a later date.

1067.³⁵ These two sources contain a feature that requires elucidation: both present the dying of Edward twice, with the second account being greatly embellished. In both texts, the second depiction presents the death of the monarch using a different narrative form while employing a different genre to the earlier account.

The entry for 1065 in MS C begins in a typical fashion, only to finish as something distinct. The first mention of the death of Edward follows the standard format for an annal.³⁶ The entry prosaically records the itinerary of King Edward: coming to Westminster near midwinter, consecrating of the Abbey built in honour of St. Peter and all God's saints, dying on the eve of Twelfth Night, and being buried in the same minster the next day.³⁷ This is followed by a poem editorially titled 'The Death of Edward'. To show its difference from an annal entry, it is printed in full below. The text copied in MS D differs only in the calculation of Edward's reign.

<H>er Eadward kingc, Engla hlaford,
 sende soþfæs<te> sawle to Criste
 on Godes wæra, gast haligne.
 He on worulda her wunode þrage
 on kyneþrymme, cræftig ræda.
 .xxiiii. freolic wealdend,
 wintra gerimes weol<an> brytnode,
 7 healfe tid, hæleða wealdend,
 weold wel geþungen Walum 7 Scottum
 7 Bryttum eac, byre Æðelredes,
 Englum 7 Sexum, oretmægcum,
 swa ymbclyppað cealde brymmas,
 þæt eall Eadwarde, æðelum kinge,
 hyrdon holdlice hagestealde menn.
 Wæs a bliðemod bealuleas kyng,
 þeah he lange ær lande bereafod,
 wunode wræclastum wide geond eorðan,
 syððan Cnut ofercom kynn Æðelredes

³⁵ The sole surviving manuscript is dated c. 1100, but internal features date the content to c. 1067; see *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, xxxii.

³⁶ The opening for 1065 fits with Sarah Foot's definition 'an arrangement of discrete statements into a framework provided by the unbroken sequence of years numbered since the Incarnation', in 'Finding the Meaning of Form: Narrative in Annals and Chronicles', in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. Nancy Partner (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 88-108 (89).

³⁷ *ASC C*, 118: 'And Eadward kingc com to Westmynstre to þam Middanwintre 7 þæt mynster þar let halgain þe he sylf getimbrode Gode to lofe 7 Sancte Petre 7 eallum Godes halgum, 7 seo circhalung wæs on Cilda mæssedæg. 7 he forðferde on Twelftan Æfen, 7 hyne man bebyrigde on Twelftan Daeg on þam ylcan mynstre swa hyt heræfter seigð.'

7 Dena weoldon deore rice
 Engla landes .xxvii.
 wintra gerimes welan bry<t>nodon.
 Syððan forð becom freolice in geatwum
 kyninge kystum god, clæne 7 milde,
 Eadward se æðela eðel bewerode,
 land 7 leode oðþæt lungre becom
 deað se bitera 7 swa deore genam
 æþelne of eorðan. Englas feredon
 soþfæste sawle innan swegles leoht.
 7 se froda swa þeah befæste þæt rice
 heahþungenum menn, Harolde sylfum,
 æþelum eorle, se in ealle tid
 hyrde holdlice hærran sinum
 wordum 7 dædum, wihte ne agælde
 þæs þe þearf wæs þæs þeodkyniges.

Here King Edward, lord of the English, sent a righteous soul to Christ, a holy spirit into God's keeping. Here in the world he lived for a while in kingly splendour, skilful in counsel; 24-and-a-half in number of years, a noble ruler distributed riches. Æthelred's son ruler of heroes, greatly distinguished, ruled Welsh and Scots, and Britons too, Angles and Saxons, combatant champions. Cold sea waves thus encircle all youthful men that loyally obeyed Edward, princely king. The blameless king was ever blithe of mood, though long before, bereft of land, he lived in paths of exile widely though the world after Cnut had overcome the race of Æthelred, and Danes ruled the dear kingdom of England for 28 years in number, dispensed riches. Afterwards came forth, noble in array, a king good in virtues, pure and mild; the princely Edward defended homeland, country and nation, until the very bitter death suddenly came and seized so dear a prince from the earth. Angels conveyed the righteous soul into heaven's light. However, the wise man committed the kingdom to a distinguished man, Harold himself, a princely earl, who at all times loyally obeyed his superior in words and deeds, neglecting nothing of which the nation's king was in need.³⁸

Renée Trilling noted that poetry in historical prose works such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 'underscore[s] moments of high emotional investment in praise evesongs and death laments, as well as providing the author with an alternative voice or voices in which to express apostrophes and commentary on events'.³⁹ That is what is occurring here. MS C draws attention to the poem by copying it in the manuscript in half-lines rather than the full lines typical in the manuscript,⁴⁰ signaling the importance invested

³⁸ *ASC C*, 118-9; translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 192, 194; since Swanton's text is not a line-by-line translation, I have printed it as prose. For MS D, see *ASC D*, 78-79.

³⁹ Renée R. Trilling, *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 181.

⁴⁰ *ASC C*, xlix-l. Anglo-Saxon poetry was typically written without line breaks. The history of the question of whether to print the poetry differently is address in Danielle Cunniff Plumer, 'The Construction of Structure in the Earliest Editions of Old English Poetry', in *The Recovery of Old*

in the account. MS D, though copying it in full lines, has the initial ‘H’ large enough that it extends into the margin, and closes with a ‘7’ ‘as large as the first letter of an annal’, highlighting its presence in the manuscript.⁴¹ The original poet desired to historicize the contemporary event, and make it appear as if it was a continuation of earlier Anglo-Saxon events. The poem is modeled on previous poems in the chronicle, employs a standard formula to announce a death, and uses archaic words and ideas to likewise emphasize historical continuity.⁴² Edward is described as if he was ‘a proper Germanic lord’: he is depicted ruling over heroes, distributing treasures, and, emphasized by an etymological pun, defending his homeland. Though Edward is depicted as being escorted by angels and his ordained heir, Harold, is said to be a reliable successor, modern scholars have read a melancholic and fatalistic attitude within this second depiction of Edward’s death.⁴³ Regardless of whether the poem looks backwards at the past or whether it looks forward to anticipate the cataclysmic events of 1066, it is clear that the author of the entry for 1065 regarded the brief entry as insufficient to articulate the contemporary feelings surrounding Edward’s death.

Two distinct accounts of death also appear in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*. These reflect a change in intention and circumstance. The first account of Edward’s death reflects the original intention of the work. The work was originally intended as an *encomium* to honour Edith and her family imitating her mother-in-law’s *Encomium*

English: Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, ed. Timothy Graham (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 243-279.

⁴¹ *ASC D*, 78-79 (n12, 20)

⁴² Thomas D. Hill, ‘The “Variegated Obit” as an Historiographical Motif in Old English Poetry and Anglo-Latin Historical Literature’, *Traditio* 44 (1988): 101-124 (117); Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the “End” of Old English Verse’, in *New Directions in Oral Theory*, ed. Mark C. Amodio (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 148-178.

⁴³ Trilling describes it as ‘the final canonical poem’, and a ‘convenient terminus for both poetic form and cultural identity reinforcing the idea that nation and ruling family are conjoined by history, tradition, and ideology’, *Aesthetics of Nostalgia*, 26. 117; Thomas A. Bredehoft sees it as ‘a fitting tribute to the last of Alfred’s dynasty and an implicit acknowledgement that that dynasty’s era was past’, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 150.

Emmae Reginae (also known, similarly, with the name of her husband, as the *Gesta Cnutonis Regis*).⁴⁴ Edward is depicted as being disturbed at the expense of his health about her brother Tostig, the Earl of Northumbria, and the rebellion triggered by the earl's poor governance.

Quo dolore decidens in morbum, ab ea die usque in diem mortis sue egrum trahebat animum. Contestatusque deum cum graui merore, ipsi conquestus est quod suorum debito destitueretur obauditu ad comprimendam iniquorum superbiam, dei que super eos imprecatus est uindictam.

Sorrowing at this, he fell ill, and from that day until the day of his death he bore a sickness of the mind. He protested to God with deep sorrow, and complained to Him, that he was deprived of the due obedience of his men in repressing the presumption of the unrighteous; and he called down God's vengeance upon them.⁴⁵

As Edward's 'powerlessness' is emphasized,⁴⁶ Edith is presented as the calm go-between. The monarch's death however brings a close to the first book of the *vita*. His sick soul makes him languish, he dies to the world, 'but was joyfully taken up to live with God'.⁴⁷

Written at a later date, likely after the battles of succession, the second account of Edward's demise in the *vita*'s second book reflects a change in intent.⁴⁸ The monarch becomes the focus of the *vita* that takes his name.⁴⁹ In contrast to the earlier depiction of a chaotic demise, Edward's death is also presented as a 'good' religious death. The dying man is both accepting and aware of his approaching end.

⁴⁴ J. L. Grassi, 'The *Vita Ædwardi Regis*: The Hagiographer as Insider', *ANS* 26 (2003): 87-102 (102).

⁴⁵ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 80-81.

⁴⁶ Richard Mortimer, 'Edward the Confessor: the Man and the Legend', in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009) 1-40 (19).

⁴⁷ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 82-83: Contigit hoc ante ipsum domini natale paucis diebus, cum mox intra ipsos natalicios dies idem deo carus rex Ædwardus ex contracta animi egritudine languescens obiit quidem mundo, sed feliciter assumptus est uicturus cum deo. As Mortimer notes, 'his death is described in what for this author are few words', 'Edward the Confessor', 19.

⁴⁸ For dating, see *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, xix-xxxiii (xxxi). For a contrasting view that the work is unified, see Victoria B. Jordan, 'Chronology and Discourse in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 8 (1998): 122-155.

⁴⁹ See the comment 'Edward is not the protagonist of his own Vita at any point other than in the miracles of Book II and in his rebuilding of Westminster', by Catherine E. Karkov, *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 162. See also R. W. Southern's quip, 'far more attention is paid to Godwin and his children than to the king himself – at least until the final pages', 'The First Life of Edward the Confessor', *EHR* 58 (1943): 385-400 (385).

Vbi uidet fide plenus rex Ædwardus ex instanti morbo urgeri se ad exitum, fune[b]ribus exequiis attitulat se commendatione et precibus summorum dei fidelium.

When King Edward, replete with faith, perceived that the power of the disease was forcing him to his end, with the commendation and prayers of the most important of God's faithful he resigned himself to the funeral rites.⁵⁰

This account has been labeled 'a highly influential, hybrid model of a royal deathbed scene'.⁵¹ The scholar, Scott Waugh, noting the intention of the text to present Edward as a saint, states the 'pattern of his death would have been familiar to readers of Bede and saints' lives more generally even in a secular setting'.⁵² Unlike the earlier account where the monarch is laden with earthly concerns, here Edward is depicted as otherworldly.

Namque exemptus rebus secularis tyranni ex aduocatione spiritus dei, liberius fruitur uisione futurorum ex contemplatione celesti.

For, indeed, being now freed by the protection of the spirit of God from the affairs of a secular ruler, he could through heavenly contemplation enjoy more easily a vision of the future.⁵³

This saintly scene is akin to earlier hagiographic texts that 'provided a moral lesson of the triumph of the spirit over the flesh, of virtue over human frailty'.⁵⁴ With the mention that the devout catered for his physical and spiritual needs,⁵⁵ Edward's death is presented akin to a monk's in a monastery. Such deaths were ritualized, in public, and heavily weighed towards religious symbolism and rites.⁵⁶ This recasting of the sudden death as a saintly death permits the insertion of new motifs and themes to Edward's life and demise. The dying king, contrary to most sufferers of a stroke, is depicted as

⁵⁰ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 116-117.

⁵¹ Waugh, 'Royal Deathbed Scenes', 121.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 116-117.

⁵⁴ Waugh, 'Royal Deathbed Scenes', 119.

⁵⁵ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 116: Cum inter manus deuotorum in funereal expectatione corpus sustentatur fragile, corporeo sopitus pondere, eorum edocetur certitudine, que pro peccatis nostris presenti patimur tempore.

⁵⁶ For the monastic way of death, see Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London: Routledge, 1999), 30, and Binski, *Medieval Death*, 29-33.

speaking fluently,⁵⁷ discussing a dream in which two long dead monks he used to know informed him that God, to punish those in high offices who were servants of the devil, had given the kingdom into the hands of the enemy until the time a green tree, felled in the middle, when rejoined would bear fruit. Though the dying seeing those long departed is a familiar topos, and that the ‘rustic metaphor’ may have come from the actual king’s deathbed mumblings, the author of the *vita* provides it with ‘scriptural polish’ to allude to biblical texts.⁵⁸ This insertion into the account of Edward’s demise is an ecclesiastical explanation to the Norman Conquest. After making this statement, the *vita* moves away from this ‘sorrow’ of what became of his kingdom to return to the dying king.⁵⁹ In another contrast to the death in book one, Edward is not passive as he approaches death: he tells his soldiers not to weep, praises his wife for standing by him like a daughter, commending her and the kingdom to Harold, and arranges his burial at Westminster.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 116: Et mox, sicut testantur hi qui aderant presentes, tanta usus est loquendi copia, ut cuius sanissimo nichil opus esset supra.

⁵⁸ Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 248 (especially fn 2, noting Luke 13:31 (Christ’s prophecy prior to his crucifixion) and Daniel 4:14, 15, 23 (the dream of Nebuchadnezzar)).

⁵⁹ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 122: Omisso interim hoc fletu, redeamus ad alterum, et explicemus qualiter hec dei gemma terreni corporis exuerit sterquilinum, et in diademate superni regis et[er]num splendoris optinuerit locum.

⁶⁰ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 122, 124: Adgrauato ad mortem cum sui starent et flerent amare, ‘Nolite’, inquit, ‘flere, sed deum pro anima mea rogate, michique eundi ad deum licentiam date. Non enim michi ne moriar propitiabitur, qui sibimet propitiari noluit ne non moreretur.’ Ad reginam uero pedibus suis assidentem, hoc ordine extremum perorauit sermonem: ‘Gratias agat dues huic sponse mee ex sedula officiositate seruitutis sue. Obsecuta est enim michi deuote, et lateri meo semper propius astitit in loco carissime filie, unde a propritio deo uicissitudinem opineat felicitates eterne.’ | Porrectaque manu ad predictum nutricium suum fratrem Haroldum, ‘Hanc’, inquit, ‘cum omni regno tutandam tibi commendo, ut pro domina et sorore ut est fideli serues et honores obesquio, ut, quoad uixerit, a me adepto non priuetur honore debito. Commendo pariter etiam eos qui natuam terram suam reliquerunt causa amoris mei, michique hactenus fideliter sunt obsecuti, ut, suscepta ab eis, si ita uolunt, fidelitate, eos tuearis et retineas, aut tua defensione conductos, cum omnibus que sub me adquisierunt, cum salute ad propria trans<fr>etari facias. Fossa sepulchri mei in monasterio paretur, in eo loco qui uobis assignabitur. Mortem uero meam queso ne celetis, sed celerius circumquaque annuntietis, ut quique fideles pro me peccatore deprecantur clementiam dei omnipotentis.’ Reginam quoque indesinenter lugentem interdum consolabatur ut insitum leuaret merorem. ‘Ne’, inquit, ‘timeas, non moriar modo, sed bene conualescam propitiante deo.’ Nec in hoc dicto diligentem, utique se, fefellit; non enim mortuus est, sed cum Christo uicturus de morte ad uitam migravit.

Also inserted in this second account is the depiction of Edward's corpse and its burial. These descriptions emphasize his qualities. Given that they are the antithesis of the putrid and broken corpses that we shall encounter in the later chapters concerned with other monarchical cadavers, it is worth quoting the *vita*'s account at length.

Erat tunc uidere in defuncto corpore gloriam migrantis ad deum anime cum scilicet caro faciei ut rosa ruberet, subiecta barba ut lilium canderet, manus suo ordine directe albescerent, totumque corpus non morti sed fausto sopori traditum signarent.

Then could be seen in the dead body the glory of a soul departing to God. For the flesh of his face blushed like a rose, the adjacent beard gleamed like a lily, his hands, laid out straight, whitened, and were a sign that his whole body was given not to death but to auspicious sleep.⁶¹

'These signs', Michael Evans noted, 'anticipated the incorruptibility of the king's body and indicated his sanctity'.⁶² The lily-like and rose-like attributes follow descriptions in Anglo-Saxon homilies concerned with the reunion of the body and the soul in the afterlife,⁶³ and earlier accounts of saintly cadavers.⁶⁴ The account of the funeral also resembles these earlier sources. Timothy Reuter suggested earlier burials of bishops would be described today 'as state funerals', noting that they resembled the *adventus* – the arrival of a ruler at a city.⁶⁵ The *Vita Ædwardi Regis* likewise presents Edward's funeral as a notable affair.

Paruntur ergo illa funebria regio, ut decebat, sumptu et honore, et cum omnium infinito merore. Deferunt eius felices exequias a domo palatii in aulam dei, precesque et gemitus cum psalmodiis celebrant tota illa die cum nocte succedenti. Orta interim die funeste celebritatis, decantatione missarum et recreatione pauperum officium beatificant perficiendi funeris, sicque coram altare beati Petri apostoli conditur corpus patrie lacrimis lotum ante conspectum dei. Totum quoque a primo die

⁶¹ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 124-125.

⁶² Evans, *Death of Kings*, 183.

⁶³ This connection is discussed in Victoria Jane Thompson, 'The Understanding of Death in England: 800-1100' (Ph.D Thesis: York: University of York, 2000), 82-83. For the homily, see *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. D. G. Scragg (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1992), 96.

⁶⁴ Wulfstan of Winchester, *Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and tr. Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 62: Testati uero nobis sunt qui ibi praesentes aderant exanime corpus sancti uiri subita inmutatione fuisse renouatum, lacteo candore perfusum roseoque rubore uenustum, ita ut quodam modo septennis pueri uultum praetendere uideretur, in quo iam quaedam resurrectionis gloria per ostensionem mutatae carnis apparuit.

⁶⁵ Timothy Reuter, 'A Europe of Bishops: The Age of Wulfstan of York and Burchard of Worms', in *Patterns of Episcopal Power: Bishops in 10th and 11th Century Western Europe*, ed. Ludger Körntgen and Dominik Waßenhoven (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 17-38 (20).

tricesimum celebratione missarum, decantatione prosecuntur psalmodum, expensis pro redemptione ipsius anime multis auri libri in subleuatione diuersi ordinis pauperum.

And so the funeral rites were arranged at the royal cost and with royal honour, as was proper, and amid the boundless sorrow of all men. They bore his holy remains from his palace home into the house of God, and offered up prayers and sighs and psalms all that day and the following night. Meanwhile, when the day of the funeral ceremony dawned, they blessed the office of the interment they were to conduct with the singing of masses and the relief of the poor. And so, before the altar of Peter the Apostle, the body, washed by his country's tears, is laid up in the sight of God. They also caused the whole of the thirtieth day following to be observed with the celebration of masses and the chanting of psalms, and expended many pounds of gold for the redemption of his soul in the alleviation of different classes of the poor.⁶⁶

Unlike examples discussed in later chapters of this thesis, there are no glitches and much religious feeling. The cadaver is transported without error and everyone is mournful, prayers and rites are successfully carried out, and money is distributed to aid the poor. The dead king is acclaimed a saint.

Reuelatum uero, ut supra texuimus, sanctum adhuc uiuentem in mundo, ad eius quoque tumbam propitia deitas his signis reuelat sanctum uiuere secum in celo, cum obentu eiusdem ibi illuminantur ceci, in gressum solidantur claudi, infirmi curantur, merentes consolatione dei reparantur, et pro fide cuiusque deum inuocantis insignia pietatis sue rex regum deus operatur.

Having been revealed as a saint while still living in the world, as we wrote before, at his tomb likewise merciful God reveals by these signs that he lives with Him as a Saint in heaven. For at the tomb through him the blind receive their sight, the lame are made to walk, the sick are healed, the sorrowing are refreshed by the comfort of God, and for the faith of those who call upon Him, God, the King of Kings, works the tokens of his goodness.⁶⁷

Edward's bishop-like burial and the miracles at his tomb fits with the monastic-like death (and skill of prophecy) and his saint-like corpse: they are religious elements inserted into the account.

All features of this second account in the *vita* are exemplary, and the question arises what triggered this new interpretation of the king's demise. The second depiction may show a continuation of established religious beliefs. Kingship for the Anglo-

⁶⁶ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 124-127.

⁶⁷ *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 126-127.

Saxons had deeply religious connotations,⁶⁸ and, unlike other religious establishments, Westminster at the time of Edward's death had an Anglo-Saxon abbot.⁶⁹ Such an action may have had political overtones, but not the ethnic type one might expect. By recasting Edward as a saint in a text that started as an *encomium* for the monarch's wife, the author of the *vita* created an interpretation of the dead ruler that proved helpful to his widow. Edward's eventual successor, William the Conqueror, supported the cult, providing his predecessor's remains with a reliquary.⁷⁰ The victor also arranged the funeral of Edith when she was brought to Westminster to be laid near her husband when she died,⁷¹ having remained in England unlike many of her family.

The MS C (and D) Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the *Vita Aedwardi Regis* as noted both depict the death of Edward twice, and in both the first account is greatly embellished in the second. The two however greatly differ in their presentation. Regarding the first death, the chronicle manuscripts record the king's final itinerary in an annalistic fashion while the *vita* presents the monarch's last moments in a negative fashion to stress the qualities of his wife. The differences in the depiction of the king's death in the later two portrayals continue to stress how the use of different traditions and genres could shape the event's image in historical writing. In the chronicles, poetry is used (and deliberately highlighted in the manuscript) with the archaic vocabulary and diction intentionally deliberately employed to fit with the presentation of the dead king

⁶⁸ William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), 19-20, 151-152.

⁶⁹ Eadwine favouring a cult of Edward is raised by John Crook, *English Medieval Shrines* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 157.

⁷⁰ Mortimer, 'Edward the Confessor', 35, highlighting Marc Bloch's edition of 'La vie de S. Édouard le Confesseur par Osbert de Clare', *Analecta Bollandiana* 41 (1923): 5-131 (120). Mortimer is apt concerning reliability: 'Osbert was a fabricator of history, but cannot have invented a prominent, valuable object whose existence could easily have been verified, and William is its most likely donor' (fn 155).

⁷¹ *ASC D*, 87: 7 Eadgyð seo hlaefdie forðferde, seo waes Eadwardes cynges geresta, scofon niht aer Cristesmaessan on Wincester, 7 se cyngc hig let bryngan to Westmynstre mid mycclan weorðscoce 7 leide heo wið Eadwarde cynges hire hlaforde.

as a heroic figure of old. In the *vita*, scenes of deathbed prophecies, images associated with a saintly corpse, bishop-like burials, and miracles are all used to turn an *encomium* for another person into a hagiographic text. In addition to showing the importance contemporary writers placed on the event, the curious feature of having the monarch's death depicted twice allows us to see how generic features articulated a response to Edward's demise.

1. 2. Dead Ends: Sulcard's *Prologus* and the Bayeux Tapestry

The next depictions of the death and burial of King Edward appear in Sulcard's *Prologus de Construccione Westmonasterii*, and in the Bayeux Tapestry. These two works are problematic in that historians have had difficulty contextualizing the works, and thus had difficulty gauging their meaning. Also problematic is that the two sources had no later medieval sources to elucidate their meaning, leaving them as anomalous curiosities. By looking at the format and the content of the two works, it is possible to establish the changing value of Edward's demise and burial for emerging social groups. With Sulcard's *Prologus*, we see its importance for the Westminster community; with the Tapestry, we see the importance of the event in articulating the history of the events that followed Edward's death.

Prologus de Construccione Westmonasterii was written by the monk Sulcard around 1080 by order of Vitalis, the Norman abbot of Westminster.⁷² Though written on the orders of the abbot of Westminster by a member of Westminster, the text does not present its re-founder, Edward, as a saintly figure capable of working miracles,⁷³ but rather presents him as a 'rex benignissimus' and 'rex pie mencionis'.⁷⁴ When

⁷² For dating, see *Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. Barlow, xxvxi.

⁷³ B. W. Scholz, 'Sulcard of Westminster: "Prologus de Construccione Westmonasterii"', *Traditio* 20 (1964): 59-91 (71); Emma Mason, *Westminster Abbey and Its People c. 1050-c. 1216* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), 294.

⁷⁴ Scholz, 'Sulcard', 90.

compared to how the *Vita Edwardi Regis* presents Edward's sanctity, Sulcard's presentation is 'extremely puzzling'.⁷⁵ Scholars as notable as Marc Bloch have answered this problem by claiming the vita to be a later fraud.⁷⁶ Westminster's treatment of Edward needs therefore assessment.

The death of Edward is presented at the end of the text. The *Prologus* describes Edward's role in the dedication of the building, presents him as hiding his fatal illness before dying after the rites, and notes he was buried by 'the very altar of the Prince of the Apostles'⁷⁷. This appearance, and description, is contrary to the negative scholarly readings, suitably sympathetic and supportive of Edward. The lack of saintly details is owing to two factors. The first is that the majority of miracles associated by Edward in the *Vita Edwardi Regis* occurred at the court, and not at the Abbey.⁷⁸ The second is that the *Prologus* belongs to a different genre to the hagiographic *vita* that the *Vita Edwardi Regis* became. The *fundatio* genre to which the *Prologus* belongs concerns the founding of an ecclesiastical establishment,⁷⁹ and, for the community of Westminster, it was St. Peter who founded the Abbey.⁸⁰ Though Edward is required,

⁷⁵ Southern, 'First Life', 387.

⁷⁶ The fraudulent nature of the *vita* was claimed by Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 17-44. For refutation of Bloch, see the Southern, 'First Life', and Eleanor K. Heningham, 'The Genuineness of the *Vita Eduuardi Regis*', *Speculum* 21 (1946): 419-456.

⁷⁷ Scholz, 'Sulcard', 91: Apparantur interea regio, vti par erat, sumptu tanti operis dedicacioni necessaria, et conuenitur eo a tota Britannia, conuenitur, inquam, | vt in natali domini sicut ad regis curiam vel ad celebrem Christo consecrandam ecclesiam. Et hoc, vti solet fieri, putabant fieri cum gaudio, sed *faciens pacem et creans malum* nostris exagitata peccatis aliter disponit diuina comminacio. Nam in ipsa natali domini nocte cepit ingrauari rex benignissimus. Dissimulans tamen ipsam diem tam in ecclesia quam in palacio ducit exultanter cum suis principibus. Secunda vero die, cum iam non posset celare, cepit secrecius requiescere et per internuncios curiam suam letificare, dedicacionemque monasterii sui per eos quos decebat consummare. Paucis, proch dolor, superuiuens diebus, sacro munitus viatico, extremum clausit diem, sepultusque est, vt videtur, ante ipsum altare principis apostolorum, cedente non solum Anglia, set omnibus vicinis regnis in gemitum.

⁷⁸ Emily L. O'Brien, 'The Cult of St. Edward the Confessor: 1066-1399' (Ph.D Thesis: Oxford: University of Oxford, 2001), 11.

⁷⁹ Scholz, 'Sulcard', 80-81: Si celestis gracia aliquam amministraret facultatem optate seruitutis, feruide ad hoc menti tandem viam reserauit fraterne pietatis et caritatis occasio, oblatu scilicet codex memorialis de huius beati Petri quod regitis et construitis monasterio.

⁸⁰ As Brian Briggs aptly in his thesis 'The Life and Works of Osbert of Clare' (Ph.D Thesis: St Andrews: University of St Andrews, 2004), 62-63, the 'saintly patron of Westminster, according to Sulcard, is clearly St Peter'.

by nature of the genre, to be relegated in importance within the text, his life, death, and burial still makes a memorable appearance at the close of the text, stressing his connection to the Abbey.⁸¹ For the monks at Westminster, it was the establishment that was important; the burial of a supportive monarch there was further proof of its qualities.

The image of King Edward's deathbed and funeral occupies an important place in the Bayeux Tapestry (figure 1), dated c. 1070s. There are two aspects to Edward's depiction: the first is his character, the second is his role in the narrative. Both are connected to his death. Underneath the caption 'HIC EADWARDVS REX IN LECTO ALLOQUIT<UR> FIDELES' is King Edward surrounded by unnamed figures likely to be Edith, weeping at his feet, Harold, by his hand, the archbishop Stigand, and Robert fitzWimarc.⁸² Underneath this image is another short text, 'ET HIC DEFVNTVS EST', itself above an ecclesiastical figure standing over the deceased monarch with two figures attending the corpse. Immediately earlier, to the left of these scenes, is Edward's corpse, wrapped in Byzantine textiles,⁸³ being carried in a catafalque akin to feretory⁸⁴ to the recently constructed Westminster

⁸¹ Like other examples of the *fundatio* genre, the *Prologus* survives as the preface to medieval chartularies; this location stresses the re-founder Edward to the legal possessions.

⁸² *BT*, plate 29; Stephen Baxter, 'Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question', in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 77-118 (112). The lack of information about what was said to the faithful is noted in R. Howard Bloch, *A Needle in the Right Hand of God: The Norman Conquest of 1066 and the Making and Meaning of the Bayeux Tapestry* (New York: Random House, 2006), 154-155.

⁸³ C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 159-165, comments that textiles found in Edward's tomb are of comparable quality to that depicted. These fragments, kept at the Victoria and Albert (T. 2, T. 3, and T. 4), are visible at <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O261251/woven-silk/>.

⁸⁴ 'What we are viewing here is not simply a bier but more specifically a feretory; and the Tapestry author was representing for us the fact that Edward's body was lying, visible to all, on an item that was more usually associated with a saint'. S. D. Church, 'Aspects of the English Succession, 1066-1199: The Death of the King', *ANS* 29 (2007): 17-34 (21).

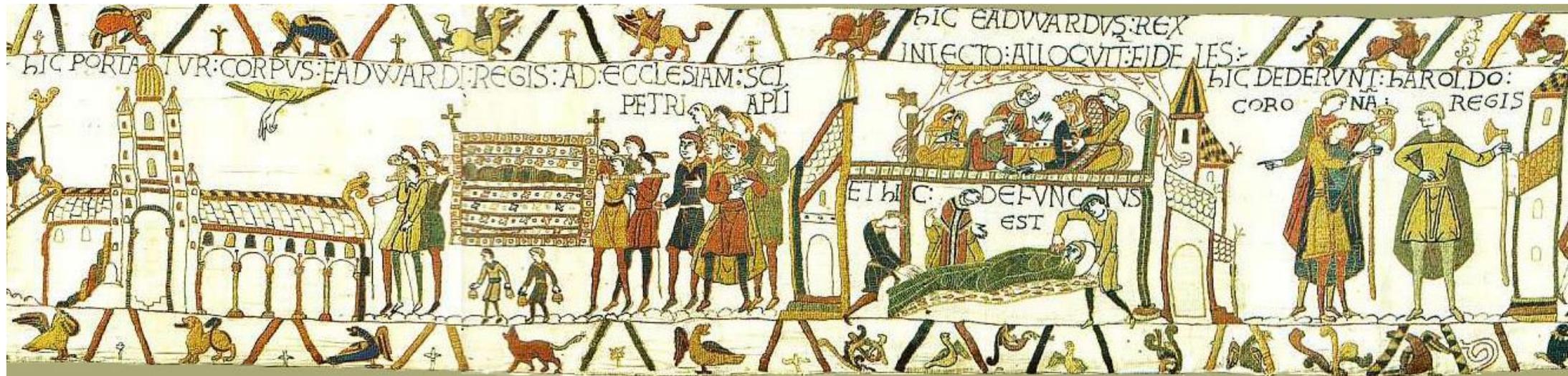


Figure 1: Burial and Death of Edward (Bayeux Tapestry)

Abbey⁸⁵ (blessed by the Hand of God),⁸⁶ under the tituli ‘HIC PORTATVR CORPVS EADWARDI REGIS AD ECCLESIAM S<AN>C<T>I PETRI AP<OSTO>LI’.⁸⁷ As in the *Prologus*, while the sanctity of Peter is stressed over Edward, the corpse was ‘already regarded as a relic’.⁸⁸ This is further emphasized by the visual allusions of Edward’s demise to the biblical figures of Jared, Lamech, Methusaleh, and Mahalalel in the illustrations to the *Old English Hexateuch* (figure 2).⁸⁹ These allusions, such as Mahalelel who had a reputation for piety,⁹⁰ emphasize the religious image of Edward in the mind of the Tapestry designer.

The role played by Edward and the importance of his death in the tapestry does not concern his saintliness; rather, it is focused on its historical importance. To see this, attention must be paid to the non-linear arrangement placing Edward’s burial before his death. Immediately after the scenes of Edward’s deathbed and death under the tituli ‘HIC DEDERUNT HAROLDO CORONA<M> REGIS’ is a noble pointing backwards at the previous image, prior to a scene depicting Harold’s coronation.⁹¹ This visually connects Edward passing the kingdom to Harold (shown visually by the touching fingers) to the coronation of Harold as his successor. The non-linear

⁸⁵ Bloch, *Needle*, 11: ‘The Tapestry signals the newness of construction via a figure placing a weathercock on the roof as Edward’s bier is carried to its final resting place’.

⁸⁶ ‘Particular significance may be discerned in the scene in the Tapestry where Edward’s body is being conveyed towards the abbey over the roof of which the Hand of God is stretched in blessing’, Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, 296.

⁸⁷ *BT*, plates 29-30.

⁸⁸ Cyril Hart, ‘The Bayeux Tapestry and Schools of Illumination at Canterbury’, *ANS* 22 (2000): 117-168 (133).

⁸⁹ A facsimile of this manuscript, and an apt reading, is provided in Benjamin C. Withers, *The Illustrated Old English Hexateuch, Cotton Claudius B. iv: The Frontier of Seeing and Reading in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2007). Bloch, *Needle*, 156, suggests another visual allusion: ‘The scene of Edward on his deathbed [...] resembles the set scene of the Dormition of the Virgin on her bier, surrounded by mourning apostles on Byzantine embroideries from the tenth century on’. On Byzantine textiles, see footnote 83.

⁹⁰ Gale R. Owen-Crocker, ‘Reading the Bayeux Tapestry through Canterbury eyes’, in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. Simon Keyes and Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 243-265 (255).

⁹¹ *BT*, plate 31.



Figure 2:

Deathbeds in the *Old English Hexateuch*, clockwise from top left Malaleel (f.11r) Jared (f. 11v), Methusaleh (f.12r), Lamech (f.12r) (from Withers); Edward in the

Bayeux
(bottom)

Tapestry



arrangement clearly links the two incidents,⁹² implying that Edward on his deathbed was dealing with the issue of succession.⁹³ This is what the designer of the tapestry considered most important about Edward's death.

In Sulcard's *Prologus* and the Bayeux Tapestry, we see the importance attached to Edward's death a decade after the event. In Sulcard's text, Edward's demise and burial is put into the context of the – mythical – history of the foundation of Westminster Abbey. Edward is depicted as a pious and benign ruler, whose death and burial, while not displaying signs of sanctity, are depicted appreciatively by the monk whose establishment Edward supported. In contrast, the designer of the Bayeux Tapestry presents the saintliness of Edward – depicting him in death like an Old Testament patriarch, and presenting his bier like a reliquary – but arranges the narrative to use Edward's deathbed as an explanation for the Norman Conquest that followed. If the current consensus regarding the commission and origin of the Tapestry is followed – that it was commissioned by Bishop Odo, half-brother of William the Conqueror,⁹⁴ and made at St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury,⁹⁵ where Odo held much property⁹⁶ – we see, as in Sulcard's *Prologus*, a community putting into context the death and burial of King Edward, and the consequences of that event.

⁹² To phrase it differently, the depictions 'were carefully planned in order to underscore certain linkages and casual relationships', Elizabeth Carson Pastan, 'Building Stories: The Representation of Architecture in the Bayeux Embroidery', *ANS* 33 (2011): 151-185 (160). For the part in question, see N. P. Brooks and H. E. Walker, 'The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 1 (1979): 1-34 (21-22), and David J. Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 160. For an alternative view – that the pattern was laid on the linen in reverse – see Desirée Kostlin, 'Turning Time in the Bayeux Tapestry', *Textile and Text* 13 (1990): 28-45.

⁹³ This, I note, does not suggest what view the Tapestry presents. For the view that this scene shows Harold – in spite of some protests – legitimately inheriting the kingdom, see Pierre Bouet and François Neveux, 'Edward the Confessor's Succession According to the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, ed. Michael J. Lewis, Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Dan Terkla (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 59-65.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Carson Pastan, 'A Feast for the Eyes: Representing Odo at the Banquet in the Bayeux Embroidery', *HSJ* 22 (2010 for 2012): 83-121 (110).

⁹⁵ As Cyril Hart asserts 'the art-historical evidence for the design and manufacture of the *Bayeux Tapestry* at St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury is now so extensive and formidable that such a provenance should be taken as an established fact', 'Bayeux Tapestry and Schools', 117.

⁹⁶ Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and Interpretation', 18.

1. 3. The Smell of Sanctity, A Whiff of Fraud: Osbert and the 1102 Translation

The most prominent event in regards to Edward's corpse occurred during the translation of 1102, where the monarch's remains were said to be uncorrupted. This was considered proof of his sanctity. Though the event is not specifically a death or a burial, it is necessary for it to be included owing to it being the paradigm of a 'saintly corpse' in opposition to the corpses of the monarchs discussed later.

The sole authority for the event is detailed. Osbert of Clare's *Vita beati Eadwari Regis*, written in 1138, thirty-six years after the event, begins by stating that the monarch's body was found whole and incorrupt.⁹⁷ The text then notes that Gilbert, the abbot of Westminster, and Gundulf, prelate of Rochester, were present.⁹⁸ Some of the other ecclesiastical figures in attendance desired to see how thirty-six years in a tomb had affected their dead monarch's features; others merely wished to see again his face.⁹⁹ Opening the tomb, they discover that the Edward's body and the symbols of his kingship are completely absent of decay; the dead king is the very image of a resurrected saintly body.¹⁰⁰ Greatly moved by the experience, Gundulf attempts to

⁹⁷ Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 121: Cum domino Deo nostro placuit oculis multorum corporalibus ostendere quanta sanctus princeps pulcritudine choruscaret in carne, sancte multitudinis illius glorie temporali testimonium sufficit, que in die sue translationis incorruptum regis corpus inueniunt.

⁹⁸ Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 121: Domnus abbas Gillebertus, cuius nomen patronimicum dicebatur Crispinus, ad tantam sollempnitatem plures honestatis personas inuitauerat, inter quas omnes uenerandus. Roffensis urbis episcopus Gunnolfus specialiter eminebat.

⁹⁹ Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 121: Sex namque et xxx annis rex delituerat Eadwardus in tumulo, eumque iuxta condicionem mortalitatis nostre arbitrati sunt nonnulli humanitus in cineres defluxisse. Quidam uero pio mentis desiderio quoddam diuinum presagiebant in eo cuius membra, quia uirginei pudoris dampna non senserant, in quadam resurrectionis gloria corpus manere non dubitabant. Alii uero sancti et religiosi uiri maximo ducebantur affectu uultum eius cernere, quibus contigit in carne dum uiueret desiderabilem faciem eius uidere. In eius namque fuerant obsequio deputati, ideoque ad sanctum feruebant celerius negotium ut propriis inuiserent oculis tanto tempore tumulatum.

¹⁰⁰ Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 121-122: Remouetur ergo lapis superior a sarcofago, corpusque gloriosum pallio inuolutum reperriunt precioso; manus delicatas et flexibiles articulos, regioque digitorum anulo circumdatum et sandalia contemplantur nullum putredinis preferre uestigium; sceptrum a latere et corona in capite et quecumque sepulture celebris erant regalia nulla uidebantur uetustate consumpta. Sicque caro et nitida erant ac inuiolata omnia uestimenta, ut integritas eorum loqueretur Deum in Eadwardo uere mirabilem, qui in eius carne representabat quondam sanctorum corporum resurrectionem.

pluck a hair from the monarch's face, only to find it stubbornly difficult to do so.¹⁰¹ Gundulf, in response to a rebuke from Gilbert for his action, provides an explanation.¹⁰² The episode closes with an unmistakable feature of sanctity: a pleasant smell.¹⁰³ Having seen all the signs of sanctity, a reader of the episode of Osbert's *Vita beati Eadwardi Regis* would receive the impression that the translation of Edward's corpse revealed the saintliness of the deceased monarch owing to the incorruptibility of his remains.¹⁰⁴

There are, however, plenty of troubling features in Osbert's account. Though the terminology is correct for the moving of relics from being buried to a place above ground,¹⁰⁵ there is no description of Edward's corpse being moved from a tomb to a shrine.¹⁰⁶ Nor is there any confirmation that Gilbert and Gundulf attended, nor could they respond to Osbert's assertions; both were long dead by the time the *Vita* was written. Also suspect is the motivation for opening the tomb. The mixed intentions – with some present professing loyalty to the king rather than for religious reasons – suggests the assembly of such important figures in the church hierarchy for an

¹⁰¹ Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 122: Tantus autem timor uniuersos inuasit, ut uelatum regis faciem nullus aggredereetur detegere, nec concupiscibilem uultum eius ex parte aliqua denudare. Solus ille uir sanctus et iustus antistes Dei Gunnulfus tanti amoris desiderio ignitus efferuuit, ut pallium sub mento scinderet et barbam foris extraheret, et inter manus suas uenusta compositione collocaret. Cum uero eam solidam sentiret in carne, heros obstupuit de miraculi nouitate. Temptauit tamen pilum aliquem si sponte sequeretur suauiter detrahere, ut de sancti regis reliquiis huiusmodi copia preualeret habundare.

¹⁰² Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 122: Astans uero et considerans hec domnus abbas Gillebertus: «Quid» inquit «est, presul amabilis, quod agis? Qui in terra uiuentium perpetuam cum sanctis Dei possidet hereditatem, quare temporalis eius glorie queries minuere porcionem? Relinque, uir insignis, talia presumere, et noli tantum principem in regni sui thalamo pregrauare.» Iam uero Gunnulfus totus in lacrimis resolutus: «Probe, uenerabilis abbas, locutus es» ait. «Set noueris quod me nulla presumptionis audacia ad hoc precipitauit. Ardor namque sancte deuotionis quo in amore gloriosi regis incalui monuit ut uel unum ex barba niuea pilum contingerem, quod ad eius memoriam sollempniter exceptum auro precioso preciosius possiderem. At quia spes effluxit nec ad uotum michi cedere potuit, que sua sunt ut Dominus habeat in pace, et superni iuris non spoliatur concessa celitus libertate. Requiescat in palatio suo et incorruptus et uirgo, donec tripudio gratulabundus occurrat aduentui iudicis, recepturus in hac carne perhennem gloriam beate immortalitatis».

¹⁰³ Bloch, 'La vie de S. Édouard', 122-123: In sepulcro igitur clauserunt sanctum corpus in integra sui soliditate repertum de quo prius tanta odoris emanauerat fragrantia ut eius suauitate illa domus Dei tota quasi redoleret aspersa.

¹⁰⁴ The 'state of Edward's body was crucial to any claim of sainthood', Lynn Jones, 'From *Anglorum basileus* to Norman Saint: The Transformation of Edward the Confessor', *HSJ* 12 (2002): 99-120 (114).

¹⁰⁵ Edward is uncovered in a sarcophagus, and reburied in a sepulchrum. For the terminology, see Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 38-39.

¹⁰⁶ O'Brien, 'Cult of Edward', 13.

unfocused event to be unlikely.¹⁰⁷ Osbert, in a papal bull he forged in 1139, alleged that the monks intended to sell the regalia.¹⁰⁸ Most striking is claim that Edward's incorrupt cadaver was owing to virginity. Osbert appears to have taken a literary theme in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis* – presenting Edith's childlessness as a 'patron and surrogate mother' of the establishments she patronized¹⁰⁹ – and employed it for Edward and Westminster. In addition, he connected it to his own adherence and promotion of the emerging cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁰ Osbert wrote Edward's life to imitate Mary's life.¹¹¹ In the *Vita beati Eadwardi Regis*, Osbert repeatedly connects Edward's chastity to his corpse (even mentioning the king's future uncorrupt cadaver during the account of his marriage),¹¹² stressing the monarch's existence in death rather than life,¹¹³ and repeatedly associating the king's corpse with Westminster.¹¹⁴ This is very different to the presentation of the monarch in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*, the *Prologus*, and the Bayeux Tapestry. To understand these historically problematic insertions of Osbert, 'a man whom we know

¹⁰⁷ For the loyalty, Evans, *Death of Kings*, 183; for the assemblage being 'unlikely', O'Brien, 'Cult of Edward', 14.

¹⁰⁸ Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, 298; *Westminster Abbey Charters 1066 – c. 1214*, ed. Emma Mason (London: London Record Society), no. 161.

¹⁰⁹ Monika Otter, 'Closed Doors: An Epithalamium for Queen Edith, Widow and Virgin', in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 63-92 (73).

¹¹⁰ Osbert's role in the cult is addressed in the chapter 'On the Origins of the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary', in Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), 238-259 (243-248).

¹¹¹ 'Osbert also apparently added Edward's great devotion to Mary, who was his model for virginity', Briggs, 'Life and Works', 143-144.

¹¹² 'With but a few exceptions, wherever Edward's chastity is mentioned or alluded to, it is in connection to his dying, death and/or the incorruption of his corpse. Even the account of his marriage is concluded with a reference to his corpse', Joanna Huntingdon, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint: Virginity in the Construction of Edward the Confessor', in *Medieval Virginites*, ed. Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans, and Sarah Salih (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), 119-139 (125).

¹¹³ 'Osbert is quite simply not interested in Edward the man as virgin. Instead, his interest is in Edward the virgin corpse', Huntingdon, 'Edward the Celibate', 125.

¹¹⁴ Osbert 'took rumors of Edward's celibacy and hagiographical sections from the early life, and centered them on his burial site at Westminster Abbey'. Briggs, 'Life and Works', 62-63.

to have been deeply involved in fraud',¹¹⁵ we must examine two contexts: the date of the supposed translation 1102, and the date of Osbert's writing.

1102 was an important year in regards to cults. That very year, at a synod in Westminster, Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, commanded that cults without episcopal authorization should be stopped.¹¹⁶ Popular cults, such as one that arose around the executed Anglo-Saxon earl Waltheof, were targeted with critical epistles.¹¹⁷ At the same time, a push for support of Anglo-Saxon saints occurred.¹¹⁸ Whether this was a rekindling of Anglo-Saxon heritage following Norman King Henry's marriage to the Anglo-Saxon Matilda (formerly Edith), or whether it was due to copious levels of church alterations and expansions, is difficult to determine. One key figure known for successfully promoting Anglo Saxon saints was Gundulf, who encourage two cults at Rochester,¹¹⁹ and took part in translations at Ely.¹²⁰ This detail is important, for it is Gundulf who Osbert claims attempted to take a hair from the dead Edward's beard. Such a choice is explained by a statement by Gábor Klaniczay: 'nails, along with the hair and teeth, were the 'corporal' relics (by far the most valuable type) that were the easiest to remove without doing any great damage to the saint's corpse'.¹²¹ It may be

¹¹⁵ Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 267.

¹¹⁶ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia et opuscula duo de vita Sancti Anselmi et quibusdam miraculis ejus*, 141-144 (143); Nequis temeraria novitate corporibus mortuorum, aut fontibus, aut aliis rebus, quod contigisse cognovimus, sine episcopali auctoritate reverentiam sanctitatis exhibeat.

¹¹⁷ Waltheof's cult is dealt with by Johanna Huntingdon, 'The Taming of the Laity: Writing Waltheof and Rebellion in the Twelfth Century', *ANS* 32 (2010): 79-95, and Emma Mason, 'Invoking Earl Waltheof', in *The English and their Legacy 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. David Roffe (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 185-203.

¹¹⁸ The earlier defence of Anglo-Saxon saints, in the decades immediately following the conquest, are discussed in Paul Antony Hayward 'Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English Resistance to the Norman Conquest', *ANS* 21 (1999): 67-93.

¹¹⁹ Gundulf's support of the cults of St. Paulinus and St. Ithamar is analysed in Simon Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 100-121.

¹²⁰ For Gundulf's part in the translation of St. Æthelthryth or Etheldred, St. Seaxburh and others at Ely in 1106, see Richard Sharpe, 'The Setting of St Augustine's Translation, 1091', in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066-1109*, ed. Richard Eales and Richard Sharpe (London: Hambledon Press, 1995), 1-13 (12).

¹²¹ Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, tr. Éva Pálmai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 119.

that the criticism by Gilbert and the lengthy speech by Gundulf was inserted by Osbert to explain why no relic was taken from Edward during the inspection of his corpse. As if overcompensating, Edward's remains are presented as completely untouched.

The changing depiction of Edward's corpse by Osbert is closely connected to the financial concerns of Westminster Abbey and emerging paradigms of saintly kingship. The Abbey's golden age, instigated by Edward, was difficult to maintain following the ruptures to their endowment caused by the Norman Conquest.¹²² Osbert was moved 'by zeal for the wellbeing of the abbey, linked with a devotion to its patron, King Edward'.¹²³ Having previously been expelled from the abbey for complaining to higher ecclesiastical authorities about the problems,¹²⁴ Osbert chose a different method to assist the church. Amid a period across the continent of that saw deceased rulers being presented as saintly figures (including the idealized image of a 'chaste prince'),¹²⁵ Osbert pushed for the canonisation of Edward 'to gain a special patron for Westminster and thus increase the sanctity of the place'.¹²⁶ To do this, the *vita* he provided presented the previous texts 'amplified with miraculous and legendary elements'.¹²⁷ Whereas Sulcard's *Prologus* mentioned the connection between the (secondary) patron and the abbey; Osbert's *Vita beati Eadwardi Regis* stressed the importance of Edward's corpse, using the detail of his lack of an heir as proof of saintliness.

¹²² *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Mason, 8.

¹²³ *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Mason, 8-10.

¹²⁴ Pierre Chaplais, 'The Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase Abbots of Westminster (1121-1157)', in *A Medieval Miscellany for Doris May Stenton*, ed. Patricia M. Barnes and C. F. Slade (London: Rudduck, 1962), 89-110 (91).

¹²⁵ Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 154.

¹²⁶ Bernhard W. Scholz, 'The Canonization of Edward the Confessor', *Speculum* 36 (1961): 38-60 (48).

¹²⁷ Edina Bozoky, 'The Sanctity and Canonisation of Edward the Confessor', in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 173-186 (174-175).

1. 4. The Death in Histories: Orderic, Malmesbury, and Huntingdon

The ‘amplification’ of Edward’s sanctity and his corpse by Osbert is apparent when one looks at the presentation of the monarch’s death and burial in historical writings produced between the date of the supposed inspection and the date of Osbert’s writing. Orderic Vitalis’s additions to William of Jumièges *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* (1109-1113) and the account in his own *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1125), William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (1126, revised c. 1135), and Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum* (c. 1133). These chronicles, though they provide conflicting images of Edward’s sanctity, each use the monarch’s demise and burial explain the historical events that followed.¹²⁸

The writings of Orderic Vitalis are important for showing that the materials that Osbert ‘amplified’ existed, but not arranged for such a purpose. In his additions to William of Jumièges *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Orderic is ‘the first [author] explicitly to mention the unconsummated marriage, Edward as a restorer of Anglo-Saxon laws, and his prophetic gifts’, all themes of Edward’s hagiographical tradition’.¹²⁹ These however appear in the account of Edward’s marriage¹³⁰ – which contains no mention of his future incorrupt corpse – than in the depiction of Edward’s deathbed. The monarch’s dying is used by Orderic to explain Harold’s problematic inheritance of Edward’s kingdom.¹³¹ Orderic’s focus is on telling the events of 1066,

¹²⁸ Omitted from the discussion is the briefest of accounts in Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 8, which appears after a lengthy account of Harold’s supposed oaths to William: In brevi post haec obit Edwardus, et juxta quod ipse ante mortem statuerat in regnum ei successit Haroldus.

¹²⁹ *GND* II, 108. For a discussion of these ‘facts of general interest, taken from other chronicles, and some oral traditions’, see Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), 176-177.

¹³⁰ *GND* II, 108: Nam reuera, ut dicunt, ambo perpetuam uirginitatem conseruarunt. Edwardus nempe rex uir bonus erat humilis, mitis, iocundus et longanimis, amator Dei fidelis, et sancte ecclesie defensor inuincibilis, Clemens pauperum tutor, et Anglicarum legum legitimus restitutor. Multoties diuina mysteria uidit, et uaticinia, que rerum euentu postmodum comprobata sunt, deprompsit regnumque Anglorum fere .xxiii. annis feliciter rexit.

¹³¹ *GND* II, 160: Denique rex Hetwardus completo termino felicis uite sub anno millesimo sexagesimo quinto Dominice incarnationis e seculo migravit. Cuius regnum Heroldus continuo inuasit, ex fidelitate

than reflecting on deceased king. In his later work, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Orderic's focus is similarly on the incidents of the tumultuous year. After noting the appearance of a comet, he consciously connects it to the death of Edward that resulted in the events that followed.¹³² Then, in comparison to the 'good death' of Edward depicted in the second part of the *Vita Edwardi Regis* that presents the dying monarch as a saint, Orderic uses the deathbed of the king to explain the succession.

Nam regem Eduardum qui morbo ingrauescente iam morti proximus erat circumuenit; eique transfretationis suae et profectionis in Normanniam ac legationis seriem retulit. Deinde fraudulentis assertionibus adiecit; quod Willelmus Normanniae sibi filiam suam in coniugium dederit, et totius Anglici regni ius utpote genero suo concesserit. Quod audiens aegrotus princeps miratus est; tamen credidit et concessit quod uaferrime tyrannus commentatus est.

He deceived King Edward who was then grievously ill and near to death; he gave an account of his crossing and arrival in Normandy and mission there, but then added falsely that William of Normandy had given him his daughter to wife and granted him as his son-in-law all his rights in the English kingdom. Though the sick monarch was amazed, nevertheless he believed the story and gave his approval to the cunning tyrant's wishes.¹³³

The *Historia Ecclesiastica's* account is interrupted by Orderic explaining that Edward had intended the kingdom to go to William, and that Harold has committed perjury having promised William the crown at Rouen.¹³⁴ Only after this explanation does Orderic include an account of Edward's funeral, albeit one that mentions how Harold usurped also the event to be crowned by Archbishop Stigand.¹³⁵ In presenting Edward's

peieratus quam iurauerat duci. Orderic could have made additions to this text if he desired; he had previously inserted the detail that Harold would marry William's daughter Adeliza.

¹³² *HE* II, 134: Anno ab incarnatione Domini mxcvi, indictione iv; mense aprili fere xv diebus a parte Circii apparuit stella quae cometes dicitur, qua ut perspicaces astrologi qui secreta physicae subtiliter rimati sunt asseuerant mutatio regni designatur. Eduardus enim rex Anglorum Edelredi regis ex Emma Ricardi senioris Normannorum ducis filia filius paulo ante obierat, et Heraldus Goduini comitis filius regnum Anglorum usurpauerat[.]

¹³³ *HE* II, 136-137, translation by Chibnall.

¹³⁴ *HE* II, 134. In addition to raising moral questions, Orderic, like Eadmer, includes the claim that Harold was to be married to one of William's daughters.

¹³⁵ *HE* II, 136: Post aliquot temporis pie memorie rex Eduardus xxiv anno regni sui nonas ianuarii Lundoniae defunctus est; et in nouo monasterio, quod ipse in occidentali parte urbis considerat et tunc praecedenti septimana dedicari fecerat prope altare quod beatus Petrus apostolus tempore Melliti episcopi cum ostensione signorum consecrauerat sepultus est. Tunc Heraldus ipso tumulationis die dum plebs in exequiis dilecti regis adhuc maderet fletibus; a solo Stigando archiepiscopo quem Romanus papa suspenderat a diuinis officiis pro quibusdam criminibus, sine communi consensus aliorum praesulum et comitum procerumque consecratus, furtim praecepit diadematis et purpurae decus.

deathbed and funeral in this manner, Orderic removes the culpability of the English people for the Norman Conquest and places it solely on Harold and Stigand. When William is crowned in the presence of the English (admittedly under careful watch by a guard of mounted Norman troops, required after violence erupts) and religious figures at Westminster, Orderic deliberately mentions it is done in the presence of the former king's remains.¹³⁶ Where Osbert uses the dead monarch's corpse to stress Edward's purity and so his saintliness, Orderic uses the death and burial of the monarch to explain the historical changes that followed the king's demise.

William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* also uses Edward's death to make historical assessments, albeit in a cutting manner. Similar to the accounts discussed earlier, the monarch is struck down with illness but continues the consecration of Westminster Abbey.¹³⁷ Unlike the earlier accounts, Malmesbury concludes with a tart comment about Edward's religious legacy.

Ita aevi plenus et gloriae simplicem spiritum caelesti regno exhibuit, et in eadem aeclesia die Theophaniae sepultus est, quam ipse illo compositionis genere primus in Anglia edificauerat quod nunc pene cuncti sumptuosis emulantur expensis.

So, full of years and glory as he was, he returned his simple spirit to the kingdom of Heaven, and was buried on the feast of the Epiphany in the church aforesaid, which he himself had built, using for the first time in England the style which almost everyone else now tries to rival at great expense.¹³⁸

This short passage requires close examination. The 'simple spirit' appears positive, but is likely to be partly critical. Malmesbury did not recognise the claims made regarding Edward's sanctity. Elsewhere in the *Gesta*, while noting Edward's miracles and

¹³⁶ *HE* II, 182, 184: Denique anno ab incarnatione Domini MLXVII indictione quinta; in die natalis Domini, Angli Lundoniae ad ordinandum regem conuenerunt; et Normannorum turmae circa monasterium in armis et equis ne quid doli et seditionis oriretur praesidio dispositae fuerunt. Adelredus itaque archiepiscopus in basilica Sancti Petri apostolorum principis quae Wesmonasterium nuncupatur ubi Eduardus rex uenerabiliter humatus quiescit, in praesentia praesulum et abbatum procerumque totius regni Albionis Guillelmum ducem Normannorum in regem Anglorum consecrauit; et diadema regium capiti eius imposuit.

¹³⁷ *GRA*, 418: Nec multum temporis intercessit quod, illo domum reuerso, rex in Natali Domini apud Lundoniam coronatus est; ibidemque morbo ictus quo se moriturum sciret, aeclesiam Westmonasterii die Innocentium dedicari precepit.

¹³⁸ *GRA*, 418-419, translation by Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom.

prophecies did not fall short of his ancestors,¹³⁹ Malmesbury undermines the claims of holiness by attributing (or insinuating) them to other causes: the ‘king’s evil’ to royal lineage,¹⁴⁰ and virginity to hatred of his wife’s family.¹⁴¹ By presenting Edward as ‘a kind of holy fool’ rather than a holy ruler,¹⁴² whose kingship was shaped by a ‘piety [that] helped him overcome his inborn sluggishness and sparklessness’,¹⁴³ the *Gesta* queries the image of the man. In a similar manner, Malmesbury questions the legacy of Edward’s main achievement: the restored Westminster Abbey, rebuilt in the new Romanesque manner. Instead of seeing this as evidence of Edward’s piety and patronage, Malmesbury uses the event of the monarch’s death to question the expensive Norman style that was destroying Anglo-Saxon religious buildings for the sake of fashion and expressions of authority.¹⁴⁴ With this closing quip in his account of Edward’s death and burial, Malmesbury insinuates that while the deceased monarch successfully prepared for his end, he left the Church of his kingdom in disarray.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ The end of the digression occurs *GRA*, 404: *Plures e familia regia utriusque sexus congnoisse ad rem referre arbitror, ut sciatur quod a uirtutibus maiorum rex Eduardus, de quo ante digressionem dicebam, minime degenerauerit. Denique miraculis et prophetiae spiritu, sicut deinceps dicam, claruit.*

¹⁴⁰ After an account of one of his cures is the assertion, *GRA*, 406, 408: *Multotiens eum hanc pestem in Normannia sedasse ferunt qui interius eius uitam nouerunt; unde nostro tempore quidam falsam insumunt operam, qui asseuerant istius morbid curationem non ex sanctitate sed ex regalis prosapiae hereditate fluxisse.* This observation is discussed by Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Monarch and Miracles in France and England*, tr. J. E. Anderson (New York: Dorset Press, 1989), 24-25.

¹⁴¹ Note however the final comment in the passage: *GRA* 352, 354: *Nuptam sibi rex hac arte tractabat, ut nec thoro amoueret nec uirili more cognosceret; quod an familiae illius odio, quod prudenter dissimulabat pro tempore, an amore castitatis fecerit, pro certo compertum non habeo. Illus celeberrime fertur, numquam illum cuiusquam mulieris contubernio pudicitiam lesisse.* For a discussion of this issue, see Stafford, ‘Edith’, 130-131.

¹⁴² Mortimer, ‘Edward the Confessor’, 35-36.

¹⁴³ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, 181.

¹⁴⁴ Another passage of the *Gesta* that mentions architecture, where Malmesbury makes a comment that ‘seems like praise, but ends with what is apparently a sarcastic dig at the vanity of the Norman elite’, is discussed by Paul Antony Hayward, ‘The Importance of Being Ambiguous: Innuendo and Legerdemain in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum* and *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*’, *ANS* 33 (2011): 75-102 (75-76). I am grateful to Dr. Hayward for providing me with a copy of his article. See also Richard Gem, ‘England and the Resistance to Romanesque Architecture’, in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher Holdsworth, and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 129-139 (132).

¹⁴⁵ This is made apparent by Malmesbury’s interpretation of William’s prophecy of the tree. Though criticism is directed at Stigand (present at the deathbed, as in *Vita Edwardi Regis* and, possibly, in the Bayeux Tapestry) by having him laugh at the prophecy, Malmesbury’s conclusion is pointed at another target. *GRA* 414-415: *Huius uaticinii ueritatem, quanuis ceteris timentibus tunc Stigandi archiepiscopi risus excepsisset, dicentis uetulum accedente morbo nugas delirare: huius ergo uaticinii ueritatem nos*

Like the other chroniclers discussed in this subchapter, Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon similarly uses the death of Edward to explain the events of 1066, rather than any focus on the monarch's supposed sanctity. Huntingdon's text follows earlier accounts, with a few insertions. While mentioning Harold usurping the kingdom after Edward was buried in a church the dead monarch had recently rebuilt and endowed, Huntingdon asserts the role of God in the humiliation of the English at the hands of the Normans, and that some of the English wanted Edgar the Atheling to become king.¹⁴⁶ Only in a much later copy of the manuscript, not in Huntingdon's hand, does any comment on Edward's sanctity appear, when 'rex Edwardus' is altered to read 'sanctus Edwardus'. The change is however is not made throughout the account.¹⁴⁷

In each of the chronicler's works, the historical consequences of Edward's death are stressed rather than his saintliness in the accounts of his death and burial. Orderic's insertion of popular stories concerning the monarch's sanctity and apparent virginity in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* appear at other moments of the text. When Orderic composed his own history, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he used Edward's demise to explain Harold's usurpation of the kingdom. Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* subverts Edward's connection with the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey in accounts of the monarch's death to pass judgment on the new Romanesque style that the monarch ushered in intentionally because of patronage and unintentionally by facilitating the Norman Conquest. Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* uses the deathbed scene to stress

experimur, quod scilicet Anglia exterorum facta est habitatio et alienigenarum dominatio. Nullus hodie Anglus uel dux uel pontifex uel abbas[.]

¹⁴⁶ *HI*, 384-385: Millesimo sexagesimo sexto anno gratie, perfecit dominator Dominus de gente Anglorum quod diu cogitauerat. Genti namque Normannorum aspere et callide tradidit eos ad exterminandum. Enimuero cum basilica sancti Petri apud Westmunstre dedicata esset in die sanctorum Innocentium, et postea in uigilia Ephiphannie rex Edwardus mundo decessisset, et sepultus esset in eadem ecclesia, quam ipse construxerat et possessionibus multis ditauerat, quidam Anglorum Edgar Adeling promouere uolebant in regem. Haroldus uero uiribus et genere fretus regni diadema inuasit.

¹⁴⁷ *HI*, 384; the summation of the chapter contents remains 'Edwardus rex bonus et pacificus regnauit in pace xxiiii annis', *ibid*, 410.

his reading of the Norman Conquest as divine judgment concerning the English. Chronicles are by their format interested in establishing historical connections; regarding Edward's death and burial, the connection is with the events that followed, rather than any thought of sanctity.

1. 5. 'We Have Him': The King's Cadaver at Westminster

Discussed above were two texts originating from Westminster: Sulcard's *Prologus* and Osbert's *Vita*. Osbert's emphasis of the importance of Edward's corpse for the Abbey, and his assertions of sanctity, stand in contrast to Sulcard's account. Given this contrast, and that modern scholars disagree to what extent the Abbey cherished its deceased patron,¹⁴⁸ examination of how Westminster itself regarded the relics is required. As with Osbert's account of the 1102 translation, though this section does not discuss a death or a burial, it is important in stressing the potential value of a king's corpse to an ecclesiastical establishment.

Westminster Abbey's textual sources provide a clearer image. Though the content mentioned is likely to be a fabrication, a document dated to 1121 grants an indulgence of forty days in commemoration of King Edward and Queen Matilda (wife of Henry I, buried at Westminster in 1118) reveals that Edward was seen as another royal figure rather than a unique saint.¹⁴⁹ Edward reappears in notifications of people seeking sanctuary in the abbey; whether his tomb was chosen for religious reasons or simply because the location of the tomb was convenient for those fleeing criminal

¹⁴⁸ Two sides of the argument are articulated by Barlow and Mortimer. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 263: 'As the next series of miracles at Edward's tomb does not start until about 1134, we can hold with assurance that a popular cult of the king had hardly begun to show at Westminster when it virtually came to an end'. Mortimer, 'Edward the Confessor', 33: 'Gaps between written references to a cult do not prove that there was no cult in the intervening time'.

¹⁴⁹ *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Mason, 90 (no 187): 'if not an outright fabrication, interpolation may be strongly suspected in the clause relating to King Edward and Queen Matilda'. *Papsturkunden in England*, ed. Walther Holtzmann (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1930-1952), vol. 1, 236 (no 13): *tum quia beate memorie Edwardus rex et Matild[a] regina in eodem monasterio sepulti iacent*. Compare *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Mason, 114 (no. 244) dated 1121-1136: *et pro requie boni patroni nostri Regis Eadwardi huius ecclesie fundatoris devoti*.

charges is difficult to ascertain.¹⁵⁰ What is known is that in texts datable from 1138 to 1157, the location is ‘sepulcrum Regis Edwardi’: a term denoting a translated saint.¹⁵¹ This may be connected to Osbert’s push for Edward’s canonisation in 1139.

The second, successful, push for canonisation in the late 1150s both displayed and resulted in a greater appreciation of the deceased patron’s remains. Though Osbert of Clare’s role in this effort is debated,¹⁵² his influence in how Edward’s sanctity was stressed is apparent. Letters presented by various ecclesiastical figures from England collected and given to Pope Alexander repeatedly mention the three elements that the *Vita beati Eadwardi Regis* stressed: the 1102 translation, Edward’s virginity, and the uncorrupted nature of the monarch’s cadaver.¹⁵³ In all of these aspects, Edward’s

¹⁵⁰ The practical view is Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 269; the religious is Chaney, *Cult of Kingship*, 219 fn 221. The charter itself is Charter No. 240, MS. Westminster Abbey Domesday (Muniment Book 11), in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Mason, 111 (no. 240): *Gilbertus abbas et conventus Westmonasterii omnibus fidelibus Regis Anglie salutem. Sciatis quod iste Jordanus altare Sanctii Petri et corpus Regis Edwardi requisivit, et ideo precamur ut libertatem sui corporis et pacem regis habeat. Valet.* See also the English writs, no. 238-239. For more information on the manuscript, see J. Armitage Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster: A Study of the Abbey Under Norman Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 36-37.

¹⁵¹ *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Mason, 135-135 (no 272, 273, 274) see also the later notification 138 (no 279). For terminology, see Kemp, *Canonization and Authority*, 38-39.

¹⁵² Scholz claims it ‘doubtful’ (‘Canonization of Edward the Confessor’, 48), while Barlow suggests that the newly elected Abbot Lawrence as potentially being ‘Osbert’s usual attempt to get the support of the new abbot for his project’ (*Edward the Confessor*, 278), though the source is a fourteenth century history by Richard of Cirencester. Briggs, examining the itinerary of Osbert, sees evidence of continued association between Osbert and the canonisation attempt (‘Life and Works’, 90).

¹⁵³ These letters survive on three pages, ff. 150v-151v, of Vatican Library manuscript Latin 6024; they have been edited and published as an appendix in Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 309-324. Nigel, Bishop of Ely, proves the widespread acceptance of Osbert’s account of the 1102 translation (317: *Tibi igitur, pater sanctissime, una cum patre nostro spirituali, T. Cant. archiepiscopo, et aliis coepiscopis nostris cum omni precum instantia supplicamus, ut quod de glorioso et incorrupto eius corpore levando fideles in Christo fratres nostri, eiusdem loci abbas et monachi, fideliter conceperunt, annuatis, et beati Petri apostulum principis, cuius sedem tenetis, patrimonium sic sullimari concedatis*). Henry and Otto describe the miraculous survival of the cloth in which Edward’s body was wrapped (311-312: *Ostendit siquidem nobis pallii casulam in quo, cum iamdicti regis corpus iuxta supradictorum testimonium per annorum multa remansisset curricula involutum, nullam tamen lesionem invenimus vel etiam coloris obfuscationem potuimus denotare. Fulget enim eiusdem asule pannus ita specie ac colore ut merito divina virtute credatur servatum illesum, quod humani corporis membra, nisi adesset miraculum, debuerant penitus consumpsisse*) 311-312), Gilbert Foliot bishop of Hereford describes the untouched nature of the monarch’s corpse and connects it to his virginity (314: *Celitus itaque collato vobis honori, pater, ut Anglorum plenius applaudat ecclesia, in uno devotissime beatis auspiciis vestris postulat exaudiri, ut beati regis Eduardi corpus liceat fidelissimo filio vestro, Wetm. abbati, L., prout eius expetit sanctitas, honorare, et a terra levatum et condigna theca repositum in publicas tocus populi gratulaciones in ecclesia sullimare, quam a fundamentis erectam construxit, et amplissime dotatam omnibus, que ad honorem domus dei sunt, in honorem dei et beati Petri nobilitatem batissime consummavit. Hoc quidem corpus, ut ab his, quibus ut credimus fides habenda est, frequenter*

corpse was central to the claims put forward for Edward's canonisation. Such delight in having such a relic was expressed in Aelred of Rievaulx's sermon given at the 1163 translation of the monarch's relics.

Letetur igitur Anglia, et cum omni deuocione huius diei celebritatem ueneretur, quam Dominus de glorificatione sancti sui celestis solis syderibus illustrauit, et eterne claritatis irradiavit fulgoribus; leteneur uniuersi, sed nos, fratres, precipue, quos huius sancti regis dignacio precipues penetralis sui cubicularios elegit, et sacri corporis sui condiendi competentibus exuuiis adorandi, quasi quosdam paranimphos constituit. Aliis sua largitus est, nobis se.

And so England rejoices and with all devotion honors the fame of this day which God, for the glorification of his saint, illuminated with the solitary celestial stars and lit up with the glories of everlasting renown. The whole world rejoices but especially, brothers, we whom this holy king's esteem elects to be the elite servants of his innermost bed-chamber and deems capable of preserving his holy body, venerating his trophies like so many bridegrooms. Others have his generosity; we have him.¹⁵⁴

Aelred's colourful and embellished language is grounded in one feature: the remains of the deceased monarch.¹⁵⁵ When Aelred had the opportunity to write a new *vita* for Edward following the successful canonisation, he depicted as a good demise like the second death in the *Vita Aedwardi Regis*, and, like Osbert, he verbosely expanded the

audiuimus, a xxxv annis usque nunc integrum incorruptumque cum visitaretur inventum est, et qui, licet in coniugio positus, animi tamen summa virtute toto vite sue curriculo, ut predicatur ab omnibus, virgo permansit, post mortem etiam beata sui [corporis] incorruptione donatus est.), as does Hilarly bishop of Chichester (315: Multo quidem tempore coniugatus virgo senex obiit, et sine lesionis indicio post vii lustra caro eius de tumulo incorrupta apparuisse memoratur.), 'H' minister of St. 'N' (320: Ego sanctitatis vestre servus in prefato monasterio, ubi tanti regis corpus iacet incorruptum, a cunabulis usque ad hec fere tempora sum educatus, perfecteque didici ex virtutum frequentia quantum refulgeat in Christi presentia. Felicitatis eius argumentum est et spiritus prophetie, quo magnifice claruit, et iuncti coniugio vera virginitas, quam carnis integritas adhuc ostendit), and the 1102 event is mentioned by an abbot of Malmesbury (321: Cuius profecto mirabilis sanctitatis eminentiam, cum ante et post obitum numerosa et preclara miracula oculatis testimoniis efferant, integritas tamen illibati et virginei etiam post coniugium corporis, post tricesimum sextum sepulture annum cum omni vestimentorum integritate inventi, etiam si cetera sileant, sufficienter poterit commendare) and 'R' – possibly the prior of St. Andrews, Rochester – (322-323: Et cum per tempora multa uxori coniugatus vixisset, plenus dierum purus immaculatus et virgo ex hac luce decissit. Unde non immerito, ut assertunt, cum caro eius tam munda tam sancta annis ferme xl in tumulo quievisset, sana et incorrupta inventa est). Curiously, the letter from Pope Alexander III (323-324), confirming canonisation, makes no mention of the corpse.

¹⁵⁴ Peter Jackson, 'In translacione sancti Edwardi confessoris: The Lost Sermon by Aelred of Rievaulx Found?', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 40 (2005): 45-83 (80-81), translation by Jackson.

¹⁵⁵ Jackson, 'In translacione', 80, 82: 'Ecclesias non solum anglicanas, sed et gallicanas plerasque auro et argento ditauit, prediis quoque et possessionibus diuersis. Nobis uero et hec omnia habundantius contulit, et insuper pretium omni precio preciosius, uidelicet preciosissimum incorrupti corporis sui thesaurum apud nos solos reponi mandauit. In hoc enim monasterio quod ipsemet in honore sanctorum principis apostolorum Petri construxerat, locum sibi sepulture elegit, ubi signis et miraculis incessanter omnipotentis Dei bonitas illucescit, et quanta sanctissimi confessoris sui regis Edwardi uirtus fuerit, luce clarius declaratur, ipso prestante qui uiuit et regnat per omnia secula seculorum, amen'

claims of Edward's sanctity by including more incidents of Edward's prophecy and more detail concerning his preparation for his demise.¹⁵⁶

Between the burial of Edward's corpse in 1066 and its translation in 1163, the people of Westminster – clergy and laity – treated the monarch's remains in a fluctuating and varied manner. It was a site of royal burial, a location to celebrate a patron, and a place of sanctuary. The pushes for canonisation reiterated the importance of the monarch's relics, and, consequently, when success occurred, it was they that were celebrated.

1. 6. Conclusion

The death of King Edward was a momentous event. Authors contemporary to the event revised their original accounts to express a different interpretation of the events. MS C, and its copy in MS D, of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, recorded the death and burial of the monarch in their typically terse annalistic entry, and then reflected on what it meant by employing the form and vocabulary of earlier Anglo-Saxon poetry. The author of an *encomium* for Edward's wife, Edith, turned his text into a hagiography of the deceased monarch and presented his demise as a good death akin to a religious figure. Both texts articulated the sadness at Edward's passing, while noting that the monarch had arranged for Harold to inherit the kingdom.

A decade later, with Harold's reign over quickly and the Normans having taken the kingdom, Edward's demise was placed in a historical context. For the establishment he patronized and re-founded, he became secondary to its original (legendary) founder St. Peter. In the Bayeux Tapestry, the signs of sanctity that Sulcard had omitted, were visually displayed. The burial and the funeral, however, were deliberately reversed, to explain how Harold inherited the kingdom. The use of Edward's death and burial to

¹⁵⁶ *PL* 185, 770-776. A translation of the *vita* appears in Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Historical Works*, ed. Marsha L. Dutton, tr. Jane Patricia Freeland (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005).

explain the historical events (and, occasionally, to pass a judgment on the state of affairs), was continued by the chroniclers Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon, who addressed (if they did) the religious aspects of Edward at other parts of their narratives.

Throughout this period, the physical remains of Edward at Westminster attracted various treatments. A supposed opening of the tomb occurred in 1102, though the reasons for doing so are unclear. The site attracted some interest, as a royal tomb, and as a site of sanctuary, though its religious importance was stressed by Osbert of Clare, whose presentation of Edward's corpse as uncorrupted was followed by later ecclesiastical figures petitioning the king. This author, known for committing fraud to aid his abbey, successfully presented Edward's remains as evidence of a saintly life by associating it with virginity. Though the association had been present earlier in the century, Osbert's depiction was of huge importance. Edward's death and burial moved from being a mourned demise that required earlier forms of expression to articulate, through being used to explain the events that followed, to being a religious paradigm.

2. 'Thirsting Above All for the Blood of the King'¹⁵⁷

Killing and Survival Stories of Harold II

Having inherited the kingdom on the death of his brother-in-law Edward in January 1066, the Anglo-Danish Harold Godwinson had to defend it against rival claimants. One was Harold Hardrada, who based his claim for England on an agreement made by one childless ruler (Harthacnut); another was William, Duke of Normandy, who based his claim on another agreement by another childless ruler (Edward). Harold successfully defeated Hardrada – who had allied with Harold's own problematic brother Tostig – at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, but was defeated by William at the Battle of Hastings.

The events on Senlac Hill, where Harold's army stood, reverberated in the historiography. The battle was both confused and decisive, and this is reflected in how the later sources depicted the death and burial of one figure: Harold. This study is divided into four parts. The first examines how the obliteration of the Anglo-Saxon elite was recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and connected with an earlier theme of divine punishment for sins. The second examines the textual accounts for Harold's death. It begins with the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* and the *Gesta Guillelmi*, two early Norman accounts that, while lauding the victors, requires Harold's demise to be asserted albeit in a form deemed palatable. It then looks at the possible sources for the claim that Harold was fatally injured by an arrow in the eye (Amatus of Montecassino's *L'Ystoire de li Normant*, the Bayeux Tapestry, and Baudri of Borgeuil's *Adelae Comitissae*), then sees how chroniclers of mixed English and Norman heritage depicted

¹⁵⁷ *The Waltham Chronicle: An Account of the Discovery of Our Holy Cross at Monacute and its Conveyance to Waltham*, ed. and tr. Leslie Watkiss and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 39.

Harold's death and the legacy of the Norman Conquest, to Waltham Abbey's chronicle, *De inventione sancte crucis*, which omitted the scene. The third part examines how the conflicting accounts of Harold's burial – the Norman sources claiming Harold's remains were interned under a cairn by the sea, while the English tradition asserted his body was moved to Waltham – were established, and then recast by later historians, before noting how Waltham dealt with the legacy of having its patron's corpse. The fourth section examines the survival stories that appeared concerning Harold, and examines the most detailed account, the *Vita Haroldi*, and discusses the purpose of such unhistorical beliefs.

The uncertainty in how Harold died and what happened to his corpse is unique among the monarchs discussed in this study. His death and burial is the exception that the rule. The demise of the monarch was of great weight to the opposing sides at Hastings. For the defeated, he was the last inheritor – via Edward – of an established line. For the victors, he was a usurper who had prevented the Normans from inheriting the kingdom from Edward. This relevance explains the appearance of Harold's death and burial in the multitude of texts, and the accompanying themes of judgment (human and divine), honour, legacy, and religious belief.

2. 1. Defeat and Divine Punishment: the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles

Before dealing with the Norman accounts of Harold's death and burial, it is worthwhile noting how contemporaries on the side of the defeated recorded the battle. The two manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle both mention Harold falling beside his brothers in the battle.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ For a study of the deaths of Harold's brothers in various sources, see Michael R. Davis, 'Leofwine and Gyrrh: Depicting the Death of the Brothers in the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, ed. Michael J. Lewis, Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Dan Terkla (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 92-95.

The relevant manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are MS E and MS D.

MS E is brief.

7 þa com Willelm eorl upp æt Hestingan on Sancte Michaelæs mæssedæg, 7 Harold com norðan 7 him wið feaht ear þan þe his here come eall, 7 þær he feoll 7 his twægen gebroðra Gyrð 7 Leofwine.

And meanwhile Earl William came up at Hastings on the Feast of St Michael and Harold came from the north, and fought with him before all his raiding-army had come; and there he fell, with his two brothers, Gyrrh and Leofwine.¹⁵⁹

MS D also mentions these figures who fell, but also commented that ‘the French had possession of the place of slaughter, just as God granted them because of the people’s sins’.¹⁶⁰

This connecting of defeat with sin is a reoccurring theme that requires examination. The scholar Elisabeth van Houts regarded this inclusion of ‘national sin and divine punishment’ by the monkish scribes as an attempt to depersonalize ‘the trauma from which they were suffering’.¹⁶¹ This attempt to remove the immediacy of the defeat is a possibility, but it just as probable that the monkish scribes provided historical comparisons to reiterate monastic religious values. One source they used was the sixth-century Gildas,¹⁶² another was the ninth-century Nennius,¹⁶³ and, more

¹⁵⁹ *ASC E*, 87; translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 198.

¹⁶⁰ Swanton, *ASC T*, 199; *ASC D*: Ðær wearð ofslægen Harold kyng, 7 Leofwine earl his broðor, 7 Gyrð eorl his broðor, 7 fela godra manna, 7 þa Frencyscan ahton wælstowe geweald, eallswa heom God uðe for folces synnon.

¹⁶¹ Elisabeth van Houts, ‘The Memory of 1066 in Written and Oral Traditions’, *ANS* 19 (1997): 167-179 (171). See also David Bates, ‘The Conqueror’s Earliest Historians and the Writing of his Biography’, in *Writing Medieval Biography, 750-1250: Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates, Julia Crick, and Sarah Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 129-142 (130-131).

¹⁶² Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, ed. and tr. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), 27, 97-98: Confovebatur namque ultionis iustae praecedentium scelerum causa de mari usque ad mare ignis orientali sacrilegorum manu exaggeratus, et finitimas quasque civitates agrosque populans non quievit accensus donec cunctam paene exurens insulae superficiem rubra occidentalem trucique oceanum lingua delamberet. In hoc ergo impetus Assyrio olim in Iudaeam comparando completur quoque in nobis secundum historiam quod propheta deplorans ait: ‘incederunt igni sanctuarium tuum in terra, polluerunt tabernaculum nominis tui’, et iterum: ‘deus, venerunt gentes in hereditatem tuam; coinquinaverunt templum sanctum tuum’, et cetera.

¹⁶³ Nennius, *British History and The Welsh Annals*, ed. and tr. John Morris (London: Phillimore, 1980), 32: et nullus illos abigere audaciter valuit, quia non de virtute sua Britanniam occupaverunt, sed de nutu Dei. Contra voluntatem Dei quis resistere poterit et nitatus? Sed quomodo voluit Dominus fecit et ipse omnes gentes regit et gubernat.

contemporary to the Anglo-Saxon chroniclers, the eleventh-century Wulfstan who mentioned Gildas.¹⁶⁴ Each of these earlier authors, complaining of their own state of affairs, connected foreign invasions to divine punishment for sinful behaviour among their peers. Such a reading ascribing it to God historicizes contemporary defeats, and – for the monks at least – removes personal responsibility for the event.

2. 2. Requiring a Killing: the Norman Equivocations, and the Arrow in the Eye

Though all are unanimous in noting that victory went to William, Duke of Normandy, the confusion of the battle is reflected in the presentation of Harold's demise. In the decade following the Conquest, Norman authors, while praising their subjects, differed in how they dealt with the monarch's death. Guy, Bishop of Amiens's *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* (c. 1067-1070) presents an idealised account of Harold's death, while the William of Poitiers's *Gesta Guillelmi* (c. 1077) omits a depiction of the monarch's demise. Later, a story about Harold being fatally injured by an arrow emerged, and successive authors used this detail to suit their own requirements. Finally, a source written by the ecclesiastical establishment that Harold supported, *De inventione sancte crucis* (c. 1177), omits depicting its patron's demise, choosing rather to offer a eulogy.

¹⁶⁴ *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 274: An þeodwita wæs on Brytta tidum Gildas hatte. Se awrat be heora misdædum hu hy mid heora synnum swa oferlice swyþe God gegræmedan þæt he let æt nyhstan Engla here heora eard gewinnan ⁊ Brytta dugeþe fordon mid ealle. And þæt wæs geworden þæs þe he sæde, þurh ricra reaflac ⁊ þurh gitsunge wohgestreona, ðurh leode unlaga ⁊ þurh wohdomas, ðurh biscopas asolcennesse ⁊ þurh lyðre yrhðe Godes bydela þe soþes geswugedan ealles to gelome ⁊ clumedan mid ceafum þær hy scoldan clypian. For context, see Dorothy Whitelock, 'Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman', in *Essays in Medieval History: Selected from the Transactions of the Royal Historical Society on the Occasion of its Centenary*, ed. R. W. Southern (London: Macmillan, 1968), 42-60 (for translation, 59), and Jonathan Wilcox, 'Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond' in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. Matthew Townend (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 375-396. For the religious issue fighting sin contained in the sermon, see, in the same volume, Alice Cowen, 'Byrsts and bysmeras: The Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*', 397-411. For MS D deliberately drawing on Wulfstan to relate to another violent incident in the past, see Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, vol. 1: *Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 130-134, 223-224.

The *Carmen* clearly depicts Harold being subject to a deliberate Norman attempt to slay him. Duke William is depicted spotting Harold repelling assaults and ordering four men (one of whom might be William himself) to kill him.¹⁶⁵ Though others are said to be present, these four are held as laudatory figures who slew Harold in accordance with the rules of war. The first pierced the king's shield and wounded his chest with a lance, the second lobbed off his head with a sword, the third speared his entrails, and the fourth cut off his thigh and carried it away.¹⁶⁶ Duke William himself may have wanted authors to justify his actions.¹⁶⁷ Though scholars have queried the accuracy of this account in the *Carmen*,¹⁶⁸ the early reference laws of chivalry at such an important moment in the poem shows the poem acutely reflects a crisis in how the event was regarded. As van Houts noted, 'The overwhelming reaction of the first generation Normans was one of legitimisation and justification, which were in fact abstract moralisations to bury any sense of guilt and shame'.¹⁶⁹ The Normans fought at Hastings a brutal battle that desired the killing of the Anglo-Saxon elite;¹⁷⁰ to remove this stain in the memory, an image of lawful heroism appeared. To give legitimacy to the Norman rule; Harold had to be dead. These two issues were resolved in the *Carmen*

¹⁶⁵ Guy, Bishop of Amiens, *The Carmen de Hastinage Proelio*, ed. and tr. Frank Barlow (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 32: *Iam ferme campum uictrix effecta regebat, / Iam spolium belli Gallia leta petit, / Cum dux prospexit regem super ardua montis / Acriter instantes dilacerare suos, / Aducat Eustachium; linqvens ibi prelia Francis, / Oppressis ualidum contulit auxilium / Alter ut Hectorides, Pontiuu nobilis heres / Hos comitatur Hugo, promptus in officio; / Quartus Gilfardus, patris a cognomine dictus: / Regus ad exicium quatuor arma ferunt.*

¹⁶⁶ Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 32: *Ast alli plures; allis sunt hi meliores. / Si quis hoc dubitat, actio uera probat: / Per nimias cedes nam bellica iura tenentes / Heraldum cogunt pergere carnis iter. / Per clipeum primus dissoluens cuspide pectus, / Effuso madidat sanguinis imbre solum; / Tegmine sub galee caput amputat ense secundus; / Et telo uentris tertius exta rigat; / Abscidit coxam quartus; procul egit ademptam: / Taliter occisum terra cadauer habet.*

¹⁶⁷ Bates, 'Conqueror's Earliest Historians', 131: 'it seems to me that almost the whole of William's life, for all its violence and his at times pitiless conduct, was a self-conscious search for secular and religious legitimisation of actions of which the most controversial was of course the brutal removal in 1066 of a crowned and consecrated king'.

¹⁶⁸ R. H. C. Davis, 'The Carmen de Hastinage Proelio', *EHR* 93 (1978): 241-261 (248-249): 'the most improbable scene in the whole poem'.

¹⁶⁹ Houts, 'The Memory of 1066', 176.

¹⁷⁰ The effect of the location on the William's army, and the desire to kill the Anglo-Saxon elite, is discussed in Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3-4.

by having Harold's 'thigh' removed. The 'thigh' is likely a euphemism for Harold's genitals, 'a most appropriate way to show that with the death of Harold a royal line comes to an end'.¹⁷¹

By contrast, the *Gesta Guillelmi* does not feature the act of killing, only a mention that Harold had been killed.¹⁷² This may be because no one knew how the monarch was slain,¹⁷³ or because Poitiers was intent on presenting an ideal figure of the *milites* rather than the reality.¹⁷⁴ In its place, Poitiers asserts that William would have fought Harold in single combat like the *Illiad*'s Achilles and Hector or the *Aeneid*'s Aeneas and Turnus.¹⁷⁵ These allusions 'hammer home a simple message'¹⁷⁶ in praising William's capabilities. The panegyric text is more interested in praising its patron than recording troubling details.¹⁷⁷

The incident of Harold's demise also became embellished with retelling. The origin of the story, however, is problematic. None of the earliest sources mention that Harold was struck in the eye by an arrow,¹⁷⁸ yet the story appeared and was repeated. The earliest possible source is *L'Ystoire de li Normant* by Amatus of Montecassino (c.

¹⁷¹ Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry*, 160. Bernstein also notes a biblical connection with the thigh – touching during the making of an oath. Harold's oath however does not appear in the *Carmen*.

¹⁷² William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 136: *Iam inclinato die haud dubie intellexit exercitus Anglorum se stare contra Normannos diutius non ualere. Nouerunt se diminutos interitu multarum legionum; regem ipsum et fratres eius, regnique primates nonnullos occubuisse; quotquot reliqui sunt prope uiribus exhaustos; subsidium quod expectant nullum relictum.*

¹⁷³ William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 136 n. 3: 'WP makes no attempt to state how, or at what point in the battle, Harold was killed: an indication, perhaps, that no one who knew survived the battle'; Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, lxxxii: 'may be that, because of the fog of war, no one really knew'.

¹⁷⁴ Jean Flori, 'Principes et milites chez Guillaume de Poitiers. Étude sémantique et idéologique', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 64 (1986): 217-233.

¹⁷⁵ William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 134, 136: *Cum Heraldo, tali qualem poemata dicunt Hectorem uel Turnum, non minus auderet Guillelmus congredi singulari certamine, quam Achilles cum Hectore, uel Aeneas cum Turno.*

¹⁷⁶ Emily Albu, *The Normans in Their Histories: Propaganda, Myth & Subversion* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 86-87.

¹⁷⁷ For other troubling details Poitiers omits, see Bates, 'Conqueror's Earliest Historians', 133.

¹⁷⁸ Martin K. Foys, 'Pulling the Arrow Out: The Legend of Harold's Death and the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations*, ed. Martin K. Foys, Karen Eileen Overbey, and Dan Terkla (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 158-175 (158).

1080s), but this survives only in a fourteenth-century translation that appears to be contaminated by later sources being incorporated by the translator.¹⁷⁹ After being hit in the eye, Harold has his eye gouged out, seemingly, by William himself. Such a scene does not take place in the earliest possible source, the Bayeux Tapestry. Under the word ‘Harold’ of the tituli ‘HIC HAROLD REX INTERFECTVS EST’, a man appears to be depicted with a shaft in his eye, closely followed by a man being struck down by a rider (figure 3).¹⁸⁰ This, like *L’Ystoire*, is a problematic source: both may be Harold, or either, and the arrow shaft might be the work of a restorer also contaminated with knowledge of later texts,¹⁸¹ though it appears that there was likely a line protruding from the eye of the second, fallen figure.¹⁸² Another possible origin for the story is Baudri of Bourgueil’s poem *Adelae Comitissae* (c.1100), written for William I’s daughter Adela. The text claims Harold was the started of the war, and, by his death owing to a deadly shaft, its concluder.¹⁸³ Within this assertion, Baudri alludes to the *Aeneid* when claiming that Harold was slain by a deadly

¹⁷⁹ Amato di Montecassino, *Ystoire de li normant: edition du manuscrit BnF fr. 688*, ed. Michèle Guéret-Laferté (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2011), 244: De ceste fortissime gent en armes fu li conte Guillerme, et assembla avec lui C mille chevaliers et X mille arbalestier et autres pedons sanz nombre; et prist son navie et vint jusque en Engleterre – loquel Adoalde, loquel seoit sur son siege et trone royal d’Engleterre – loquel Adoalde regnoit puiz la mort de Adegarde, juste roy – estoit maledit home. Contre cestui ala premerement Guillerme, et combati contra lui, et lui creva un oil d’une sajete; et molt gent de li Englez occist. Et puiz li devant dit Guillerme fu haucié en lo siege royal et ot victorioso corone. For a translation, see *The History of the Normans by Amatus of Montecassino*, tr. Prescott N. Dumbar, intro and notes by Graham A. Loud (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 46. For the issue of contamination, see Foys, ‘Pulling the Arrow Out’ 163.

¹⁸⁰ *BT*, plate 71. For the reading that an earlier incident, Harold rescuing Norman soldiers from quicksand, foretells the monarch’s demise by an allusion in the borders, see Owen-Crocker, ‘Reading the Bayeux Tapestry’, 262-263; for a rejection of this view, see Jill Frederick, ‘Slippery as an Eel: Harold’s Ambiguous Heroics in the Bayeux Tapestry’, in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, ed. Michael J. Lewis, Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Dan Terkla (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 121-126 (125).

¹⁸¹ David Bernstein, ‘The Blinding of Harold and the Meaning of the Bayeux Tapestry’, *ANS* 5 (1983): 40-64 (40).

¹⁸² Bloch, *Needle*, 168-169.

¹⁸³ *Les Oeuvres Poétiques de Baudri de Bourgueil (1046-1130)*, ed. Phyllis Abrahams (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1926), 209: Perforat Hairaldum casu letalis aundo, / Is belli finis, is quoque causa fuit. For a translation, included in a study that examines the poem alongside the tapestry, see Shirley Anne Brown and Michael W. Herren, ‘The *Adelae Comitissae* of Baudri de Bourgueil and the Bayeux Tapestry’, *ANS* 16 (1994): 55-73 (66). For a translation of the whole work, see Monika Otter, ‘Baudri of Bourgueil, “To Countess Adela”’, *Journal of Medieval Latin* 11 (2001): 60-141.



Figure 3: Harold's Death in the Bayeux Tapestry

shaft.¹⁸⁴ The influence of Baudri's text, however, appears negligible.¹⁸⁵

Easier to pinpoint is the moral of such an injury. David Bernstein has noted the symbolism of an eye being struck.¹⁸⁶ The Normans punished perjury and theft by blinding. Since Harold was regarded by Normans as having committed these crimes by breaking an oath to William concerning the succession of the English kingdom after King Edward, an injury to his eye, by arrow, was divine punishment. Gale R. Owen-Crocker, discussing the Tapestry's apparent borrowing of an image of a man with arrow in his eye during a battle from the ninth century Utrecht Psalter or its eleventh century copy (figure 3), notes the text illustrated in these manuscripts concerns kings that had set themselves against the Lord and received divine wrath.¹⁸⁷ A divinely ordained death brought about by an arrow in battle similarly afflicted Julian the Apostate, whose death was appearing in a boon of literary depictions in eleventh and twelfth century writing.¹⁸⁸ For the Normans, who appear to have invaded under a papal banner,¹⁸⁹ this was justification for their actions. Later authors were thus able to present differing accounts of Harold's death to suit their intention. Orderic, when copying William of Jumièges's *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, did not include such a death, opting instead to reflect – curiously, given his mixed heritage – on the sinners of both sides being punished, followed by Jumièges's reason for the

¹⁸⁴ Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI* (London: Heinemann, 1986), 400: *uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur / urbe furens, quails coniecta cerva sagitta, / quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit / pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum / nescius: illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat / Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis harundo.*

¹⁸⁵ For Baudri being 'very unlikely' the source for the eye story, see Brooks and Walker, 'The Authority and Interpretation', 27-28. Bernard S. Bachrach, 'The Norman Conquest, Countess Adela, and Abbot Baudri', *ANS* 25 (2013): 65-78, suggests that 'Baudri's claim that Harold was wounded by an arrow seems to have been well known', but associates it with the Bayeux Tapestry and L'Ystoire, two problematic sources.

¹⁸⁶ Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry*, 158-159.

¹⁸⁷ Owen-Crocker, 'Reading the Bayeux Tapestry', 256-258. The text is Psalm 2.

¹⁸⁸ Philip Shaw, 'A Dead Killer? Saint Mercurious, Killer of Julian the Apostate, in the Works of William of Malmesbury', *Leeds Studies in English* 35 (2004): 1-22.

¹⁸⁹ See the discussion in Catherine Morton, 'Pope Alexander and the Norman Conquest', *Latomus* 34 (1975): 362-382, and David S. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War c. 300-c. 1216* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 66-67, 102-103.

IVS VIR QVI
 NON HABIT INCONSILIO IMPIO
 rum. & inuia peccatorum
 non stetit. & in cathedra
 pesti & lentae non sedet

Et erit tanquam lignum
 quod plantatum e. secus
 decursus aquarum
 Quod fructum suum dabit
 in tempore suo. & folium
 eius non decidet. & omnia
 quaecumque fecerit pro
 spera buntur

I deo non resurgunt impii
 in iudicio. neque pecca
 tores in consilio iustorum
 Quia nouit dñs uia iustoru
 & iter impiorum per
 ibit

PSALMVS DAVID
 QUARE FREQUERUNT
 gentes. & populi medi
 tati sunt inania
 Adstiterunt reges terre. &
 principes conuenerunt

& proiciamus anobis iugu
 ipsorum
 Qui habitat in caelis irri
 debit eos. & dñs subfanna
 bit eos
 Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira

rex ab eo. sup. ion montem
 scm eius. predicans pre
 ceptum dñi
 Dñs dixit ad me. filius meus
 estu. ego hodie genuite
 Postula a me & dabo tibi



CEU eTD
 Figure 4: An Arrow in the Eye in the Eleventh-Century Copy of the Utrecht Psalter (British Library MS Harley 603 f2)

Norman invasion.¹⁹⁰ His own work, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, follows Jumièges.¹⁹¹ William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Harold is depicted having his brain pierced by an arrow,¹⁹² and, later, using the same allusion to the *Aeneid* as Baudri, repeats the story that Harold was struck down by a deadly shaft, but adds that a Norman horseman hacked off the grounded monarch's thigh, and was consequently stripped of his status by Duke William.¹⁹³ The divine-like nature of an arrow meant that antics formerly lauded in the *Carmen* were now deemed mutilations.¹⁹⁴ Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, combined the Norman story of the arrow with the Anglo-Saxon list of the slain elite.¹⁹⁵ Wace, by contrast, in his *Roman du Rou* (c. 1160), has, after depicting Harold pulling an arrow out of his eye, the claim Englishmen habitually told Frenchmen that the arrow was well-made.¹⁹⁶ The arrow incident, with

¹⁹⁰ *GND* II, 168, 170: Cum quo sub hora diei tertia comitens bellum in cedibus ab utraque parte morientium usque ad noctem protraxit. Heroldus etiam ipse in primo militum congressu occubuit uulneribus letaliter confossus. Comperientes itaque Angli regem suum mortem oppetiisse de sua diffidentes salute iam nocte imminente uersa facie subsidium appetierunt fuge. Sic omnipotens Deus pridie idus Octobris innumeros peccatores utriusque phalangis puniit diuersis modis. Nam uesania seuiente Normannorum, in die sabbati multauit multa milia Anglorum, qui longe ante innocentem Aluredum, iniuste necauerunt, ac precedenti sabbato Heraldum regem et Tostium comitem aliosque multos absque pietate trucidauerunt.

¹⁹¹ *HE* II, 176: Ab hora diei tertia bellum acriter commissum est; et in primo militum congressu Heraldus rex peremptus est.

¹⁹² *GRA*, 454: Valuit haec uicissitudo, modo illis modo istis uincens, quantum Haroldi uita moram fecit; at ubi iactu sagittae uiolato cerebro procubuit, fuga Anglorum perhennis in noctem fuit.

¹⁹³ *GRA*, 454, 456: Emicuit ibi uirtus amborum ducum. Haroldus, non contentus munere imperatorio ut hortaretur alios, militis officium sedulo exsequabatur; sepe hostem comminus uenientem ferire, ut nullus impune accederet quin statim uno ictu equus et eques prociderent; quapropter, ut dixi, eminus letali harundine ictus mortem impleuit. Iacentis femur unus militum gladio proscidit; unde a Willelmo ignominiae notatus, quod rem ignauam et pudendam fecisset, militia pulsus est.

¹⁹⁴ For a study connecting this incident with the birth of chivalry, see Karl Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), 66.

¹⁹⁵ *HA*, 394: Interea totus ymber sagittariorum cecidit circa regem Haraldum, et ipse in oculo ictus corruit. Irrumpens autem multitudo equitum, regem uulneratum interfecit, et Girdh consulem et Leuine consulem, fratres eius, cum eo. Sic igitur contritus est exercitus Anglorum.

¹⁹⁶ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ed. Anthony J. Holden, tr. Glyn S. Burgess, notes by Glyn S. Burgess and Elisabeth van Houts (St. Heiler: Société Jersiasse, 2002), 272: 272: Issi avint qu'une saete, / qui devers le ciel ert chaete, / feri Heraut desus l'oil dreit, / que l'un des oilz li a toleit; / e Heraut l'a par air traite, / getee l'a, mais ainz l'out fraite; / por le chief, qui li a dolu, / s'est apoié sor son escu. / Por ço soleient dire Engleis / e dient encore as Franceis / que la saete fu bien faite / qui a Heraut fu en l'oil traite, / e mult les mist en grant orgoil / qui al rei Heraut creva l'oil.

the following hacking, is a means for Wace to tell a story rather than be accurate,¹⁹⁷ and tells of how the symbol of Harold's army – his standard – was knocked to the ground as Harold was killed,¹⁹⁸ before claiming with an 'ignorance assertion'¹⁹⁹ that he is uncertain about who killed Harold and with what weapon,²⁰⁰ fulfilling all the requirements for a verse chronicle. Each of the chroniclers that used the eye story was able to present it in a manner that suited their aims.

The notable omission is *De inventione sancte crucis*, also known as the Waltham Chronicle. The main subject of the text concerns a relic of the Holy Cross, but the Waltham chronicler is required to discuss the death of its major patron, Harold. In the account of his demise, the chronicler notes his qualities, gently chastises him for his pride, and notes that Normans were 'thirsting above all for the blood of the king'.²⁰¹ Rather than discuss the manner in which his patron died, the Waltham chronicler steps out of the narrative of the battle and instead eulogises the defeated king.

Quid multis moror? Indultus est effere genti de hoste triumphus. Cadit rex ab hoste fero, Gloria regni, decus cleri, fortitudo militie, inermium clypeus, certantium firmitas, tutamen debilium, consolatio desolatorum, indigentium reparator, procerum gemma. Non potuit de pari contendere, qui modico stipatus agmine quadruplo congressus exercitui, sorti se dedit ancipiti.

¹⁹⁷ Wace, *Roman*, 286: Heraut a l'estandart esteit, / a son poeir se deffendeit, / mais mult esteit de l'oil grevez / por ço qu'il li esteit crevez. / A la dolor que il senteit / del colp de l'oil que li doleit, / vint un armé par la bataille, / Heraut feri sor la ventaille, / a terre le fist trebuchier; / a ço qu'il se volt redrecier / un chevalier le rabati, / qui en la coisse le feri, / en la coisse parmié le gros, / la plaie fu desi en l'os. The text adheres to rhyme rather than factual accuracy, using the word 'ventaille', which is used for a specific piece of Norman armour (the moveable part fitting over the mouth and neck, from *ventus*, wind), for Harold, who would not have worn such an item.

¹⁹⁸ Wace, *Roman*, 286: L'estandart ont a terre mis / e le rei Heraut ont ocis / e les meilleurs de ses amis, / le gonfanon a or ont pris; / tel presse out a Heraut ocire / que jo ne sai qui l'ocist dire. Regarding the symbolism of standards, see Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry*, 145

¹⁹⁹ Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 166-168.

²⁰⁰ Wace, *Roman*, 286: Ne sai dire, ne jo nel di, / ne jo n'i fui, ne jo nel vi / ne a maistre dire n'oï / qui le rei Heraut abati / ne de quel arme il fu nafrez, / mais od les morz fu morz trevez; / mort fu trove entre les morz, / nel pout garir ses granz esforz.

²⁰¹ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 46, 48: Modico stipatus agmine rex properat ad expugnandas gentes exteris, heu nimis animosus, minus quidem quam expediret circumspectus, propriis quidem magis quam suorum confidens uiribus. Set 'frangit Deus omne superbum', nec diuturnum extat hominis edificium, cui non est ipse Deus fundamentum. Fit congressus belli; cadunt hinc inde milites proceri; gens effera Normannorum, peruciatie non ignara, huiusmodi calamitatibus magis assueta quam gens nostra, penetrant cuneos nichil preter sanguinem regis sitientes.

Why do I delay any longer telling the story? Victory over its enemy was granted to that savage race. The king who was the glory of the realm, the darling of the clergy, the strength of his soldiers, the shield of the defenceless, the support of the distressed, the protector of the weak, the consolation of the desolate, the restorer of the destitute, and the pearl of princes, was slain by his fierce foe. He could not fight an equal contest for, accompanied by only a small force, he faced an army four times as large as his; but he submitted to his fate, whatever it might be.²⁰²

De inventione sancte crucis, the sole text supportive of Harold, uses the uncertainty relating to its patron's death as a way of praising his bravery, rather than proclaiming the value of his victors or asserting that the manner in which he died suggested divine judgment.

Harold's death was a required feature for historical accounts dealing with the history of the Conquest. Given that the brutal conflict did not follow the accepted standards required of such a battle, the early Norman historians were keen to present Harold's demise either in an idealized fashion (*Carmen*), or to omit it in favour of praises of the victorious Duke William (*Gesta Guillelmi*). Though the origin of the story of Harold being fatally wounded by an arrow in the eye is uncertain (*L'Ystoire de li Normant*, the Tapestry, and *Adelae Comitissae*), with its connotations of divine punishment for perjury, was either excluded (Orderic), classicized (Malmesbury), connected with Anglo-Saxon accounts (Huntingdon), or turned into a poetic set piece at the expense of accuracy (Wace). In the account produced by the abbey he patronised (*De inventione sancte crucis*), at the moment the narrative should provide details of his demise, it opts to reflect on his character.

2. 3. The Burials of Harold: the Cairn or the Church

From not appearing in some of the earliest accounts,²⁰³ likely owing to uncertainty or lack of information, the burial of Harold became an important feature of the historical narratives. Two different locations for Harold's burial are recorded in the sources. The

²⁰² *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 48-49.

²⁰³ The burial is not mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, or in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*.

invaders claimed that the slain monarch was buried on the coast near to the location of the battle, while the defeated asserted the ruler was taken to Waltham Abbey for internment. The manner in which a source dealt with the burial of Harold reflected the interpretation of the author of the Conquest as a whole.

The two early Norman sources, the *Carmen de Hastinage Proelio* and the *Gesta Guillelmi*, use the burial arrangements of Harold to stress the magnanimous victor, Duke William. The *Carmen* depicts William showing concern for his slain soldiers, and disdain for those of the defeated: the former are permitted burial ‘in the bosom of the earth’, while the latter ‘he left to be eaten by worms and wolves, by birds and dogs’.²⁰⁴ Harold’s corpse however is treated generously, ‘wrapped in purple linen’ and taken to the Norman camp for ‘the usual funeral rites’.²⁰⁵ Though it is difficult to determine whether the connotation of *porphyrogenitus*, being born into purple, is present, the importance of the colour is apparent by its expense.²⁰⁶ The *Carmen*, while presenting William as generous, depicts the duke as his own ruler, not swayed by the demands of the defeated. The poem presents Harold’s grieving mother offering gold for Harold’s remains, ‘the bones of one in place of the three’ sons that she lost, and William responding that he ‘would sooner put him in charge of the shore [...] under a heap of stones’.²⁰⁷ A man, part-English, part-Norman, obeyed the command, and buried Harold under a tombstone inscribed ‘You rest here, King Harold, by the order of the duke, so

²⁰⁴ Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 34-35: Illuxit postquam Phebi clarissima lampas / Et mundum furuis expiat a tenebris, / Lustravit campum, tollens et cesa suorum / Corpora, dux terre condidit in gremio. / Vermibus atque lupis, aibus canibusque uoranda / Deserit Anglorum corpora strata solo. Translation by Barlow.

²⁰⁵ Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 34-35: Heraldus corpus collegit dilaceratum, / Collectum textit sindone purpurea; / Detulit et secum, repetens sua castra marina, / Expleat ut solitas funeris exequias. Translation by Barlow.

²⁰⁶ C. Biggam, ‘Knowledge of Whelk Dyes and Pigments in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006): 23-55. Note however the ‘purpurae decus’ in *HE* II, 138.

²⁰⁷ Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 34-35: Heraldus mater, nimio constricta dolore, / Misit ad usque ducem, postulat et precibus, / Orbate misere natis tribus, et uiduate, / Pro tribus, unius reddat ut ossa sibi, / Si place taut corpus puro preponderet auro. / Set dux iratus prorsus utrumque negat, / Iurans quod pocius presentis littora portus / Illi committet, aggere sub lapidum. Translation by Barlow.

that you may still be guardian of the shore and sea'.²⁰⁸ Though some scholars have interpreted this scene as evidence of the Normans' adherence to the rites of their pagan Viking ancestors,²⁰⁹ the *Carmen* is associating William with the classical past to praise the new ruler and affirm his authority. The duke, rejecting the offer from Harold's mother, is presented as being better than Achilles, who accepted gold offered from Hector's mother. The ironic inscription emphasises William's victory and kingship – a message reiterated when the duke takes the title of king and distributes alms to the poor.²¹⁰

William of Poitiers, 'essentially a propagandist rather than a historian',²¹¹ presents the burial in a similar manner. The duke surveys the fallen on the battlefield with pity, 'even though it had been inflicted on impious men, and even though it is just and glorious and praiseworthy to kill a tyrant'.²¹² At camp, he receives Harold's mangled body, 'despoiled of all signs of status' but recognized 'by certain marks' (likely tattoos), and entrusts it to a 'William surnamed Malet',²¹³ rejecting the offer of

²⁰⁸ Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 34-35: Ergo uelut fuerat testatus, rupis in alto / Precepit claudi uertice corpus humi. / Extimplo quidam, partim Normannus et Anglus, / Compater Heraldus, iussa libenter agit. / Corpus enim regis cito sustulit et sepeliuit; / Imponens lapidem, scripsit et in titulo: / 'Per mandata ducis rex hic Heraldus quiescis, / Vt custos maneat littoris et pelagi.' Translation by Barlow.

²⁰⁹ *The Carmen de Hastings Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens*, ed. Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xlv, asserted the scene depicted a 're-enactment of old Viking rites by a Christian prince, recorded without explanation or excuse'; see also Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 'Scandinavian Influence in Norman Literature of the Eleventh Century', *ANS* 6 (1983): 107-121 (111-112).

²¹⁰ Guy, *Carmen*, ed. and tr. Barlow, 34: Dux, cum gente sua, plangens super ossa sepulta, / Pauperibus Christi munera distribuit. / Nomine postposito ducis, et sic rege locato, / Hinc regale sibi nomen adeptus abit.

²¹¹ *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, xviii n. 2. John Gillingham, 'William the Bastard at War', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher Holdsworth, and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989) 141-158 (141): 'nauseatingly sycophantic'.

²¹² William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 138-141: Sic uictoria consummata, ad aream belli regressus, reperit stragem, quam non absque miseratione conspexit, tametsi factam in impios; tametsi tyrannum occidere sit pulchrum, fama gloriosum, beneficio gratam. Late solum operuit sordidatus in cruore flos Anglica nobilitatis atque iuuentutis.

²¹³ Barlow, *The Godwins*, 157: 'There is no trace of Malet in England before the Conquest, and how he could have been a co-father of Harold is unascertainable'. See also the conclusion to Cyril Hart, 'William Malet and His Family', *ANS* 19 (1996): 123-165 (165).

Harold's mother.²¹⁴ Though the *Gesta* omits any indication of sympathetic treatment towards Harold's corpse, like the *Carmen* it uses the image of a woman as a sorrowful victim of war, a presentation 'as old as classical tragedy' where the 'Woman offers the pleas of kin and family only to be rejected by the different morality of the world of men and war'.²¹⁵ Again, the duke is presented as surpassing his classical predecessors by rejecting such pleas and jokingly suggesting Harold should be buried on shore, given that he 'considered it would be unworthy for him to be buried as his mother wished, when innumerable men lay buried because of his overweening greed'.²¹⁶ The *Gesta* uses this jest to further praise the duke with classical comparisons. Treating the burial of Harold on the coast as official, Poitiers addresses Harold's tumulus in a manner imitating Lucan's account of the burial of Pompey in the *Pharsalia*.²¹⁷ Having previously presented Duke William as superior to Pompey in warfare,²¹⁸ Poitier's

²¹⁴ William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 138-141: Propius regem fratres eius duo reperti sunt. Ipse carens omni decore, quibusdam signis, nequaquam facie, recognitus est, et in castra ducis delatus qui tumulandum eum Guillelmo agnomine Maletto concessit, non matri pro corpore dilectae prolis auri par pondus offerenti.

²¹⁵ Pauline Stafford, 'Chronicle D, 1067 and Women: Gendering Conquest in Eleventh-century England', in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. Simon Keynes and Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 208-223 (213-214).

²¹⁶ William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 140: Sciuit enim non decree tali commercio aurum accipi. Aestimavit indignum fore ad matris libitum sepeliri cuius ob nimiam cupiditatem insepulti remanerent innumerabiles. Dictum est illudendo, oportere situm esse custodem littoris et pelagi, quae cum armis ante uestanus insedit.

²¹⁷ William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 140: Nos tibi, Heralde non insultamus, sed cum pio uictore, tuam ruinam lachrimato, miseramur et plangimus te. Vicisti digno te prouentu, ad meritum tuum et in cruore iacuisti, et in littoreo tumulo iaces, et posthumae generationi tam Anglorum quam Normannorum abominabilis eris. Lucan, *The Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 496, 498 (viii. 816-822): Quis capit haec tumulus? surgit miserabile bustum / Non ullis plenum titulis, non ordine tanto / Fastorum; solitumque legi super alta deorum / Culmina et extractos spoliis hostilibus arcus / Haud procul est ima Pompei nomen harena / Depressum tumulo, quod non legat advena recetus, / Quod nisi monstratum Romanus transeat hospes.

²¹⁸ William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 114, 116: Marius, aut Magnus Pompeius, uterque eximius calliditate atque industria meritis triumphum, hic adducto Romam in uinculis Iugurtha, ille coacto Mithridate ad uenenum, sic in hostium fines delatus formidaret agens militem uniuersum, se in periculum seorsim ab agmine cum legione segniter daret. Fuit illorum, et est ducum consuetudinis, dirigere non ire exploratores: magis ad uitam sibi, quam ut exercitui prouidentiam suam conseruarent. Guillelmus uero cum uiginti quinque, non amplius militum comitatu promptus ipse loca et incolas explorauit. Inde reuertens, ob asperitatem tramitis pedes (re non absque risu gesta, quanquam lector forte rideat) seriae laudi materiam dedit, gestans in humero sociatam suae loricae satellitis, dum nominatissimum ui corporis ut animi, Osbertni filium Guillelmum ferreo fasce leuauit.

address to Harold's grave presents William overcoming both his contemporary rivals and his illustrious predecessors,²¹⁹ all while proclaiming the duke's legitimacy.²²⁰ What follows is a 'self-righteous lecture',²²¹ where the achievements of Harold are presented in a negative manner,²²² while proclaiming the end he met both proved 'by what right you were raised through the death-bed gift of Edward' and fulfilled the ominous sign provided by Halley's Comet.²²³ As in the *Carmen*, the burial of Harold permits the author the opportunity to praise William. Poitiers uses the occasion to restate the reasons behind the Conquest.

The manner in which Anglo-Norman historians that followed used the burial of Harold shows how they regarded the Conquest. Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, omits mention of Harold's burial, copying instead a detail from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's entry. The detail, taken from the 1087 entry concerned with William's passing, mentions that the duke built an abbey at the site of the battle for the souls of the dead.²²⁴ By this alteration, Huntingdon stresses the religious aftermath (while fitting

²¹⁹ This feature is discussed in Jeanette M. A. Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1981), 1-22.

²²⁰ William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 140: *Corruere solent qui summam in mundo potestatem summam beatitudinem putant; et ut maxime beati sint, rapiunt eam, raptam ui bellica retinere nituntur.*

²²¹ Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and William of Poitiers: a Monastic Reinterpretation of William the Conqueror', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 50 (1972): 1116-1127 (1122).

²²² William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 140: *Atqui tu fraterno sanguine maduisti, ne fratris magnitudo te faceret minus potentem. Rustici dein furiosus in alterum conflictum, ut adiutus patriae parricidio regale decus non amitteres. Traxit igitur te clades contracta per te.* Regarding the death of Harold's brother, Tostig, it is worthwhile noting the depiction of the incident in the *Carmen*, 10. After classical allusions to Lucan's *Pharsalia* and Statius's *Thebais*, concerned with civil wars and family disputes, the *Carmen* employs the biblical tale of Cain killing his brother: *Inuidus ille Cain fratris caput amputat ense, / Et caput et corpus sic sepeliuit humo. / Hec tibi preuidit qui debita regna subegit: / Criminis infesti quatinus ultor eas.* The *Carmen* presents the outcome of a battle as an individual fight between the two protagonists, and connects the unrelated dispute to the Norman rationale for invasion.

²²³ William of Potiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 140-143: *Ecce non fulges in corona quam perfide inuasisti; non resides in solio quod superbe ascendisti. Arguunt extrema tua quam recte sublimatus fueris Edwardi dono in ipsius fine. Regum terror cometa, post initium altitudinis tuae couscans, exitium tibi uaticinatus fuit.* The differing interpretations of the comet, widely seen as a symbol but interpreted as an omen for a variety of predictions, is examined in Elisabeth van Houts, 'The Norman Conquest through European Eyes', *EHR* 110 (1995): 832-853.

²²⁴ *HA*, 394: *Quo in loco rex Willelmus abbatiam nobilem postea pro defunctis suis construxit, et eam digne nomine Belli uocauit.*

his theme of the Normans as divinely assisted). In the account presented William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, the details are arranged so that Duke William is praised for his generosity while Harold is suitably honoured. The Norman ruler, after seeing that his own dead were 'splendidly buried' and giving permission to the defeated to do the same,²²⁵ accepts the request of Harold's mother (while rejecting the offered ransom), who buries it at Waltham.²²⁶ Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, too, has the duke regarding with pity the dead of both sides.²²⁷ His account, a rewrite of William of Poitiers's *Gesta Guillelmi*, has Harold's corpse, identified by his non-facial features, brought to the duke and buried at the shore by William Malet.²²⁸ Absent from the Orderic's text is the sarcastic epitaph, any mention of Harold's loss of status, and any self-righteous lecture. Orderic also presents the story of Harold's mother in a different manner. In addition to providing her a name, Gytha, the *Historia* presents her as subject to fortune.²²⁹ Her sons, possible claimants for the throne, are listed. In another context, these would appear as possible figureheads for a revolt against Norman rule;²³⁰ here, however, they are further evidence of Gytha's ill-fortune.²³¹ Her offer to Duke William

²²⁵ *GRA*, 460-461: Ille, ubi perfecta uictoria potitus est, suos sepeliendos mirifice curauit; hostibus quoque, si qui uellent, idem exsequendi licentiam prebuit. Translation by Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom.

²²⁶ *GRA*, 460: Corpus Haroldi matri repetenti sine pretio misit, licet illa multum per legatos obtulisset; acceptum itaque apud Waltham sepeliuit, quam ipse aecclesiam ex proprio constructam in honore sanctae Crucis canonicis impleuerat.

²²⁷ *HE* II, 178: Dux autem uictoria consummata ad aream belli regressus est; ibique miserabilem stragem non absque miseratione uidendam intuitus est. Anglica nobilitatis et iuentutis flos in cruore sordidatus late solum operuit.

²²⁸ *HE* II, 178: Heraldus quibusdam signis et non facie recognitus, et in castra ducis delatus; ac ad tumulandum prope littus maris quod diu cum armis seruauerat Guillelmo agnomine Maletto uictoris iussu traditus.

²²⁹ *HE* II, 178: Vergibili fortuna mortalibus in terris suppeditante ualde aspera et inopinata; quidam de puluere prosiliunt ad magnarum potestatum culmina, aliique de summo apice subito pulsati gemunt in ingenti mesticia. Sic Githa Goduini comitis relicta, quondam diuitiis gaudens et potentia; nunc nimio merore est affecta, quia grauibus infortuniis uehementer est afflicta. For Orderic's use of Gytha, compare William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. Davis and Chibnall, 116-123; *HE* II, 170-173, and *GND*, II, 166-169.

²³⁰ Stafford, 'Chronicle D, 1067 and women', 219.

²³¹ *HE* II, 178: Nam septem filios uiro suo peperit, Suenum, Tosticum, Heraldum, Guorth; Elfgarum, Leofuinum et Wlnodum. Omnes hi comites fuerunt, magnoque corporis decore et saeculari probitate uiguerunt; sed diuersos et atroces euentus separatim experti sunt. Elfgarus et Wlnodus Deum diligentes

is similarly presented differently; the duke rejects it, while claiming that the English should be allowed to bury their dead if they so wished.²³² By presenting Harold's burial in this manner, Orderic implies that not only was Duke William not the man that earlier text presented, but also his actions resulted in long-term divisiveness. These three authors – Huntingdon, Malmesbury, and Orderic – in their differing presentations of Harold's burial provide different responses to the legacy of the Conquest.

The remains of Harold were one of the many problems the Conquest left to Waltham Abbey. The text, *De inventione sancte crucis*, is an attempt to deal with a problematic history. The need to explain why their patron was defeated was simple: they explained it away by proclaiming the other noted feature of their establishment – the Holy Cross – prophesied the monarch's demise by nodding when he prayed there before setting off to combat the invaders of his kingdom.²³³ Dealing with Harold's remains was more difficult. It explains that two elder monks of the church, Osgod Cnoppe and Æthelric Childemaister, were sent to bring back the corpses of those

pie legitimeque uixerunt; et in uera confessione prior Remis peregrinus et monachus et alter Salesberiae uenerabiliter obierunt. Verum alii quinque diuersis in locis, uariisque studiis intenti armis interierunt.

²³² *HE* II, 178, 180: Mesta igitur mater Guillelmo duci pro corpore Heraldi par auri pondus optulit, sed magnanimus uictor tale commercium respuit; indignum ducens ut ad libitum matris sepeliretur, cuius ob nimiam cupiditatem innumerabiles insepulti remanerent. Ipse suis ingentem sepeliendi curam exhiberi praecepit; Anglis quoque cunctis uolentibus quosque ad humandum liberam potestem concessit.

²³³ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 46: Nam mane facto ecclesiam sancte crucis ingrediens et reliquas quas apud se habebat in capella sua repositas altari superponens, uotem uouit quod si successus prosperos sub euentu belli prestaret ei Dominus, copiam prediorum et multitudinem clericorum Deo ibidem seruiturorum, ecclesie conferret, et se Deo seruiturum amodo quasi serum empticum sponderet. Clero igitur eum comitante et processione precedente, ueniunt ad ualuas templi ubi conuersus ad crucifixum, rex ille sancte cruci deuotus, ad terram in modum crucis prosternens se, pronus orauit. Contigit autem interea miserabile dictu et a seculis incredibile. Nam imago crucifixi, que prius erecta ad superiora respiciebat, cum se rex humiliaret in terram, demisit uultum, quasi tristis: signum quidem prescium futuorum! This incident is discussed in Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Appropriating the Future', tr. Peregrine Rand, in *Medieval Futures: Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. A. Burrow and Ian P. Wei (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 3-17 (9).

devoted to the church if needs be.²³⁴ After witnessing the defeat of their patron,²³⁵ they – and not Harold’s mother – proceed to plead with Duke William for their patron’s corpse. In presenting their pleas to the victor, *De inventione sancte crucis* stresses the positive aspects of Harold’s life (notably, his patronage of their abbey),²³⁶ Duke William, similarly, acknowledges his slain rival’s attributes when he permits them their wishes.²³⁷ This friendly dialogue between the monks and the new monarch reflect concerns contemporary to the author of the text rather than the battle. The text mentions William’s desire to establish an abbey on the site of the battle. Though this occurred – as noted by Huntingdon above – the concept that it was William’s plan, rather than Pope Alexander demanding such a structure for penance for the sins committed on the battlefield, first appeared in a forged charter included in the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*.²³⁸ This is telling: the chroniclers of Battle Abbey and Waltham both desired to

²³⁴ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 46: Viso autem hoc infausto auspicio, multo dolore correpti, duos fratres de ecclesia precipuos es maiores natu, Osegodum Cnoppe et Ailricum Childemaister, in comitatu regis miserunt ad prelium ut cognitis rei euentibus, de copore regis et suorum ecclesie deuotorum curam agerent et, si fortuna sic daret, cadauera reportarent.

²³⁵ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 50: Post miserabiles belli euentus et infaustum omen certantium, quid animi, quid angoris, quidue suppressi doloris fuerit fratribus predictis Osegodo et Ailrico qui fatales hos regis euentus secuti fuerant a longe ut uiderent finem, pensare poterit cuius animo hoc fixum sit, ‘O uos qui transitis per uiam attendite et uidete si est dolor sicut dolor meus.’

²³⁶ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 50, 52: Necessitate tamen urgente, esti timore obstante, ducem adeunt pedibus humiliati; precibus lacrimas addunt dicentes: ‘Dux generose, nos serui tui, omni solatio destituti (utinam sic et uita presenti!), exploraturi huc destinati sumus euentus belli a fratribus quos rex iste defunctus in ecclesia Walthamensi constituerat, set successibus uestris prouidens Dominus sublatus est de medio qui consolabatur nos, cuius presidiis necnon et stipendiis Deo militabant quo ipse in ecclesia instituit; rogamus, domine, et contestamur te per gratiam tibi diuinitus collatam et pro remedio animarum omnium eorum qui in presenti causa uestri expleuerunt dies supremos, quod liceat nobis in beneplacito uestro corpora tollere et nobiscum libere deportare domini regis fundatoris et institutoris ecclesie nostre, necnon et eorum qui ob reuerentiam ipsius sepulture locum elegerunt aput nos ut ipsorum presidiis munita firmior maneat status ecclesie et perpetuitas illibata.’

²³⁷ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 52: Quorum precibus et irriguis fletibus egregious dux ille motus, ‘Rex’, inquit, ‘uester fidei sue religionis immemor, esti dignas transgressionis ad presens exsoluerit penas, non meruit sepulture beneficio priuari. Quoniam regimen tante sedis, quocumque modo adeptus, diem consummauit rex dictus, paratus sum ob illius reuerentiam et hereditatibus huic conquestioni coadiutores animas exalauerunt, ecclesiam et ordinem monasticum centum monachorum instituere qui perhennitur eorum saluti animarum inuigilent, et ipsum regem uestrum in ecclesia eadem debito cum honore pre ceteris sublimare et ob ipsius reuerentiam locum amplioribus beneficiis augere.’

²³⁸ *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and tr. Eleanor Searle (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 20-21. For context, see Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 102-103, and C. N. L. Brooke, *Churches and Churchmen in Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999), 146-148.

reiterate and secure the importance of their respective abbeys. Thus, when *De inventione sancte crucis* presents its two brothers offering Duke William money for Harold's corpse,²³⁹ and the duke rejects and offers his support,²⁴⁰ it should be seen as stressing the twelfth-century desire for Waltham Abbey to present its pre-Norman abbey having Norman support. Possibly more historically accurate is the claim that in place of his mother, it is Harold's mistress, Edith Swanneck, who, having 'at one time been the king's concubine, and knew the secret marks on the king's body better than others did', identified the body.²⁴¹ Having located the remains, the body was placed on a bier by the monks and honoured by Norman soldiers, and escorted to Waltham where, the chronicler asserts, it has resided ever since. As he records this information about Harold's remains, the chronicler of *De inventione sancte crucis* speaks in the first person singular, announcing that he was present at the third translation of the corpse, and, then in the first person plural, that the monks heard testimony from older men who had seen and touched the wounds on the bones.²⁴² Though the chronicler makes this

²³⁹ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 52: Ad quem fratres illi, multo talia promittentis solatio confortati, 'Non' inquit, 'magne rex future, annue precibus supplicantium ut successibus suis gaudeat generosa sublimitas tua, et has .x. marcas auri ex beneficio defuncti in usus tuorum digneris suscipere, et corpus ad locum quem instituit ipse remittere ut beneficio corporis exhilarati, de morte ipsius plurimam nos gaudeamus suscepisse consolationem, et posteris nostris presens in ecclesia tumuli structura perpetuum sit monumentum.'

²⁴⁰ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 52, 54: Compatiens igitur dux ille gloriosus, ut erat misericordis animi et pronioris ad exaudiendum propter successus, quia dederat ei Dominus de hoste triumphum, annuit uotis eorum, spernens et pro nichilo oblatum reputans aurum. 'Si quid autem', inquit, 'uobis defuerit in expensis ad exhibenda funeralia officia, uel itineri uestro quocumque modo necessaria, habundanter uobis exhiberi precipimus, pacem et omnimodam tranquillitatem a commilitationibus exercitus nostri uobis per omnia indulgemus.'

²⁴¹ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 54-55: Gaudio igitur inestimabili fratres confortati, currunt ad cadauera, et uertentes ea huc et illuc, domini regis corpus agnoscere non ualentes, quia corpus hominis exanguine non consueuit mortuum formam prioris status frequenter exprimere; unicum placuit remedium, ipsum Osegodum domum redire et mulierem quam ante sumptum regimen Anglorum dilexerat, Editham cognomento Swanneshals, quod gallice sonat 'collum cigni', secum adducere que domini regis quandoque cubicularia, secretiora in eo signa nouerat ceteris amplius, ad ulteriora intima secretorum admissa, quatinus ipsius noticia certificarentur secretis inditiis qui exterioribus non poterant, quia statim letali uulnere confosso, quicquid in eo regalis erat insignii duci deportatum est, signum scilicet prostrationis regie, quoniam consuetudinis erat antique, et adhuc credimus moderne, in regum expugnatione uel castrorum captione magnis eos donari muneribus qui primi possent regis conum dicere et regi offerre, uel primus castro expugnato regis uexillum, precipue ipsius castri munitioni eminentis.

²⁴² *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 54, 56: Quam cum adduxisset Osegodus et inter strages mortuorum pluribus inditiis ipsa corpus regis Haroldi designasset, aptatum fereto multis heroum

assertion to reject invented stories concerning Harold's survival (discussed in the next subchapter), the detail that he was present at the third translation of the slain monarch's remains is telling. This suggests that the tomb of Harold, despite being repeatedly moved around the abbey, attracted visitors that were problematic to the abbey.²⁴³ While the text praises its former patron, the manner it presents his burial (and the treatment of his body while at the abbey), show they were keen to stress that Harold, and his reign, were over,²⁴⁴ to woo support from the Normans.

As with his death, the burial of Harold provided chroniclers the opportunity to emphasise their stance. In the early Norman works, the *Carmen* and the *Gesta Guillelmi*, the incident allows the authors to present the subject of their panegyrics, Duke William, as surpassing the heroes of the classical past in using a scene where Harold's mother tries to buy her son's corpse. William's refusal, and his order for Harold to be buried overlooking the sea, emphasized the legitimacy of his rule (while presenting the dead Harold as a vassal to his opponent). Later historians, descended from both sides of the conflict, adopted a more nuanced approach. Huntingdon opted to omit any mention of Harold's burial, choosing to mention William's construction of an abbey on the site of the battle. Malmesbury opted to present the duke as a generous figure, while claiming that Harold was taken for burial at Waltham Abbey, placating both sides. Orderic, by contrast, presented a different version, using the incident with

Normannie comitatus honorem corpori exhibentibus usque ad Pontem Belli, qui nunc dicitur, ab ipsis fratribus et multa superuenientium copiositate Anglorum qui audierant eorum imminens excidium, quia nunquam fuit Anglis cognata Normannorum societas, cum magno honore corpus Waltham deductum sepelierunt, ubi usque hodie, quicquid fabulentur homines quod in rupe manserit Dorobernie et nuber defunctus sepultus sit Cestrie, pro certo quiescit Walthamie: cuius corporis translatione, quoniam sic se habebat status ecclesie fabricandi, uel deuotio fratrum reuerentiam corpori exhibentium, nunc extreme memini me tertio affuisse et, sicut uulgo célèbre est et attestations antiquorum audiuimus, plagas ipsis ossibus impressas oculis corporeis et uidisse et manibus contrectasse.

²⁴³ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, xiii-xiv.

²⁴⁴ *Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Wakiss and Chibnall, 56: Vixit autem et Anglis imperauit egregius rex iste modico tempore per annum et <***> menses et uiam uniuerse carnis ingressus appositus est ad patres suos.

Gytha to present the duke in a negative light. Finally, *De inventione sancte crucis* attempts to use the burial to praise its defeated patron while also claiming Norman support for their pre-Norman Abbey, a squaring of the circle similar to its attempt to claim ownership of Harold's remains while trying to suppress cults surrounding his tomb. Like his death, Harold's remains were a potent symbol, wherever they were deemed to be.

2. 4. 'Saved Only For Repentance': Understanding Survival Stories

An interesting feature of Harold's posthumous afterlife, originating from the uncertainty surrounding his death and burial, are stories claiming that he survived Hastings. Such stories commonly accumulated around monarchs whose reigns had ended turbulently. The scholar František Graus noted the reoccurring features that appear in the legendary accounts of kings said to have become ascetics,²⁴⁵ and Hungary has the curious tale of the defeated King Solomon (d. 1087), who, in addition to receiving alms while in a monk's habit from the king that defeated him, resided in Pula in poverty.²⁴⁶ Plotting the changing treatment of Harold's demise allows us to see how

²⁴⁵ František Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit* (Prague: Nakladatelství Československé Akademie Věd, 1965), 428-429.

²⁴⁶ Simon of Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum*, ed. and tr. László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer (Budapest: Central European Press, 1999), 134, 136: Salomon ergo metuens fratres suos, cum tota familia in Styriam introivit, ubi in Agmund monasterio familia sua derelicta in Musunium est reversus volens colligere exercitum iterato. Sed cum de die in diem deficeret, illorumque processus reciperet Felicia incrementa, confusus rediit ad caesarem adiutorium petiturus. Et licet pro militia solidanda affluentem pecuniam tradidisset, Teutonici ob timorem Hungarorum recipere noluerunt. Unde spe omni destitutus rediit in Agmund ad reginam, cum qua dies aliquos cohabitans in veste monachali deinde Albam venit. Et cum Ladislaus frater eius in porticu ecclesiae Beatae Virginis minibus propriis pauperibus elemosinam erogaret, ipse ibi inter eos dicitur accepisse. Quem mox cognovits Ladislaus, ut inspexit. Reversus autem Ladislaus a distributione elemosinae inquiri fecit diligenter, non quod ei nocuisset, sed ille malum praesumens ab eodem, secessit inde versus mare Adriaticum, ubi in civitate vocata Pola usque mortem in summa paupertate in penuria finiens vita suam, in qua et iacet tumulatus, numquam rediens ad uxorem usque mortem. Regina vero Sophia uxor eius in maxima castitate perseverans, nunciis frequentibus maritum visitabat mittens ei expensam, ut habere poterat, in vitando nihilominus, quod eam videre dignaretur usque mortem. Qui quamvis in corde habuisset, ob nimiam egestatem tactus verecundia ire recusavit. Quem cum de medio sublatum cognovisset, licet multi principes de Germania sibi copulari matrimonialiter voluissent, spretis omnibus, quae habebat saecularia faciens venumdari, egenis est largita. Ipsa vero monialis effecta arctissimam vitam deducendo migravit ad Dominum et in praefato monasterio tumulata, sicut sancta veneratur. For the historical evidence of this tradition, see Péter Rokay, *Salamon és Póla* (Novi Sad: Forum, 1990); for the context, see Gábor Klaniczay, 'The Ambivalent Model of Solomon for Royal Sainthood and Royal Wisdom', in *The*

such a legend emerged. Early authors that mentioned such stories either recorded uncertainty about Harold's demise (Aelred of Rievaulx, Gervais of Tilbury), or claimed he survived and became a penitential hermit at Chester (Gerald of Wales, Ralph of Coggeshall). Later authors muddled this fantastical life with stories surrounding Óláfr Tryggvason, a Norwegian king whose death was also disputed. A final life, the *Vita Haroldi*, mixed the fantastical with the religious, and depicted Harold's supposed death as an anchorite in a hagiographical fashion.

Early mentions of such beliefs are brief. The earliest known appearance occurs in Aelred of Rievaulx's *Vita Sancti Edwardi Regis et Confessoris* (c. 1162-1163), where Aelred notes Harold 'met a miserable death, or, as some think, escaped, saved only for repentance'.²⁴⁷ Gerald of Wales's *Itinerarium Cambrae* (1191) provides more detail. After claiming the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry V, was a penitential hermit at Chester,²⁴⁸ Gerald notes that Harold, having survived an arrow in his left eye and defeat in battle (owing to his perjury), became an anchorite in the same city.²⁴⁹ Gervase of Tilbury wrote akin to Aelred and claimed uncertainty about the facts of Harold's demise,²⁵⁰ and Ralph of Coggeshall wrote similar to Gerald a story that Harold survived

Biblical Models of Power and Law: Les modèles bibliques du pouvoir et du droit, ed. Ivan Biliarsky and Radu G. Păun (Frankfurt: Peter Land, 2008), 75-92.

²⁴⁷ *PL* 195, 766: Contra quos aciem producens Haroldus, victor exstitit, Tostinus in bello prosternitur, rex Norwagiae lapsus fuga in unam navim cum paucis sese receipt. Eodem anno Haroldus ipse regno spoliatus Anglorum aut misere occubuit, au tut quidam putant poenitentiae tantum reservatus evasit. Aelred, *Historical Works*, ed. Dutton, tr. Freeland, 189-190.

²⁴⁸ The connection between the tales of the two supposedly-churchbound monarchs is explored in Gilles Lecuppre, 'L'empereur, l'imposteur et la rumeur: Henri V ou l'échec d'une "réhabilitation"', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 42 (1999): 189-197.

²⁴⁹ 'Itinerarium Cambrae', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. James F. Dimock, vol. 6 (London: Longmans, 1898), 3-152 (140): Similiter et Haroldum regem se habere testantur: qui, ultimus de gente Saxonica rex in Anglia, publico apud Hastings bello cum Normannis congregiens, poenas succumbendo perjuri luit; multisque, ut aiunt, confossus vulneribus, oculoque sinistro sagitta perdito ac perforato, ad partes istas victus evasit: ubi sancta conversatione cujusdam urbis ecclesiae jugis et assiduus contemplator adhaerens, vitamque tanquam anachoriticam ducens, viae ac vitae cursum, ut creditur, feliciter consummavit. Ex utriusque, ut fertur, ultimi articuli confessione, veritas antea non comperta demum prodiit publicata.

²⁵⁰ Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, ed. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 478: et Haraldus utrum fuga sibi consuleret an in prelio ceciderit adhuc dubium relinquit. This text is dated 1210-1214.

and, after his wanderings, became a hermit at Chester, surviving supposedly until the reign of Henry II (1154-1189).²⁵¹ Though the form of the text influenced the inclusion of such tales,²⁵² Chester, at the time these texts were produced, was a volatile border town; by locating the last English monarch in such a location and presenting him a religious penitent, the authors were colonising and securing the territory in the minds of their audience.²⁵³

Stories, however, transcend boundaries. These tales that surround Harold are remarkably similar to the legendary stories that developed around another king whose death in battle was uncertain. Óláfr Tryggvason, a Norwegian king who was last seen leaping from his ship following his defeat at the Battle of Svolder (1000), was also said to have survived, gone on pilgrimages, and taken up a religious life. Their two lives, and the legends around them, may have become increasingly embellished, intertwined, and increasingly confused, with other stories, with Scandinavian authors themselves writing of survival stories of Harold.²⁵⁴ Though these texts at certain moments indicate

²⁵¹ Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stevenson (London: Longman, 1875), 1. Anno ab Incarnatione Domini MLXVI. Willelmus, dux Normannorum, contracto a partibus transmarinis innumerabili exercitu, in Angliam applicuit apud Hastinges, ac justo Dei judicio die Sancti Calixti papae, regem Haraldum, qui imperium Angliae injuste usurpaverat, regno simul ac vita privavit, quamvis quidam contendant ipsum Haraldum inter occisos delituisse, nocturnaue fuga lapsum, post multas peregrinationes, apud Cestriam eremiticam vitam duxisse, et usque ad ultima tempora regis Henrici Secundi, in sancto proposito perdurasse. This text is dated c. 1223.

²⁵² Aelred was producing a vita for Edward (albeit one in which Edward prophesied Harold's death while watching him squabble with his brother), Gerald wrote a travel account of Wales, Gervase was collecting curiosities for the Holy Roman Emperor's pensive hours, and Ralph employed it to open his chronicle.

²⁵³ Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Medieval Anchoritisms: Gender, Space and the Solitary Life* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2011), 168: 'These two monarchs, of course, were closely bound up in the political crises of conquest and continuity which beset the period and their supposed anchoritic vocation at Chester served discursively not just to stabilize and sacralize one of the most unstable and vulnerable of border towns, but also to offer an anchor for perceived English nationhood and help construct it as an ontological category'.

²⁵⁴ For these, see Margaret Ashdown, 'An Icelandic Account of the Survival of Harold Godwinson', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. P. Clemoes (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1959), 122-136; Marc Cohen, 'From Trondheim to Waltham to Chester: Viking- and post- Viking- Age Attitudes in the Survival Legends of Óláfr Tryggvason and Harold Godwinson', in *The Middle Ages in the North West*, ed. Tom Scott and Pat Starkey (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 1995), 143-153; Gillian Fellows-Jensen, 'The Myth of Harold II's Survival in the Scandinavian Sources', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 53-64. For Óláfr in the context of Scandinavian hagiography, see Haki Antonsson, St. Magnús of Orkney: A Scandinavian Martyr-Cult in Context

religious feeling – such as when Harold’s corpse is said to smell sweetly in *Hemings þáttur Áslákssonar*,²⁵⁵ making him akin to a saint – the stories tend towards the content and style of sagas and romance.

The clearest and most detailed articulation of the survival narrative is the *Vita Haroldi* (c. 1204-1206),²⁵⁶ which combines romance with religion. In this version, Harold, left for dead at Hastings, is brought to Winchester where a Saracen woman – evidence of the influence of Romance literature – heals him. After failing to spur Saxons and Danes to fight against the Normans, Harold realizes God is against such a path, and so opts to go barefoot on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After unsuccessfully trying to carry off relics from a church in Rome, he returns to England, scars covered underneath a cowl, under the name Christian. After a spell in the Welsh borders as a hermit, where he is beaten and robbed of his clothes by the Welsh, he becomes an anchorite in Chester where he dies.

This irrational tale has its reasons. Scholarship on the *vita*, however, has long neglected them owing to hostility. It has been rejected as ‘little else than an historical romance’ written by a former monk of Waltham intent on removing its reputation connected to its patron,²⁵⁷ and ‘the quietist literature of a defeated nation’.²⁵⁸ Recent reappraisal has not only comprehended how such a far-fetched tale could be compiled,²⁵⁹ but also how it was intended to be read. Robert M. Stein has noted how the *vita* transforms Harold “into a new kind of saint while transforming itself into a

(Leiden: Brill, 2007), 147-157, and Antonsson’s ‘The Early Cult of Saints in Scandinavia and the Conversion: A Comparative Perspective’, in *Saints and Their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000-1200)*, ed. Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2010), 17-37.

²⁵⁵ Fellows-Jensen, ‘Myth of Harold’, 57.

²⁵⁶ Alan Thacker, ‘The Cult of King Harold at Chester’, in *The Middle Ages in the North West*, ed. Tom Scott and Pat Starkey (Oxford: Leopard’s Head Press, 1995), 155-175 (156)

²⁵⁷ Thomas Duffus Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1862), 668.

²⁵⁸ J. C. Holt, *Colonial England 1066-1215* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), 3-4.

²⁵⁹ Thacker, ‘The Cult of King Harold’, 164-169.

romance” by using a narrative modeled on the *Vita S. Martini*, while adamantly stressing its veracity.²⁶⁰ This is apparent in the depiction of Harold’s death in the *Vita Haroldi*, which is worth quoting at length.

Appropinquante autem die exitus venerabilis viri Haroldi perventum est ad hoc quod extreme necessitatis urgente articulo vir sanctus viatici salutaris indigeret solacio . Unde accedens sacerdos . quem ego bene novi Andreas nomine . de ecclesia sancti Johannis . infirmum visitabat et illi quicquid mos exigit Christianus devote exhibebat . Extremam vero ipsius audiens confessionem eum interrigavit cujus condicionis vir fuerit. Cui ille . “Si michi dixeris in verbo Domini quod me vivente quod tibi dixeris nulli propalabis satisfaciam rationi tue interrogationis.” Cui sacerdos. “In periculo anime mee dico tibi quod quicquid mihi dixeris omnibus erit incognitum . usque quo extremum efflaveris halitum.” Tum ille . “Verum est quod rex fui quondam Anglie Haroldus nomine . nunc autem pauper et jacens in cinere . et ut celarem nomen meum appellari me feci nomine Christianum.”

Non diu post hec emisit spiritum: et jam omnium hostium suorum victor migravit ad dominum. Sacerdos vero statim omnibus nunciavit . quod ei vir Dei in extrema confessione intimavit et ipsum effe certissime re[gem Haroldum][.]²⁶¹

Now as the day of the death of the venerable Harold drew near, and as that last moment of extreme necessity arrived when the holy man demanded the consolation of the Holy Sacrament, a priest, whom I knew well, named Andrew, came and visited the sick man and administered to him all that the Christian rite requires. But as he was listening to his last confession, he asked of him what station of life he was? To whom he replied: “If you will promise me, on the Word of the Lord, that, as long as I live, you will not divulge what I tell you, I will satisfy the motive of your question.” The priest answered: “On peril of my soul, I declare to you that anything you shall tell me shall be preserved a secret from everyone till you have drawn your last breath.” Then he replied: “It is true that I was formerly the King of England, Harold by name, but now am I a poor man, lying in ashes; and, that I might conceal my name, I caused myself to be called Christian.” Not long after this he gave up the ghost, and now, conqueror over all his enemies, he has departed to the Lord. But the priest at once told them all that the man of God had confessed to him, in his last words, that he was indeed King Harold.²⁶²

The moment of death produces the ‘truth’ of the life of Harold that the text presents.

The accumulation of fantastical facts creates a new story, one that presents ‘the life of a saint (or near saint) who was destined to be a king, rather than the life of a king whose

²⁶⁰ Robert M. Stein, ‘The Trouble with Harold: The Ideological Context of the *Vita Haroldi*’, *New Medieval Literatures* 2 (1998): 181-204 (197). The medieval use of Martin’s *vita* is examined in Jean Leclercque, ‘S. Martin dans l’hagiographie monastique du moyen age’, *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961): 175-187.

²⁶¹ *Vita Haroldi*, ed. Walter de Gray Birch (London: Elliot Stock, 1885), 98-99.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 202-3.

virtues were sufficient to make him a saint'.²⁶³ Though seemingly unbelievable, the *Vita Haroldi* is a religious text, a point reinforced by its survival in a codex that includes a copy of *De inventione sancte crucis* and the Voyage of Brendon.²⁶⁴ The divine judgment claimed to have been meted out at the Battle of Hastings is here, consciously, replaced with a Christian's death.

These survival stories, though sidelined by contemporaries and by modern scholars, reveal much about how Harold's demise was regarded. The troubling uncertainty about his death was used as a curiosity, and then as a means to instill 'Englishness' in a troublesome town on the Welsh border. Such stories, however, by their nature, are fluid, and this meant narratives of Harold's survival were muddled and mixed with those of Óláfr Tryggvason. These accounts of their 'peregrinations' ('wanderings'), became pilgrimages, and the romantic escapism of a defeated king became attached to hagiographic forms and content. In doing this, the 'bad' sudden and violent death of Harold at Hastings was replaced with the exemplary 'good' death of a hermit.

2. 5. Conclusion

Harold's death during the Battle of Hastings, and the treatment of his corpse afterwards, proves that eleventh and twelfth century chroniclers and poets were concerned with these aspects in their treatments of the lives of monarchs. From the sparse account in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, where one manuscript records the death of Harold and his brothers and another embellishes this version with the motif of divine punishment for sins, a varied literature emerged that dealt with the problematic end of the last Anglo-Danish monarch.

²⁶³ Stephen Matthews, 'The Content and Construction of the *Vita Haroldi*', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 65-73 (65)

²⁶⁴ British Library Harley 3776 is catalogued and provided with a detailed description at <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7326>.

The manner in which Harold died reflected judgment on his character and reign. The Norman invasion had been brutal, and, though they had received papal support, the Normans were keen to stress that the conflict was both justified, legal, and a success. As a consequence, the early Norman accounts that laud the Norman participants are keen to stress that Harold was dead, either by presenting it in an idealized manner (*Carmen*), or by singing praises to the victorious William (*Gesta Guillelmi*). The story of Harold being fatally wounded by an arrow piercing his eye, with its connotations of divine judgment for his supposed perjury, appears in sources (*L'Ystoire de li Normant*, the Tapestry, and *Adelae Comitissae*) that while problematic, reveal the importance of stressing the monarch's demise in this manner. It became the key account that could either be ignored (Orderic), classicized (Malmesbury), joined to Anglo-Saxon accounts (Huntingdon), or poeticized for dramatic appeal (Wace). Notably, in the account produced by Waltham Abbey, which the deceased monarch had patronized, the moment of his death is used to reflect on his character.

The dispute over where Harold was buried provided authors with the opportunity to reiterate their interpretation of the monarch and the Norman Conquest. The early Norman works, the *Carmen* and the *Gesta Guillelmi*, present Duke William rejecting the pleas and offers of money from Harold's mother to present the subject of their panegyrics as surpassing classical heroes, and the eventual burial of the remains by the shore is a means to depict William as superior to his defeated rival. Later responses were less one-sided, with one omitting the scene to stress the construction of an abbey to pray for the souls of the dead (Huntingdon), another presenting the duke as accepting the pleas so Harold could be buried at Waltham allowing both sides could be presented in a good light (Malmesbury), and another depicting William's refusal as the evidence for later conflicts between the two sides (Orderic). Waltham Abbey, which

claimed to have the monarch's remains, presented its ownership as a means to quash rumours of Harold's survival and to attract Norman support for their pre-Norman establishment.

Such disputes, however, facilitated another understanding of Harold's demise. Authors recorded claims that he survived for curiosity value, and some used the tale that he became a hermit in Chester to address contemporary political concerns. Other accounts took details from the survival stories that had accumulated around the similarly defeated Scandinavian monarch Óláfr Tryggvason, and one source, the *Vita Haroldi*, used the growing religious interpretations of Harold's life to present it as a hagiographical text. In the previous chapter, it was shown how Edward's death and burial changed from being a mourned event to a religious paradigm. With Harold, his death and burial is a continued battlefield between the two forces that fought each other. The resolution for some, it appears, was to provide the defeated monarch with the exemplary good death that he was denied at Hastings.

3. 'Ought Not Rest in a Place He Had Seized By Brute Force'²⁶⁵

The Conquest Seen Through William I's Demise and Burial

William I, the Duke of Normandy and King of England,²⁶⁶ died in 1087. Throughout his life, he had difficulties with legitimacy and authority. The illegitimate child inherited the duchy after his absent father died during on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and William spent much of his youth and young adulthood securing his position.²⁶⁷ Success resulted in further problems. Having defeating Harold at Hastings and been crowned king, William's frequent absence from the kingdom created problems for his rule. His own family was fractured: his sons quarreled among themselves, and his eldest, Robert, even waged war on him. These problematic elements meant how William regarded his territories and the issue of succession meant his death, and to a lesser extent burial, determined how his kingdom would exist after his demise. His death was a political event, and, in the *De Obitu Willelmi*, was depicted for political purposes.

Though William I chose to use what followed after his demise to assert his Norman values, English and Anglo-Norman chroniclers of mixed parentage later used his death and burial to assess and critique his conquest and rule in England.²⁶⁸ Contrary to the claims of the abbey he founded at Battle,²⁶⁹ the monarch desired to be buried at Caen, a choice that reflected both the seat of his power and his patronage.²⁷⁰ The Abbey

²⁶⁵ *GRA*, 513.

²⁶⁶ Regarding the name 'William the Conqueror', see Michel du Bouard 'Note sur l'appellation "Guillaume le Conquérant"', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher Holdsworth and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 21-26.

²⁶⁷ The influence, and extent of, the problems inheriting the duchy on William's character is assessed in David Bates, 'The Conqueror's Adolescence', *ANS* 25 (2003): 1-18.

²⁶⁸ Malmesbury and Vitalis both had a French father and an English mother; Huntingdon, an English father and a Norman mother.

²⁶⁹ *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and tr. Searle, 92, 94: In Anglia vero tertiam, de qua nunc sermo actitatur, in loco sibi a De out supra relatam est uictorie concesse fundauit, in qua et se humari si in Anglia obisset procul dubio decreuit.

²⁷⁰ For place of death acting as 'a mirror of their activities, and the geographical spread of their rule', see Evans, *Death of Kings*, 23.

of Saint-Etienne, where his corpse resided,²⁷¹ he had built to appease the Papacy having married Matilda of Flanders against their ruling (Matilda was buried in the female monastery, built for the same purpose, at the Abbey of Sainte-Trinité).²⁷² After a ‘generation of silence’,²⁷³ authors across the English Channel, and authors of English ancestry in Normandy, used their depictions of the death and burial of the first Norman monarch as a means to articulated and unsympathetic assessments of William. The Peterborough Chronicle and Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum* use Anglo-Saxon historical traditions of poetry, homiletic, and Bede’s view of history writing to assess the legacy of the deceased ruler while addressing contemporary concerns. William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and Orderic Vitalis’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*, employing motifs taken from earlier historical texts that had been copied and circulated after the Norman Conquest and biblical and classical allusions, crafted William’s death and burial into a moral *exemplum*. Finally, By examining these presentations, it is possible to see how twelfth-century historical writing could alter historic events for political, pedagogical, and theological purposes.

3. 1. Politicising the Demise: *De obitu Willelmi*

The earliest source depicting the death of William I appears in one manuscript of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*,²⁷⁴ under the title *De obitu Willelmi, ducis Normannorum regisque Anglorum, qui sanctam ecclesiam in pace uiuere fecit* (On the death of William, duke of the Normans and king of the English, who brought peace to the holy

²⁷¹ His remains were destroyed with the exception of a single thighbone when the tomb was ransacked by Calvinists in 1562; the thighbone was removed in the riots of 1793. David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England* (New Haven: Conn., 1999), 363.

²⁷² Matilda’s burial is contextualized in John Carmi Parsons, “‘Never was a body buried in England with such solemnity and honour’: The Burials and Posthumous Commemorations of English Queens to 1500”, in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference held at King’s College London, April 1995*, ed. Anne Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997): 317-337.

²⁷³ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 136.

²⁷⁴ *GND* II, 184-191; the Latin text of this edition is also printed as an appendix in Katherine Lack, ‘The *De Obitu Willelmi*: Propaganda for the Anglo-Norman Succession, 1087-88?’, *EHR* 123 (2008): 1417-1546 (1445-1456).

Church).²⁷⁵ After noting how the death and burial of William is noted, the construction of the text and its political nature will be examined.

De obitu Willelmi begins with William, back from burning Mantes, afflicted with nausea, sobs as his breathing became difficult and his stomach rejected food and drink.²⁷⁶ After ordering accommodation in Rouen, the king collapses.²⁷⁷ The text then inserts rhetorical questions concerning the state of the church, and asking who will bring God's mercy with tears, before noting the conqueror did not fear death but was troubled about what would happen to Normandy.²⁷⁸ To ease the monarch's transition from life to death, and his kingdom from one ruler to the next, William's demise has an audience. *De obitu Willelmi* lists notable figures that were present: William, archbishop of Rouen, Gilbert of Lisieux, a physician named John, the chancellor Gerard, and the monarch's half-brother Robert.²⁷⁹ With such an audience capable of recording and carrying out his final wishes, the dying William arranges who should receive what.²⁸⁰ After pious charity towards churches and the poor, the monarch deals with the problem of succession. He desired his eldest son, William (later William II), receive the crown, sword, and sceptre – meaning, in all likelihood, this one son should inherit all.²⁸¹ The

²⁷⁵ *GND* II, 184-185, translation by van Houts.

²⁷⁶ *GND* II, 184: Anno Domini Incarnationis millesimo octogesimo septimo piissime recordationis rex Willelmus, dum a Medante subuersione seu combustione reuerteretur cepit fastidio tabescere et nausianti stomacho cibum potumque reicere, crebris suspiriis urgeri, singultibus quati ac per hoc uirtute destitui.

²⁷⁷ *GND* II, 184: Quod cernens iussit sibi parai habitaculum apud ecclesiam sancti Geruasii, que est sita in suburbia urbis Rotomagensis, ibique uiribus deserto lecto sese committit.

²⁷⁸ *GND* II, 184, 186: Porro quis explicet pro ecclesie statu sollicitudinem, uel pro eius concussionem merorem? Quis narrare lacrimarum flumina quas pro acceleratione diuine fundebat clementie? Non enim se recessurum dolebat, sed quod futurum nouerat gemebat, affirmans Normanniam patriam esse post suum obitum miseram, sicut postea rei probauit euentus.

²⁷⁹ *GND* II, 186: Aderant autem eius consolationi uenerabiles antistites et et alii serui Dei plurimi inter quos errant Willelmus archiepiscopus prefate urbis, Gislebertus episcopus Lexouiensis, Iohannes medicus et Gerardus cancellarius, sed et Robertus comes Moritoniensis, frater eiusdem Regis, quem quanto sibi propinquorem nouerat, tanto ei familiaris sua omnia credebatur.

²⁸⁰ *GND* II, 186: Iussit autem eidem uenerabili fratri suo Roberto, ut ministros camere sue ante se uenire faceret et rem familiarem que constabat in thesauris regalibus scilicet coronis, armis, uasis, libris uestibusque sacerdotalibus, per singula describi iuberet. Et prout sibi uisum fuit, quid ecclesiis, quid pauperibus, postremo quid filiis largire deberet edixit.

²⁸¹ John Le Patourel, 'The Norman Succession, 996-1135', *EHR* 86 (1971): 225-250.

audience, however, disagrees, and manages to spur the monarch to forgive his eldest son, Robert, and grant him the duchy of Normandy.²⁸² This done, the dying William requests the blessing and unction, receives communion, and dies.²⁸³ After listing the lengths of his life and reign, the text provides a sketch of the monarch's character before noting that he was buried at Caen in a church he had erected,²⁸⁴ with a monument built by his son William (with an inscription in gold composed by the Archbishop of York).²⁸⁵

The short passage provides us with an image of how a king prepared for a 'good' death. As with Edward's demise, discussed in an earlier chapter, William dies surrounded by an audience, meeting his end publically like a monk in an ecclesiastical community.²⁸⁶ At his deathbed are archbishops, concerned with his soul. Present, however, noted briefly, is the physician identifiable as John of Tours. This figure later became royal chaplain, and, later, bishop of Wells owing to the patronage of William's son (William).²⁸⁷ Such men, learned in medicine, were often treated with disdain by

²⁸² *GND* II, 186, 188: Inter hec tam uenerabilis antistes Willelmus quam ceteri qui aderant, uerebantur ne forte suo filio primogenito Roberto implacabilis esse uellet, scientes quod uulnus frequenter incisum aut cautherio adustum acerbiorem sustinenti propagaret dolorem; fisi tamen de eius inuicta pacientia, qua semper usus est, per archiepiscopum Willelmum, cuius uerba spernere nolebat, animum illius leniter pulsant. Qui primum quidem amaritudinem sui monstrauit animi. At uero parumper deliberans et uiribus quantulumcumque collectis, enumerare uidebatur quot et quantis ab eo affictus sit incomodis, dicens: 'Quia ipse', inquit, 'uenire satisfactorius non uult aut dedignatur, ego quod meum est, ago: uobis testibus et Deo, omnia que in me peccauit, illi remitto, et omnem ducatum Normannie sibi concedo' (quem Deo teste et proceribus palatii illi iam dudum ante largitus fuerat). 'Vestrum autem erit illum monere, ut, si ego illi tociens perpere gesta indulsi, ille tamen sui non obliuiscatur, qui canos paternos deducit cum dolore ad mortem, et in talibus communis patris Dei precepta minasque contempsit'.

²⁸³ *GND* II, 188: His dictis petiuit ut in se celebraretur uisitacio et unction infirmorum, et per officium archipresulis et per manus eius iuxta morem communio sacra sibi traderetur. In talibus ergo uite presentis terminum sortitus ad requiem feliciter, ut credimus, commigrauit.

²⁸⁴ For the later details: *GND* II, 188: Tandem omnium animis sedit nusquam eum honestius tumulari posse, quam in ea basilica, quam ipse ob amorem et honorem Dei et sancti Stephani prothomartiris proprio sumptu in Cadomo construxerat, et sicut antea disposuerat.

²⁸⁵ *GND* II, 188, 190: In hac ergo sepultus est, et arca argentea deaurata supra tumulum eius est exstructa per filium suum Willelmum, qui ei in regno successit Anglico, (EPITHAPHIVM REGIS) et titulus in eadem huiusmodi aureis litteris scriptus: Qui rexit rigidos Normannos, atque Britannos / Armis deuicit fortiter optinuit, / Et Cenomannenses uirtute cohercuit enses, / Imperii que sui legibus applicuit, / Rex magnus parua iacet hac tumulatus in urna / Sufficit et magno parua domus domino / Addiderat septem<et>ter quinis partibus unam / Virginis in gremiis Phebus et hic obiit.

²⁸⁶ Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 30; Binski, *Medieval Death*, 29-33.

²⁸⁷ His career is discussed in R. A. L. Smalls, 'John of Tours, Bishop of Bath 1088-1122', in *Collected Papers*, ed. David Knowles (London: Longmans and Green, 1947), 74-82.

their more monastic colleagues because their pursuit often led them to financial success (which burdened them with worldly concerns).²⁸⁸ That the majority of practitioners were foreign did not help.²⁸⁹ They were, however, of great use to the monarch. The ecclesiastical figures were present to step in when the physician could do no more, and to prepare the dying monarch's soul for death. Important also is the presence of Gerard, then Lord Chancellor of England, later Archbishop of York,²⁹⁰ and William's half-brother; their purpose, in addition to being familiar to the dying monarch, is to record and disseminate the king's final wishes, which were allowed to feature changes as long as the monarch was in sound mind.²⁹¹ *De obitu Willelmi* shows William preparing for death in the accepted – if not exemplary – fashion.

The text however is not what it appears. Though it seems to be an account of William's death and an assessment of his character, analysis of the text has discovered it is an amalgamation of two ninth-century texts altered to fit the Norman context.²⁹² The death is that of Louis the Pious in the *Vita Hludouuici*, and the character is Charlemagne's from Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*. The latter praises William by comparison to the esteemed ruler, while the inclusion of the former expresses concern

²⁸⁸ See the depiction of John of Tours in William of Mamesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, ed. and tr. M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 304: Cum uero eis successisset Iohannes, natione Turonicus, professione medicus, qui non minimum questum illo conflauerat artificio, minoris gloriae putans si in uilla resideret inglorius, transferre thronum in Bathoniam animo intendit. See also the treatment of Henry's select physician, Faritus, in Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 13-14.

²⁸⁹ Of the forty-five medical practitioners living under Norman kings – listed in C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammon, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register* (London: Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1965) – Frank Barlow noted in *The English Church, 1066-1154* (New York: Longman, 1979), 262, that only one was English, three were possibly Italian, and the rest were French.

²⁹⁰ For Gerard's career, curious death (and condemned reading material), and refused burial, see William of Mamesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and tr. Winterbottom, 392, Barlow, *English Church*, 72, C. S. Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 167.

²⁹¹ See however George Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066-1166* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 171.

²⁹² L. J. Engels, 'De obitu Willelmi ducis Normannorum regisque Anglorum: Texte, modèles, valeur et origine', in *Mélanges Christine Mohrmann: Nouveau recueil offert par ses anciens élèves* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1973): 209-255; Lack, 'De obitu'.

about the kingdom. Louis's reign was marked by his sons attempting to depose their own father owing to disputes over succession, and closed with a civil war. The problem concerned Louis's youngest son; notably, the author of *De Obitu Willelmi* inserts the word 'primogenitus' into the account, making the inversion clear. A recent article has suggested that the *De obitu Willelmi* was disseminated by supporters of one son (William), over another (Robert), and was copied into the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* by another hand.²⁹³ This likely explanation does not assist understanding how William met his death, but it does illuminate key concerns regarding the event: that the king died a 'good' death, which the text makes overt, and that the issue of succession is clarified. William had selected his son Robert as successor to the Norman duchy prior to 1066,²⁹⁴ and it seems there was a distinction between patrimony and acquisition, which meant while William was required to hand Robert the Norman duchy that he had inherited, he was able to be undecided about who would inherit the kingdom of England that he had acquired.²⁹⁵ The fabricated text of *De obitu Willelmi* is therefore an attempt to politicize an already politicized deathbed by presenting the son William as the dying William's actual choice of successor.

3. 2. Moralising the Death: Peterborough and Huntingdon

The next two sources, in contrast to *De obitu Willelmi*, do not depict the deathbed of William; rather, they depict the death of the monarch to pass an assessment on his reign. The Peterborough Chronicle and Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, owing to a likely shared source, are similar in the details they include about William I's death, but differ in their presentation and opinion. In both sources, the

²⁹³ Lack, 'De obitu'.

²⁹⁴ Emily Zack Tabuteau, 'The Role of Law in the Succession to Normandy and England', *HSJ* 3 (1991): 141-169 (148-152, particularly 150, note 42).

²⁹⁵ Barbara English, 'William the Conqueror and the Anglo-Norman Succession', *Historical Research* 64 (1991): 221-236. Gillingham, 'At the Deathbeds', 512-513.

monarch's death is placed after a description of the plight of the kingdom and is followed by a comment on the character of the deceased king.

The relevant annal entry in the Peterborough Chronicle begins in a standard fashion, before employing homiletic techniques to reflect upon the death of the monarch. It lists the date from Christ's birth, then the number of years that the monarch had ruled, and includes a comment on the problems that the kingdom faced. This standard feature is followed by a standard interpretation – present in the previous chapter concerning the death of Harold – that it such afflictions was owing to the sinfulness of the English people. This state of affairs the chronicler connects to the greed of the monarch and his men. After listing further problems with the kingdom, the Chronicle records that William's army, in their raids against King Philip I of France, burnt the town of Mantes. The flames engulfed all the holy ministers within the town, and burnt to death two anchorites.²⁹⁶ A homiletic form appears, rhetorically addressing the reader before informing him of William's demise.

Reowlic þing he dyde, 7 reowlicor him gelamp. Hu reowlicor? Him geyfelade, 7 þet him stranglice eglade. Hwaet maeg ic teollan? Se scearpa deað þe ne forlet ne rice menn he heane, seo hine genam.

He did a pitiful thing, and more pitiful happened to him. How more pitiful? He became ill and that afflicted him severely. What can I say! The sharp death which spares neither powerful men nor lowly – it seized him.²⁹⁷

Details concerning where William died and where he was buried are included among moralistic comments about a king receiving only at the end only seven feet of land at the end of his life, and all his riches traded for earth.²⁹⁸ Given the importance of

²⁹⁶ *ASC E*, 95-96: Eac on þam ilcan geare toforan Assumptio Sancte Marie for Willelm cyng of Normandige into France mid fyrde 7 hergode uppan his agene hlaford Philippe þam cynge 7 sloh of his mannon mycelne dael 7 forbearnde þa burh Maðante 7 ealle þa halige mynstres þe waeron innon þære burh, 7 twegen halige menn þe hyrsumedon Gode on ancersetle wuniende þær waeron forbeande. Ðissum þus gedone, se cyng Willelm cearde ongean to Normandige.

²⁹⁷ *ASC E*, 96; translation is from Swanton, *ASC T*, 218.

²⁹⁸ *ASC E*, 96: He swealt on Normandige on þone nextan daeg aefter Natiuitas Sancte Marie, 7 man bebyrgede hine on Capum aet Sancte Stephanes mynsterl aerer he hit araerde 7 syððan maenifealdlice wela. Se þe waes aerur rice cyng 7 maniges landes hlaford, he naefde þa ealles landes buton seofon fotmael, 7 se þe waes hwilon gescrið mid golde 7 mid gimum, he laeg þa oferwrogen mid moldan.

recording the succession, the annal records what each of William's son received – Robert the duchy, William the kingdom, Henry untold riches – with no homiletic comment.

The death of the monarch provides the chronicler the chance to assess the quality of his rule, and insert contemporary concerns, following Bede's view of history as preventing evil and leading the good to do good. A prose section commenting on William's character and how his kingdom was run, and a poem now known as 'The Rime of King William', follow the homiletic account of William's death.²⁹⁹ The prose account records the churches he constructed and the state of law in the kingdom (noting their success, while stressing their severity), while the poem complains about William's establishing of the New Forest and the harsh penalties on poaching (with his seeming preference for animals over men). The prose is ambiguous in its praise. Alluding to Bede's assessment of an earlier monarch that a woman could travel from sea to sea with or without a baby unmolested,³⁰⁰ the chronicler asserts that a man could travel through William's England with a bosom full of gold unmolested.³⁰¹ The clearer attitudes that the poem displays fit with what has been argued about the production of manuscript. The entries in the chronicle up to 1131 were written in the same hand, replacing a copy destroyed in the disastrous 1126 fire at Peterborough Cathedral.³⁰² Though the chronicler attempted to make his interpolations look contemporary (with the poem uses antiquated diction),³⁰³ the poem displays the influence of anti-forest law polemics that

²⁹⁹ Following Bartlett Jere Whiting, 'The Rime of King William', in *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies*, ed. T. A. Kirby and H. B. Woolf (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1949), 89-96.

³⁰⁰ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, 192: *Tanta autem eo tempore pax in Brittaniam, quaquaversum imperium regis Eduini peruenerat, fuisse perhibetur ut, sicut usque hodie in proueribo dicitur, etiam si mulier una cum recens nato paruulo uellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se ledente ualeret.*

³⁰¹ *ASC E*, 97: *Betwyx oðrum þingum nis na to forgytane þet gode frið þe he macode on þisan lande, swa þet an man þe him sylf aht waere mihte faran ofer his rice mid his bosum full godes ungederad.*

³⁰² *ASC E*, xiii, xviii.

³⁰³ For the making the interpolations look contemporary, see Malasree Home, 'Double-Edged Déjà Vu: The Complexity of the Peterborough Chronicle', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language,*

appeared in the twelfth century, suggesting that the poem was a later addition.³⁰⁴ Copying the account of the death of the monarch allowed the chronicler to politicise, like the author of *De Obitu Willelmi*, a historical event with contemporary concerns. A Bede-like explanation for their inclusion follows the poem, asserting that the good and evil that William did have been recorded so that those reading can follow the good and restrain from the evil.³⁰⁵

Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, reshaped details taken from a source akin to the Peterborough Chronicle,³⁰⁶ for polemical purposes in his *Historia Anglorum* (also written in the 1120s). In his account, the Normans were inflicted on the English by the will of God,³⁰⁷ and the severity of their rule in England (and in other lands),³⁰⁸ is proof of the character of the Normans. The divinely punished William, after his warmongering burnt to death two anchorites, is presented as further evidence of God's wrath.³⁰⁹ Like the Peterborough Chronicle, Huntingdon proceeds to assess the character and reign of William by noting the conditions under the monarch. Unlike the Peterborough Chronicle, he omits 'The Rime of King William' and twice makes Bede-

Literature, History, ed. Alice Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 67-90; for the diction, see Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Authors, Audiences, and Old English Verse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 190.

³⁰⁴ Stefan Jurasinski, 'The Rime of King William and its Analogues', *Neophilologus* 88 (2004): 131-144 (140). For another reading of the poem in a hunting context, see William Perry Marvin, *Hunting Law and Ritual in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), 50-52.

³⁰⁵ *ASC E*, 98: Ðas þing we habbað be him gewritene, aegðer ge gode ge yfele, þet þa godan men niman aefter þeora goodness 7 forleon mod ealle yfelnesse 7 gan on ðone weg þe us lett to heofonan rice.

³⁰⁶ *HA*, xci-xcviii.

³⁰⁷ *HA*, 402: Anno uigesimo primo regni Willelmi Regis, cum iam Domini iustam uoluntatem super Anglorum gentem Normanni complessent, nec iam uix aliquis princeps de progenie Anglorum esset in Anglia, sed omnes ad seruitutem et ad merorem redacti essent, ita etiam ut Anglicum uocari esset obprobrior, huius auctor uindictae Willelmus uitam terminauit.

³⁰⁸ *HA*, 402: Elegerat enim Deus Normannos ad Anglorum gentem exterminandam, quia prerogatiua seuciae singularis omnibus populis uiderat eos preminere. Natura siquidem eorum est, ut cum hostes suos adeo depresserunt, ut adicere non possint, ipsi se deprimant, et se terrasque suas in pauperiem et uasitatem redigant. Sempereque Normannorum domini, cum hostes contriuerint, cum crudeliter non agere nequeant, suos etiam hostiliter conterunt. Quod scilicet in Normannia, et Anglia, Apulia, Calabria, Cicilia, et Anotiochia, terries optimis quas eis Deus subiecit, magis magisque apparet.

³⁰⁹ *HA*, 402: Iuerat autem hoc anno rex Willelmus in Franciam, predauitque regnum regis Philippi, et multos suorum neci dedit. Combussit quoque castrum nobile, quod uocatur Mannte, et omnes ecclesias que ibi interant, plebemque multam et duos anachoritas sanctos igni tradidit. Quibus de causis Deus irritatus, regem cum inde rediret infirmitati, potesta morti concessit.

like statements regarding the purpose of history.³¹⁰ This emphasizes both the divine role in William's death, and the role of God in history.³¹¹

Though the Peterborough Chronicle and the *Historia Anglorum* seem to share the same source and both follow Bede's vision of history, they differ in how the details are presented. The Peterborough Chronicle uses the event of William's death to insert contemporary concerns that it saw as arising from the Norman Conquest, while Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* uses the monarch's demise to reiterate his thesis on the role of the Normans in God's divine plan for the English.

3. 4. The Deathbed against the Death and the Burial: Malmesbury and Orderic

In the lengthy and detailed accounts of William I's death and burial included in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (1126, revised 1135) and Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1135, revised 1139), the monarch is presented as dying a 'good' death, putting his affairs in order. These two sources depict the fatal illness of William however as self-ordained, and present the condition and burial of the corpse in a negative fashion. In doing this, setting the 'good' deathbed against the 'bad' fatality and burial, the chroniclers present their own complex interpretation of the legacy of William and his reign. To achieve this result, Orderic and Malmesbury employ a variety of historiographical traditions to make clear their reading.

The account of William's death occurs after a lengthy assessment of the monarch's character. Malmesbury's presentation is consciously modeled on the Suetonian pattern of history writing: the historic figure is dramatically presented to

³¹⁰ *HA*, 404: De cuius regis potentissimi uita, bona perstringenda sunt et mala, ut a bonis sumantur exempla, et a malis discatur cautela. *HA*, 406: Vos igitur qui legitis et uiri tanti uirtutes et uicia uidetis, bona sequentes et a malis declinantes, pergite per uiam directam que ducit ad uitam perfectam.

³¹¹ When concluding his history, bringing it to his present time, Huntingdon continues in this vein: *HA*, 410: Willelmus omnium predictorum summus xxi anno glorifice splenduit. De quo dictum est: Cesariem Cesar tibi si natura negauit, / Hanc Willelme tibi stella comata dedit.

show the reader both the event and the character.³¹² Biography is the mode used to provide an insight into the past. The cause of the monarch's death is a means to criticize the ruler's character. William is presented as being angered by a joke made at his expense by Philip concerning his corpulence.³¹³ This both fits with a theme of the *Gesta* – that uncontrolled anger leading to violence results in vengeance³¹⁴ - and with the biographical image that William that Malmesbury presents, terrorizing his audience with loud oaths.³¹⁵ In this classical mode of biography, chronology is less important than character, as it is the latter that presents an image of the historical period articulated by the king's behaviour.³¹⁶

In his recording of William's fatal injury and demise, Malmesbury connects this classical manner to the established practices of a medieval ecclesiastical chronicler. Presenting a pastoral idyll destroyed by William's hostility,³¹⁷ the *Gesta* repeats the story – albeit with only one recluse, a female, killed – of the fire in Mantel engulfing a

³¹² Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, 98: “Although the Suetonian pattern is less distinct in book III [where William's death is depicted], the character of the Conqueror is the focal point of this book also”. For Malmesbury and Suetonius, see Marie Schütt, ‘The Literary Form of William of Malmesbury's “Gesta Regum”’, *EHR* 46 (1931): 255-260, and Joan Gluckauf Haahr, ‘William of Malmesbury's Roman Models: Suetonius and Lucan’, in *The Classics in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies*, ed. Aldo S. Bernardo and Saul Levin (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1990), 165-173.

³¹³ *GRA*, 510: *Extremo uitae tempore in Normannia habitans, contractis inimicitiiis cum rege Francorum aliquantisper se continuit; cuius abutens patientia Philippus fertur dixisse: ‘Rex Angliae iacet Rotomagi, more absolutarum partu feminarum cubile fouens’, iocatus in eius uentrem, quem potione alleuiarat.*

³¹⁴ Kirsten A. Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 36.

³¹⁵ *GRA*, 510: *Quo prestrictus conuitio, respondit: ‘Cum ad missam post partum iero, centum milia candelas ei libabo’, talia, ‘per resurrectionem et splendorem Dei’ pronuntians, quod soleret ex industria talia sacramenta facere quae ipso hiatu oris terrificum quiddam auditorum mentibus insonarent.*

³¹⁶ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, 262: ‘They [the portraits of the Norman kings] were composed according to classical principles of biography designed to bring out the character of the king rather than the sequence of events that constituted his reign. The qualities displayed by the kings are mirrored by English society under their rule; the king's personal morality is a casual factor for the state of society as a moral community’.

³¹⁷ *GRA*, 510: *Nec multo post, Augusto mense declinante, quando et segetes in agris et botri in uineis et poma in uiridariis copiam sui uolentibus fatiunt, exercitu coacto Frantiam infestus ingreditus. Omnia proterit, cuncta populatur; nichil erat quod furentis animum mitigaret, ut iniuriam insolenter acceptam multorum dispendio ulcisceretur.*

church.³¹⁸ Like the texts discussed earlier, Malmesbury connects this action to William's subsequent fatal illness, asserting that the monarch stood too close to the flames.³¹⁹ To stress this reading, Malmesbury includes another account of William's death: he claims that some state the monarch was fatally injured when his horse jumped over a ditch, causing his gargantuan stomach to protrude over the saddle.³²⁰ Though the two accounts differ in detail, their message to Malmesbury's audience is the same: William's behaviour brought about his own punishment. The dying king is then presented as returning back to his bed in Rouen.³²¹ The presentation of his death similarly reveals Malmesbury's monastic bias. The brief medical detail – doctors foretelling certain death by examining his urine – is included so the monarch can reform and set his affairs in order and die a Christian death.³²² Modern medical scholarship has – understandably, given their focus – misread these details concerning William's demise, seeing them as facts rather than a detail of an *exemplum* intended to teach moral lessons.³²³ In Malmesbury's account, the monarch's deathbed reiterates this moral slant: after recording which son has what, and the typical releasing of prisoners and

³¹⁸ *GRA*, 510: Postremo Medantum ciuitatem iniectis ignibus cremauit, combusta illic aeclesia sancte Mariae, reclusa una ustulata, quae spelem suum nec in tali necessitate deserendum putauit; fortunae omnes ciuium pessumdatae.

³¹⁹ *GRA*, 510: Quo successu exhilaratus, dum suos audatius incitat ut igni aditiant pabula, propius flammam succedens foci calore et autumnalis estus inaequalitate morbum nactus est.

³²⁰ *GRA*, 510: Dicunt quidam quod pruruptam fossam sonipes transiliens interreana sessoris diruperit, quod in anteriori parte sellae uenter protuberabat.

³²¹ *GRA*, 510: Hoc dolore affectus receptui suis cecinit, Rotomagumque reuersus crescente in dies incommodo lecto excipitur.

³²² *GRA*, 510: Consulti medici inspectione urinae certam mortem predixere. Quo audito querimonia domum repleuit, quod eum preoccuparet mors emendationem uitae iam dudum meditantem. Resumpto animo, quae Christiani sunt exsecutus est in confessione et uiatico.

³²³ Medical scholarship has focused on William's fatal horse-riding accident. R. R. James, 'The Medical History of William the Conqueror', *The Lancet*, May 8 1937, 1151, suggested 'The possibility of injury to the perineum, bladder, or urethra has to be considered as well as an umbilical hernia', with the author noting he 'should like to suggest biliary or renal colic'. This reading was repeated in Anthony R. Mundy and Daniela E. Andrich, 'Urethral trauma. Part 1: introduction, history, anatomy, pathology, assessment and emergency management', *BJUI* 108 (2011): 310-327 (pp. 310-311). The assertion of William's physicians is explained by a modern Fellow of the Royal Society of Surgeons: Brewer, *Death of Kings*, 24: 'They most probably saw the swelling of the leaked urine and the bloodstain. This leaking of urine has severe consequences, as the tissues become necrotic and possibly even gangrenous, increasing the possibility of a severe secondary infection. Without skillful surgical repair the condition is invariably fatal in some 10 to 20 days.'

distribution of wealth to churches, the *Gesta* notes that William had put aside money for the church burnt at Mantes.³²⁴

Further criticisms of the monarch are presented in Malmesbury's account of his burial. After being suitably honoured with the correct rites and transported down the river Seine to Caen, the cadaver's burial is interrupted when a knight claims the land in which the monarch is to be buried belongs to his family and William's son, Henry, has to settle the claim financially.³²⁵ The *Gesta* highlights this incident, stressing the change in fortune of a ruler powerful in life but unsuccessful in death, by introducing a *contemptus mundi* reflection that slows down the narrative, forcing the audience to reflect. This *exemplum* features a knowing allusion that an educated audience would recognize: in describing the loud voice of the knight proclaiming robbery by William's corpse, Malmesbury alludes to an incident in Lucan's *Pharsalia* where a tribune tries to stop Caesar's soldiers from robbing the treasury.³²⁶ The *Gesta*, in its presentation of an event likely to have occurred,³²⁷ reiterates its previous reading of the monarch as one consumed by greed.³²⁸ Though the passage concludes with information about his sons (again, telling in their details) and how his wealth was disseminated,³²⁹ the main focus

³²⁴ *GRA*, 510, 512: Normanniam inuitus et coactus Roberto, Angliam Willelmo, possessiones maternas Henrico delegauit. Vinctos suos omnes educi et solui, thesaurus efferri et aecclesiis dispergi precepit. Certum numerum pecuniae ad reparationem aecclesiae nuper crematae ipse indixit.

³²⁵ *GRA*, 512: Corpus regio sollempni curatum per Sequanam Cadomum delatum; ibi magna frequentia ordinatorum, laicorum pauca humi traditum. Varietatis humanae tunc fuit uidere miseriam, quod homo ille, totius olim Europae honor antecessorumque suorum omnium potentior, sedem aeternae requietionis sine calumnia impetrare non potuit: namque miles quidam, ad cuius patrimonium locus ille pertinuerat, clara contestans uoce rapinam sepulturam inhibuit, dicens auito iure solum suum esse, nec illum in loco quem uiolenter inuaserat pausare debere. Quocirca uolente Henrico filio, qui solus ex liberis aderat, centum librae argenti litigatori persolutae audacem calumniam compescuere.

³²⁶ Lucan, *Civil War*, 122, 124 (iii. 119-133)

³²⁷ *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes caennaises*, ed. Lucien Musset (Caen: Société des antiquaires de Normandie, 1967), 45-46

³²⁸ See the two descriptions at *GRA*, 508: (the early version): Sola est de qua merito culpetur pecuniae cupiditas, quam undecumque captatis occasionibus nichil umquam pensi habuit quin corraderet, faceret diceret nonnulla, et pene omnia, tanta maiestate indigniora, ubi spes nummi affulsisset. (Revised version): Sola est de qua nonnichil culpetur pecuniae aggestio, quam undecumque captatis occasionibus, honestas modo et regia dignitate non inferiors posset dicere, congregabat. Sed excusabitur facile, quia nouum regnum sine magna pecunia non posset regere.

³²⁹ *GRA*, 512: Nam tunc Rotbertus primogenitus in Frantia contra patriam bellabat; Willelmus antequam plane pater expiraret Angliam enauigauerat, utilius ducens suis in posterum commodis prospicere quam

of the account in the treatment of the monarch's corpse, which passes judgment on his behaviour in his life.

In his depiction of William's fatal injury in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Orderic Vitalis is also keen to emphasise that it was a consequence of the monarch's actions. The account, however, is keen to balance this final illness with the qualities of the king's reign. Unlike earlier accounts, Orderic establishes the context of the dispute and the grounds for William's claim while noting the king's anger and threats.³³⁰ Though the attack on Mantes is led by the duke, the *Historia* is keen to stress the church-consuming fire was caused by his unruly troops.³³¹ There, the corpulent king falls dangerously ill for six weeks owing to exhaustion and heat.³³² Orderic, after noting that some of king's enemies used this situation to pillage, others feared the monarch's forthcoming death owing to his reputation for peace.³³³ This dichotomy in the *Historia* between the negative illustration of monarch's character and actions, and the positive reading of his reign is articulated in the opposing depictions of the monarch's deathbed, portrayed positively, and his burial, negatively.

obsequiis paterni corporis interesse. Porro, in dispartienda pecunia nec segnis nec parcus, omnem illum thesaurum Wintoniae totis annis regni cumulatam ab archanis sacrariis eruit in lucem, monasteriis aurum, aecclesiis agrestibus solidos quinque argenti, unicuique pago centum libras uiritim egenis diuidendas largitus. Patris etiam memoriam ingenti congeries argenti et auri cum gemmarum luce conspicue adornauit.

³³⁰ *HE IV*, 74: Antiquo rancore inter Normannos et Francos renouato bellorum incendium exortum est; unde grauissimum pondus detrimentorum clericis et laicis male infixum est [...] Vnde bellicosus rex Guillelmus uehementer iratus totam Wilcassinam prouinciam calumniari cepit; Pontisariam et Caluimontem atque Madantum redidit sibi a Philippo rege Francorum requisitum. Et nisi ius suum sibi reddatur; terribilibus minis in hostes euehitur. Ratio calumniae huiusmodi est [...]

³³¹ *HE IV*, 78: Irruens itaque exercitus Regis cum opidanis portas pertransiuit, et per rabiem armigerorum immisso igne castrum cum aecclesiis et edibus combussit, ac sicut fertur hominum multitudo uiolentia ignis deperit.

³³² *HE IV*, 78: Tunc ibi ex nimio estu et labore pinguissimus rex Guillelmus infirmatus est; et sex ebdomadibus languens grauiter anxiatu est.

³³³ *HE IV*, 78: Inde quidam qui paci aduersabantur gaudebant; et liberam permissionem furandi seu res alienas rapiendi expectabant. Porro alii qui securitate pacis exultabant; pacifici patroni mortem multum formidabant.

William's death, Orderic notes, 'was as noble as his life', in which the monarch had followed wise council, served God, and defended the Church;³³⁴ the claim he had 'kept his renown untarnished until the end' does not appear to be ironic, for Orderic is keen to depict William's deathbed as a good demise. The monarch is alert, able to speak, and so able to confess and take part in the rites while surrounded by religious men assisting his end.³³⁵ Though noise in Rouen means the ill monarch is moved from the city to a church his grandfather had given to an abbey,³³⁶ William is watched over by ecclesiastics familiar with medicine 'and several other physicians'.³³⁷ There, fearing of what he would meet after death, the dying monarch called his sons to his bedside – omitting Robert, who was fighting for the rival French king – to cater for the kingdom after his death.³³⁸ Money is charitably given, including gifts to the clergy of Mantes (which the *Historia* now asserts William had burnt),³³⁹ before urging others to respect God and his Church and saying an 'eloquent last speech, which deserves to be remembered for all time'.³⁴⁰ In this deathbed speech, William notes he is stained with

³³⁴ *HE IV*, 78: Ille uero qui semper in omni uita sua sapientum consilio usus fuerat, Deumque ut fidelis seruus timuerat; sanctaeque matris aeclesiae indefessus defensor extiterat, usque ad mortem laudabili memoria uiguit, et sicut uita sic etiam finis uenerabilis extitit.

³³⁵ *HE IV*, 78: In egritudine sua usque ad horam mortis integrum sensum et uiuacem loquelam habuit, scelerumque penitens peccata sua sacerdotibus Dei reuelauit, ac secundum morem Christianitatis Deum sibi placare humiliter studuit. Circa illum presules et abbates et religiosi uiri commorabantur; et morituro principi salubre consilium perennis uitae largiebantur.

³³⁶ *HE IV*, 78, 80: Et quia strepitus Rotomagi quae populosa ciuitas est intolerabilis erat egrotanti, extra urbem ipse rex precepit se efferri; ad aeclesiam sancti Geruasii in colle sitam occidentali, quam Ricardus dux auus eius dederat cenobio Fiscannensi.

³³⁷ *HE IV*, 80-81: Ibi Gislebertus Luxouiensis episcopus et Guntardus Gemmeticensis abbas cum quibusdam aliis archiatris sedulo excubabant; et de spirituali cum corporali salute regis sollicite tractabant. Translation by Chibnall.

³³⁸ *HE IV*, 80: Denique rex morbo nimium ingrauescente dum sibi mortem uidet ineuitabiliter imminere; pro futuris quae non uidebat, sed intimo corde reuoluendo pertimescebat; crebro cum supiriis ingemiscebat. Filios itaque suos Guillelmum Rufum et Henricum qui aderant et quosdam amicorum conuocauit; et de regni ordinatione sapienter ac multum prouide tractare cepit. Robertus enim filius eius qui maior natu erat, multotiens olim contra patrem suum litigauerat, et tunc nouiter pro quibusdam ineptiis similiter stomachatus ad regem Francorum discesserat.

³³⁹ *HE IV*, 80: Verum sapiens heros in futurum sibi multisque commoda facere non distulit; omnesque thesauros suos aeclesiis et pauperibus Deique ministries distribui precepit. Quantum uero singulis dari uoluit callide taxauit; et coram se describi a notariis imperauit. Clero quoque Madantensi supplex ingentia dona misit; ut inde restaurarentur aeclesiae quas combusserat.

³⁴⁰ *HE IV*, 80: De fide et iusticia seruanda, de lege Dei et pace tenenda; de priuilegiis aeclesiarum et statutis partum obseruandis omnes qui presentes errant admonuit, et allocutionem perenni memoria dignam admixtis interdum lacrimis eloquenter sic edidit.

the blood he has shed, and his innumerable wrongs will be accounted before God.³⁴¹ At length, the dying monarch recounts his bloody and troublesome history, including how he ‘won a royal crown [...] by divine grace, not hereditary right’, and how the brutality required to retain his rule ‘gnaw at my heart’,³⁴² pleads to the religious figures to assist his soul by prayers and distribution of his wealth,³⁴³ before reminding them how he has assisted and patronised the Church.³⁴⁴ The hand of the monastic chronicler writing with hindsight is apparent when the dying monarch asserts he is not guilty of ecclesiastical malpractice – selling offices, simony, manipulating candidates – that chroniclers accused his successors of.³⁴⁵ Following this, William moves to the matter of succession, which again, is used to stress a theme the chronicler favours: that William was doing the work of God. The problematic Robert receives Normandy because ‘the honour cannot be taken from him’,³⁴⁶ while the kingdom of England is entrusted ‘to the eternal

³⁴¹ *HE* IV, 80, 82: ‘Mutis’ inquit ‘O amici grauibusque peccatis onustus contremisco; et mox ad tremendum Dei examen rapturus quid faciam ignoro. In armis enim ab infantia nutritus suum; et multi sanguinis effusione admodum pollutus sum. Nullatenus enumerare possum mala quae feci per sexaginta quatuor annos quibus in hac erummosa uita uixi; pro quibus absque mora rationem reddere nunc cogor equissimo iudici[.]’

³⁴² *HE* IV, 90-91: Diadema regale quod nullus antecessorum meorum gessit adeptus sum, quod diuina solummodo gratia non ius contulit hereditarium. Quantos ultra mare labores et periculosos conflictus pertulerim contra Exonios; Cestrenses et Nordanhimbros, contra Scotos et Gualos; Nordwigenas et Dacos, et contra caeteros aduersarios qui conabantur me regno Anglicaе spoliare; difficile est enarrare, in quibus omnibus prouenit michi sors uictoriae. Sed quamuis super huiusmodi triumphis humana gaudeat auditas, me tamen intrinsecus pungit et mordet formidinis anxietas; dum perpendo quod in omnibus his grassata est seua temeritas. Translation by Chibnall.

³⁴³ *HE* IV, 90: Vnde uos O sacerdotes et ministri Christi suppliciter obsecro ut orationibus uestris me commendetis omnipotenti Deo; ut peccata quibus admodum premor ipse remittat, et per suam infatigabilem clementiam inter suos me saluum faciat. Thesaurus quoque meos iubeo dari aecclesiis et pauperibus; ut quae congesta sunt ex facinoribus dispergantur in sanctis sanctorum usibus.

³⁴⁴ *HE* IV, 90: Debetis enim recolere quam dulciter uos amaui; et quam fortiter contra omnes emulos defensauit. His detailed relationship with the church appears *HE* IV, 90-93.

³⁴⁵ *HE* IV, 90: Aecclesiam Dei matrem scilicet nostram nunquam uiolauit; sed ubique ut ratio exegit desideranter honorauit. Aecclesiasticas dignitates nunquam uenundedit; simoniam detestatus semper refutauit. In electione personarum uitae meritum et sapientiae doctrinam inuestigauit; et quantum in me fuit omnium dignissimo aecclesiae regimen commendauit. For the dealings of the sons, see C. Warren Hollister, ‘William II, Henry I and the Church’, in *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell*, ed. Marc Antony Meyer (London: Hambleton Press, 1993), 185-205.

³⁴⁶ *HE* IV, 90-91: Ducatum Normanniae antequam in epitimio Senlac contra Heraldum cerassem Roberto filio meo concessi; cui quia primogenitus est et hominum pene omnium uisus patriae baronum iam receipt concessus honor nequit abstrahi. Translation by Chibnall.

Creator to whom I belong and in whose hand are all things'.³⁴⁷ This reading permits Orderic the chance to restate complaints about William's rule in England,³⁴⁸ while also making the dying king appear seemingly prophetic. His 'good son' William (later William II) he hopes will 'bring lustre to the kingdom if such is the divine will'³⁴⁹ (the next chapter will show how this was not the case), and advises his other son, Henry, miserable on receipt of only treasure, that he will 'have all the dominions that I have acquired and be greater than your brothers in wealth and power'.³⁵⁰ The *Historia*, however, does not present William as an exemplary king, for those nearby have to beg him to follow the custom of releasing prisoners.³⁵¹ Although the monarch is depicted as suffering pain, Orderic provides him with a decent approach to death. The king dies after commending himself to the Virgin Mary.³⁵²

³⁴⁷ *HE IV*, 92-95: Neminem Anglici regni heredem constituo; sed aeterno conditori cuius sum et in cuius manu sunt omnia illud commendo.

³⁴⁸ *HE IV*, 94 – Non enim tantum decus hereditario iure possedi; sed diro conflictu et multa effusione humani cruoris periuro regis Heraldo abstuli, et interfectis uel effugatis fauctoribus eius dominatui meo subegi. Naturales regni filios plus aequo exosos habui, nobiles et uulgares crudeliter uexaui, iniuste multos exhereditaui, innumeros maxime in pago Eborachensi fame seu ferro mortificaui. Deiri enim et transhumbranae gentes exercitum Sueni Danorum regis contra me susceperunt; et Robertum de Cuminis cum mille militibus intra Dunelmum aliosque proceres meos et tirones probatissimos in diuersis locis peremerunt. Vnde immoderato furore commotus in boreales Anglos ut uesanus leo properaui; domos eorum iussi segetesque et omnem apparatus atque suppellectilem confestim incendi, et copiosos armentorum pecudumque greges passim mactari. Multitudinem itaque utriusque sexus tam dirae famis mucrone multauit; et sic multa milia pulcherrimae gentis senum iuuenumque pro dolor funestus trucidauit.

³⁴⁹ *HE IV*, 94: Guillelmum filium meum qui michi a primis annis semper inhesit, et michi pro posse suo per omnia libenter obediuit; opto in spiritu Dei diu ualere, et in regni solio diuina uoluntas est feliciter fulgere.

³⁵⁰ *HE IV*, 94-97. Henricus iunior filius ut nil sibi de regalibus gazis dari audiuit, merens cum lacrimis ad regem dixit, 'Et michi pater quid tribuis?' Cui rex ait, 'Quinque milia libras argenti de thesauro meo tibi do.' Ad haec Henricus dixit, 'Quid faciam de thesauro, si locum habitationis non habuero?' Cui pater respondit, 'Equanimis est fili et confortare in domino. Pacifice patere; ut maiores fratres tui precedant te. Robertus habebit Normanniam; et Guillelmus Angliam. Tu autem tempore tuo totum honorem quem ego nactus sum habebis, et fratribus tuis diuitiis et potestate prestabis.' Translation by Chibnall.

³⁵¹ *HE IV*, 96: Interea medici et regales ministri qui languidum principem custodiebant, proceresque qui ad eum uisitandi gratia ueniebant; ceperunt pro uinctis quos in carcere tenebat eum affari, ac ut miseretur eis et relaxaret suppliciter deprecari. The dialogue about prisoners appears *HE IV*, 96-100.

³⁵² *HE IV*, 100: Sic Guillelmus rex licet nimio ilium dolore grauiter angeretur; sana tamen mente ac uiuaci loquela efficaciter fruebatur, et in omnibus de negociis regni poscentibus promptum et utile consilium impertiebatur. Denique quinto idus Septembris feria quinta, iam Phebo per orbem spargente clara radiorum spicula; excitus rex sonum maioris signi audiuit in metropolitana basilica. Percunctante eo quid sonaret; responderunt ministri, 'Domine, hora prima iam pulsatur in aeclesia sanctae Mariae.' Tunc rex cum summa deuotione oculos ad coelum erexit, et sursum minibus extensis dixit, 'Dominae

The burial though is decidedly negative and problematic. At the moment of his death, those owning properties flee to secure them. Those remaining rob what they can, leaving the king's cadaver almost naked on the floor.³⁵³ Regardless of whether such an event occurred or if it was an established motif,³⁵⁴ it is a situation that Orderic uses for pedagogical ends. He stresses his audience take note of,³⁵⁵ before meditating of the transience of worldly affairs.³⁵⁶ As the laity in Rouen act drunk and confused, the religious finally proceed with the required Christian rites,³⁵⁷ and the Archbishop of Rouen decrees the corpse should be escorted to Caen, to be buried in the establishment William had founded.³⁵⁸ A lone knight, Herluin, 'moved by natural goodness', pays out of his own pocket to transport the corpse via the Seine to Caen.³⁵⁹ More problems ensue

meae sanctae Dei genitrici Mariae me commendo; ut ipsa sanctis precibus me reconciliet carissimo filio suo domino nostro Ihesu Christo.' Et his dictis protinus expirauit.

³⁵³ HE IV, 100, 102: Archiatri autem et ceteri coessentes qui regem sine gemitu et clamore quiescentem tota nocte seruauerunt, et nunc ex insperato isc eum mox migrasse uiderunt; uehementer attoniti et uelut amentes effecti sunt. Porro ditiores ex his ilico ascensis equis recesserunt; ac ad sua tutanda properauerunt. Inferiores uero clientuli ut magistros suos sic manicasse perspexerunt; arma uasa uestes et linteamina omnemque regiam suppellectilem rapuerunt, et relicto regis cadauere pene nudo in area domus aufugerunt.

³⁵⁴ For the motif, see Michail A. Bojcov, 'Die Plünderung der toten Herrscher als allgemeiner Wahn', in *Bilder der Macht in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Byzanz-Okzident-Russland*, ed. Otto Gerhard Oexle and Michail A. Bojcov (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2007), 53-117 (for Orderic, see 87, 91).

³⁵⁵ HE IV 102: Cernite precor omnes; qualis est mundane fides. Vnusquisque quod potuit, de apparatu regio ut miluss rapauit; et confestim cum preda sua aufugit. Impietas itaque iusticiario labente impudenter prodiit; et rapacitatem circa ipsum ultorem rapinae primitus exercuit.

³⁵⁶ HE IV, 102: O secularis pompa quam despicibilis es; quia nimis uana et labilis es. Recte pluuiialibus bullis equanda diceris, quae in momento ualde turgida erigeris, subitoque in nichilum redigeris. Ecce potentissimus heros cui nuper plus quam centum milia militum auide seruiebant, et quem multae gentes cum tremore metuebant, nunc a suis turpiter in domo non sua spoliatus est; et a prima usque ad tertiam supra nudam humum derelictus est.

³⁵⁷ HE IV, 102: Ciues enim audito Rotomagenses lapsu principis ualde territi sunt; et pene omnes uelut ebrii desipuerunt, et palam ac si multitudinem hostium imminere urbi uidissent turbati sunt. Vnusquisque de loco ubi erat recessit; et quid ageret a coniuge uel obuio sodali uel amico consilium quesiiuit. Res suas quisque aut transmutauit, aut transmutare decreuit; pauidusque ne inuenirentur abscondit. Religiosi tandem uiri clerici et monachi collectis uiribus et intimis sensibus processionem ordinauerunt, honeste induti cum crucibus et thuribulis ad sanctum Geruasium processerunt; et animam regis secundum morem sanctae Christianitatis Deo commendauerunt.

³⁵⁸ HE IV, 102: Tunc Guillelmus archiepiscopus iussit ut corpus eius Cadomum deferretur; ibique in basilica sancti Stephani prothomartiris quam ipse condiderat tumularetur.

³⁵⁹ HE IV 102-105: Verum fraters eius et cognati iam ab eo recesserunt, et omnes ministri eius eum ut barbarum nequiter deseruerunt. Vnde nec unus de regiis satellitibus est inuentus; qui curaret de exequiis corporis ipsius. Tunc Herluinus quidam pagensis eques naturali bonitate compunctus est; et curam exequiarum pro amore Dei et honore gentis suae uiriliter amplexatus est. Pollinctores itaque et uispilliones ac uehiculum mercede de propriis sumptibus conduxit; cadauer regis ad portum Sequanae deuexit, impositque nauis usque Cadomum per aquam et aridam perduxit. Translation by Chibnall

when the reverent procession of clergy and laity is disturbed by a freak outbreak of fire, leaving the monks, alone, to transport the cadaver to the abbey.³⁶⁰ The Bishop of Évreux's pleas for those wronged by the deceased to forgive him is followed by Ascelin, son of Arthur, proclaiming the place where the king is to be buried – the holy place between the altar and the choir – was robbed from his family by the monarch. Sixty shillings, and the promise of sixty more, placated him.³⁶¹ The problems continue as the body is forced into a too-small sarcophagus, causing the bowels to burst. This releases a foul stench that overpowers the incense, causing the last rites to be hurried.³⁶² Certain parts of this account are verifiable by land ownership documents,³⁶³ but much of the text is a conscious reversal of hagiographical depictions of the death of saints. Having copied the Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, Orderic was well

³⁶⁰ *HE* IV, 104: Tunc domnus Gislebertus abbas cum conuentu monachorum ueneranter obuam feretro processit, quibus flens et orans multitudo clericorum et laicorum adhesit; sed mox sinistra fortuna ombibus pariter maximum terrorem propinauit. Nam enorme incendium de quadam domo protinus erupit, et immensos flammaram globos eructauit; magnamque partem Cadomensis burgi damnose inuasit. Omnes igitur ad ignem comprimendum clerici cum laicis cucurrerunt; soli uero monachi ceptum officium compleuerunt, et soma regis ad cenobialem basilicam psallentes perduxerunt.

³⁶¹ *HE* IV, 104, 106: ipsumque in presbiterio inter chorum et altare sepelierunt. Expleta missa cum iam sarcophagum in terra locatum esset, sed corpus adhuc in feretro iaceret; magnus Gislebertus Ebroicensis episcopus in pulpitem ascendit, et prolixam locutionem de magnificentia defuncti principis eloquenter protelauit, quod ipse fines Normannici iuris strenue dilatauerit, gentemque suam plus quam omnes antecessores sui sullimauerit, iusticiam et pacem sub omni ditione sua tenuerit, fures et predones uirga rectitudinis utiliter castigauerit; et clericos ac monachos et inermem populum uirtutis ense fortiter munierit. Finita uero locutione plebem rogauit, et pro pietate multis flentibus ac uerba eius attestantibus adiecit, 'Qui nullus homo mortalis potest in hac uita sine peccato uiuere, in caritate Dei uos omnes precamur pro defuncto principe; ut propter illum apud omnipotentem Deum studeatis intercedere, eique si quid in uobis deliquit benigniter dimittere.' Tunc Ascelinus Artui filius de turba surrexit, et uoce magna querimoniam huiuscemodi cunctis audientibus edidit, 'Haec terra ubi consistitis area domus patris mei fuit; quam uir ista pro quo rogatis dum adhuc esset comes Normanniae patri meo uiolenter abstulit, omnique denegata rectitudine istam edem potenter fundauit. Hanc igitur terram calumnior et palam reclamo; et ne corpus raptoris operiatur cespite meo, nec in hereditate mea sepeliatur ex parte Dei prohibeo.' Hoc ut episcopi et proceres alii audierunt, et uicinos eius qui eundem uera dixisse contestabantur intellexerunt, hominem accersierunt, omnique remota uiolentia precibus blandis lenierunt; et pacem cum eo fecerunt. Nam pro loculo solius sepulturae lx solidos ei protinus adhibuerunt. Pro reliqua uero tellure quam calumniabatur equipollens mutuum eidem promiserunt; et post non multum temporis pro salute specialis eri quem diligebant pactum compleuerunt.

³⁶² *HE* IV, 106: Porro dum corpus in sarcophagum mitteretur, et uiolenter quia uas per imprudentiam cementariorum breue et strictum erat complicaretur; pinguis uenter crepuit, et intolerabilis foetor circum astantes personas et reliquum uulgus impleuit, fumus thuris aliorumque aromatum de thuribus copiose ascendebat; sed teterrimum pudorem excludere non preualebat. Sacredotes itaque festinabant exequias perficere; et actutum sua cum pauore mappalia repetere.

³⁶³ *Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant*, ed. Musset, 45-46.

acquainted with saintly motifs, and presents the opposite for effect. Familiarity with tales like the miraculous sarcophagus that accommodated the almost-saintly King Sebbi (and a pillow, with space to spare)³⁶⁴ meant the chronicler could depict William's burial as the reverse, with the exploding belly echoing the ends of the less-than-saintly Judas and Arius,³⁶⁵ and the foul smell reminiscent of Herod and Antiochus.³⁶⁶ Being knowledgeable in both Bede and the Bible, Orderic used such allusions as 'divine pedagogy', illuminating his subject by comparing them to episodes in earlier accounts in histories and the Bible.³⁶⁷ His monastic audience would have understood such typologies, and used Orderic's *simplex historica* to understand the divine.³⁶⁸ William I's burial was presented in a negative fashion to show that while the king's conquest was seen as the workings of God, the man himself was no saint.

The accounts of William I's death and burial in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica* display the problematic aspects of twelfth-century historiography: 'genre, the impact of the Bible, and the influence of classical literature'.³⁶⁹ However, looking at the two texts, it becomes

³⁶⁴ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors: 366, 388: Cuius corpori tumulando praeparauerant sarcophagum lapideum; sed cum huic corpus inponere coepissent, / inuenerunt hoc mensura palmi longius esse sarcophago. Dolantes ergo lapidem in quantum ualebant, addiderunt longitudini sarcophagi quasi duorum mensuram digitorum. Sed ne sic quidem corpus capiebat; unde facta difficultate tumulandi, cogitabant aut aliud quaerere loculum, aut ipsum corpus, si possent, in genibus inflectendo breuiare, donec ipso loculo caperetur. Sed mira res et non nisi caelitus facta, ne aliquid horum fieri deberet, prohibuit. Nam subito adstante episcopo et filio regis eiusdem ac monachi Sighardo, qui post illum cum fratre Suefredo regnauit, et turba hominum non modica inuentum est sarcophagum illud congruae longitudinis ad mensuram corporis, adeo ut a parte capitis etiam ceruical posset interponi, a parte uero pedum mensura quattuor digitorum in sarcophago corpus excederet. For other cases of coffins miraculously accommodating large corpses, see Bates, 'Conqueror's Earliest Historians', 139.

³⁶⁵ Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 30.

³⁶⁶ Evans, *Death of Kings*, 69-70. For a discussion of illness and historiography, see Thomas Africa, 'Worms and the Death of Kings: A Cautionary Note on Disease and History', *Classical Antiquity* 1 (1982): 1-17.

³⁶⁷ Elisabeth Mégier, 'Divina pagina and the Narration of History in Orderic Vitalis' *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000): 106-123.

³⁶⁸ Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and his Readers', *Studia Monastica* 14 (1972): 17-33 (29).

³⁶⁹ Roger D. Ray, 'Medieval Historiography through the Twelfth Century: Problems and Progress of Research', *Viator* 5 (1974): 33-60 (35).

apparent that the two authors used their learning to explain William I's position in history. By insinuating the monarch's fatal injury was the fault of his anger, they stress flaws in his character; by providing him with a 'good' deathbed, they present him as a just and Christian king; by depicting his burial as disturbed and chaotic, while emphasizing a *contemptus mundi* theme, they reveal the workings of God in the historical events. Though their personal attitudes towards the monarch and his legacy would have been mixed, their writings use the final rituals of his reign to express this simple reading of a complex legacy.

3. 5. Conclusion

The death and burial of William I was one that though shaped and understood by the use of literary models, addressed contemporary concerns. The earliest account of his death, *De obitu Willelmi*, presented the monarch's death as if it was ideal. The dying ruler, assisted by a physician, ecclesiastical figures, family members, and his chancellor, set his earthly affairs in order so that he can focus on the world to come. The text was ideal in more ways than one. Having been amalgamated from two ninth-century *vitas*, the short obituary dealt with the pertinent issue about who was to inherit the duchy he inherited and the kingdom he conquered.

After a lengthy period of silence on the matter – and after two coronations, after William's territories had been divided, and then reunited – the production of new histories (and the replacement of ones lost by fire) resulted in a revised assessment of the monarch. The shared model for the Peterborough Chronicle and Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* was Bede's view of history: that a considerate audience should be moved to imitate the good, and refrain from evil. Despite attempts to present the insertions as contemporaneous to the original event, the evil seen by the author of the the Peterborough Chronicle were contemporary issues such as the Forest

Law, articulated in the polemical ‘Rime of King William’. In the *Historia*, the death of first Norman ruler was a furthering of Bede’s dictum, for it provided Huntingdon the chance to reiterate the negative: the role of God in punishing the English by invasion and occupation.

The *Gesta Regum Anglorum* of William of Malmesbury, and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis, use different models to express the same reading of the deceased king. Their interpretation is expressed through a shared pattern: the monarch’s final illness is of his own making, his deathbed is good (answering the succession issue, and the rituals being followed), and the death is problematic. Malmesbury, using Suetonius’s method of illuminating a character by incident, and Orderic, consciously presenting material oppositional to the content of hagiography, depict the death and burial of William I to stress the role of God in the monarch’s life.

The models used by the varied authors reflect their attitudes to the monarch and, importantly, their intention in writing history. *De obitu Willelmi* was to propagate a view on the succession. The Peterborough Chronicle recorded events and occurrences. The *Historia Anglorum* was written to record events like an annal, but connecting them to a particular theme. The *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* were produced for moral edification and to see the workings of the divine. These different forms and intentions reflect the different accounts of William I’s death.

Fittingly, for a monarch adept at self-fashioning and presentation, the abbey that he founded on the site of his most famous engagement omits his own reason for not being buried there, in favour of an interpretation more desirable. The *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, produced in the reign of Henry II, claims that had its patron died in England, he would have been buried in England, but the workings of God meant he was not. Although seemingly problematic for a foundation story to lack the presence of its

founder, it notes the support of the son, William II – supposedly urged on by his dying father. By doing this, the chronicler presented the abbey as having continued support (which it was wooing) and secure foundations (that it was forging).³⁷⁰ For a man whose laudatory text, the *Gesta Guillelmi*, lacks an end, it is apt that the chronicle of his foundation lacks a corpse.

³⁷⁰ *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and tr. Searle.

4. ‘Considering his Squalid Life and Dreadful Death’³⁷¹

The Strange End(s) of William II

The ‘misaimed arrow of some blundering archer’³⁷² that killed William II³⁷³ in 1100 while he hunted in the New Forest was a godsend to chroniclers critical to his rule. He died seemingly without absolution, and with no son to inherit the kingdom he had inherited from his father, William I. He had, however, been successful in securing his territory: he quelled a rebellion of his father’s old elites that favoured his brother Robert (who had inherited the Duchy of Normandy), seized parts of Normandy, repelled an invasion by Malcolm III of Scotland, and campaigned in Wales.³⁷⁴ Such deeds, however, required funding, and he raised it by sharp, and somewhat sleight, means. Most notable for shaping his legacy was his use of the Church for funds, which led to a dispute with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, who went into self-imposed exile. These dealings, as this chapter will show, greatly shaped how his sudden death and burial was depicted.

The suddenness of the William II’s death, contrary to the idea of a ‘good’ demise, was widely seen as a judgment on his life and reign. The accounts in the Peterborough Chronicle, Hugh of Flavigny’s *Chronicon*, Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum in Anglia* and *Vita Anselmi*, and Gilo of Paris’s *Vita Sancti Hugonis* all present premonitions to suggest a divine hand in the monarch’s demise. Later chroniclers – Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis – either repeated or further embellished the incident for moral edification. Modern

³⁷¹ *HE* V, 293.

³⁷² Hollister, ‘Strange Death’, 653; for a different judgment, see Duncan Grinnell-Milne, *The Killing of William Rufus* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1968).

³⁷³ For the various names attached to William II, see David Crouch, *The Normans: The History of a Dynasty* (London: Continuum, 2007), 129

³⁷⁴ Emma Mason, ‘William Rufus: Myth and Reality’, *JMH* 3 (1977): 1-20.

historians have often erred in following too closely these texts, discussing the image rather than the man³⁷⁵ – claiming the monarch was ‘the enemy of God and man’³⁷⁶, repeated insinuations about the monarch’s sexuality,³⁷⁷ and asserted, ‘from a moral standpoint’, William II was ‘was probably the worst king that has occupied the throne of England’³⁷⁸ – before comment on the sources noted that the views expressed were those of ‘minor obedientaries, often the librarians of their communities’ who had a distorted and simplified view of the workings of the royal court, having little knowledge of its method and culture.³⁷⁹ Their value system – to use the sociological term, their *habitus* – is shown by the different presentation of William II’s death and burial in Geoffrei Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis* (c.1136-1137).³⁸⁰ This work, the oldest historiographical work in the French vernacular that survives, was long neglected for its ahistorical qualities until its forceful re-evaluation by John Gillingham, who saw it as ‘precious early evidence of an alternative and secular set of values’.³⁸¹ This study clarifies this reading. It shows that while Gaimar presents an alternative view of

³⁷⁵ Thomas Callahan Jr, ‘The Making of a Monster: The Historical Image of William Rufus’, *JMH* 7 (1981): 175-185; Emma Mason, ‘William Rufus and the Historians’, *Medieval History* 1 (1991): 6-22.

³⁷⁶ William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874), 302: ‘Unrestrained by religion, by principle or by policy, with no family interests to limit his greed, extravagance, or hatred of his kind, a foul incarnation of selfishness in its most abhorrent form, the enemy of God and man, William Rufus gave to England and Christendom a pattern of absolutism’.

³⁷⁷ Edward A. Freeman, *The Reign of William Rufus and the Accession of Henry the First*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), 159: ‘Vices before unknown, the vices of the East, the special sin, as Englishmen then deemed, of the Norman, were rife among them. And deepest of all in guilt was the Red King himself. Into the details of the private life of Rufus it is well not to grope too narrowly. In him England might see on her own soil habits of the ancient Greek and the modern Turk.’ For the prejudices of Freeman, see Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Hanover, NE: University Press of New England, 1982), 101, and William M. Aird, ‘Edward A. Freeman in America and “The English People in its Three Homes”’, *HSJ* 15 (2004): 40-54.

³⁷⁸ A. L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta 1087-1216* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 99.

³⁷⁹ Mason, ‘William Rufus: Myth and Reality’, 3-4. See the astute comment in V. H. Galbraith, ‘Good Kings and Bad Kings in Medieval English History’, *History* 30 (1945): 119-132 (132): “the value of results obtained from historical inquiry is proportionate to the quality (as well as the quantity) of the sources available

³⁸⁰ Geoffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis: History of the English*, ed. and tr. Ian Short (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xxvii.

³⁸¹ John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 257.

William II's death and burial, the manner in which it is depicted shares with the ecclesiastical authors the paradigm of the good Christian death. It is the anomaly that proves the rule: its contrasting presentation reveals the literary constructs of both itself, and those of the ecclesiastical authors.

4. 1. Signs and Premonitions: Peterborough, Flavigny, Eadmer, Gilo

Monastic authors produced early responses to the sudden death of William II. The first, the Peterborough Chronicle, records ominous events prior to the incident in the forest, the king's demise, and then a critical commentary on the reign. The *Chronicon* (finished before 1102), by Hugh of Flavigny, places a theological spin on the portents and the death itself. Eadmer, personally affected by the king's rule, provides two accounts (*Historia Novorum in Anglia*, c. 1109; *Vita Anselmi*, v. 1114, expanded 1122) that differ in how they condemn the monarch, one method of which appears in Gilo of Paris's *Vita Sancti Hugonis* (finished before 1114).

The earliest account of William II's demise appears in the Peterborough Chronicle. The entry for 1100 records a blood rising from the earth in a village of Berkshire, before noting that an arrow shot by one of the king's men slew the monarch while he was hunting and was subsequently buried in Winchester.³⁸² After this event, it sketches the character of the monarch and the conditions of his reign: it is uniformly negative. The violent and greedy ruler, persuaded by an evil toadying counsel, taxed excessively, held on to church property when the ecclesiastical figure died so he could commit simony or put the properties out to rent. His kingdom contained 'all that was hateful to God and to just men', and the monarch was 'hated by well-nigh all his nation'. The view of God, the chronicler asserts, was shown by his death, 'because he departed

³⁸² *ASC E*, 109: 7 to þam Pentecosten waes \ge/sewen innan Barrucscire aet anan tune blod weallan of eorþan, swa swa maenige saedan þe hit geseon sceoldan. And þaeraefter on morgen aefter Hlammaesse daege wearð se cyng Willelm on huntnoðe fram his anan men mid anre fla ofsceoten, 7 syððan to Winceastre gebroht 7 on þam biscoprice bebyrged: þet waes þaes þreotteðan geares þe he rice onfeng.

in the midst of his injustice, without repentance and reparation'.³⁸³ Sudden death, the chronicler felt, was a fitting end to such a life.

Hugh of Flavigny's *Chronicon* includes the same details, but places on them a greater rhetorical and theological spin. Emphasis is placed on the blood welling up in a Berkshire village. Hugh claims the king saw the sign, and then claimed he hadn't, and that others told him that it portended his death.³⁸⁴ This focus, connected to an allusion to Proverbs 18:3, stresses that the sinner will be condemned.³⁸⁵ Having chosen to ignore the warnings, William II is punished: slain by an arrow, deprived of penitence and communion, and buried in Winchester.³⁸⁶ By presenting William as deliberately ignoring the premonitions, the *Chronicon* uses his death to stress the authority of holy law.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ *ASC E*, 109-110: He waes swiðe strang 7 reðe ofer his land 7 his maenn 7 wið ealle his neahheburas 7 swiðe ondraedendlic. 7 þurh yfelra manna raedas þe him aefre gecweme waeran 7 þurh his agene gitsunga, he aefre þas leonde mid here 7 mid ungyldre tyrwigende waes, forþan þe on his dagan aelc riht afeoll 7 aelc unriht for Gode 7 for worulde up aras. Godes cyrcean he nyðerade; 7 þa biscoprices 7 abbotrices þe þa ealdras on his dagan feollan, ealle he hi oððe wið feo gesealde oððe on his agenre hand heold 7 to gafle gesette, forþan þe he aelces mannes, gehadodes 7 laewedes, yrfenuma beon wolde, 7 swa þet þæs daeges þe he gefeoll, he heafde on his agenre hand þet arcebiscoprice on Cantwarbyrig 7 þet bisceoprice on Winceastre 7 þet on Searbyrig 7 .xi. abbotrices, ealle to gafle gesette. And þeah þe ic hit laeng ylde, eall þet þe Gode waes lað 7 rið/tefulle mannan, eall þet waes gewunelic on þisan lande on his tyman, 7 forþi he waes forneah ealre his leode lað 7 Gode andsaete, swa swa his aende aetywde, forþan þe he on middewardan his unrihte buten behreowsunge 7 aelcere daedbote gewat. On þaene þunresdaeg he waes ofslagen 7 þæs on morgen bebyrged. Translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 235-236.

³⁸⁴ *Chronicon Hugonis monachi Viridunensis et Divionensis, abbatis Flaviniacensis*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz in *Monumenta Germanica Historica, Scriptorum* 8 (Hanover: Hahn, 1848), 280-502 (495): Obiit etiam Willelmus iunior rex Anglorum. Quo etiam anno in Anglia fons verum sanguinem olidum et putentem manare visus est. Ad quod spectaculum cum fere tota insula curcurrisset, insolita rei novitate stupefacta, rex praegatus advenit, et vidit, nec tamen ei profuit vidisse. Autumabat vulgus promiscuum, portentum istud mortem regis portendere, quod etiam ei dicebatur a referentibus; sed homo secularis, et in quem timor Dei non ceciderat, voluptatibus carnis et superbiae deditus, divinorum praeceptorum contemptor et adversarius, qui tamen satis regii fuisset animi, si non Deum postposuisset fastu regni inflatus, nec cogitabat se moriturum. Ideo cum temporibus eius miranda in Anglia contigissent, Domini recordatus non est, immo nec sui ipse cum etiam quibusdam revelationibus, quae tamen ei non profuerunt, ad Deum converti moneretur, quibus nec obedivit, pena quae ei iudicio divino intentabatur perterritus.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*: Impletum enim erat in illo quod dictum est: Peccator cum venerit in profundum malorum, contempnet.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*: Et quia Deum deseruit, sanctam aecclesiam opprimens et eam sibi ancillari constituens, a Deo quoque derelictus est; in silva, quae adiacet Wintoniae civitati, dum venationem exercet, sagitta a quodam percussus, quo lethali vulnere decidit, et exanimatus est, penitentia et communione carens, et apud eandem urbem sepultus.

³⁸⁷ Canon law permits the withholding of the anointing of the sick for those who persevere in sin: Can. 1007: *Unctio infirmorum ne conferatur illis, qui in manifesto gravi peccato obstinate perseverent.*

This manipulation of detail to suit a desired image appears also in the writings of Eadmer. In his *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, the death of Pope Urban in the previous year is used to criticise William, as the monarch is depicted as blaspheming, arrogant, wayward, and disrespectful as he asserts his authority.³⁸⁸ This liberty is short-lived, as his demise is inevitable. Recording his death in the forest, Eadmer inserts the question whether the unconfessed and unrepentant monarch died instantly when struck by the arrow, or whether he fell upon it and died, only to claim ‘we think it unnecessary to go into; sufficient to know that by the just judgment of God he was stricken down and slain’.³⁸⁹ The raising of the question is rhetorical – it insinuates, slyly, that if William fell onto the arrow he was responsible for his own demise (with connotations of damned suicide)³⁹⁰ – while at the same time stressing the authority of God. Eadmer, having previously explained away the monarch’s success in wars and channel crossings as due to divine assistance,³⁹¹ is keen to stress the king, having refused to be disciplined, was dealt a sudden death by God.³⁹²

³⁸⁸ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 115-116: Qui decessus vitae ubi ejusdem regis auribus insonuit, respondit, “Et Dei odium habeat, qui inde curat.” Adjecitque, “Ille vero qui modo papa est, cujusmodi est?” Cui cum in aliquibus Anselmo archiepiscopo similis diceretur, ait, “Per Vultum Dei, si talis est non valet. Veruntamen sit modo ipse per se; quia, per hoc et hoc, papatus suus non ascendet hac vice super me. Ego interim libertate potitus agam quod libet.” Nec enim putabat apostolicum orbis posse in regno suo esse cujuslibet juris, nisi permissus a se. The death appears, prior to William II’s demise, in Hugh, *Chronicon*, 8, 495: Anno inc. dom. 1099. obiit Urbanus papa, successit Paschalis.

³⁸⁹ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 116: Attamen libertate qua se potitum gloriatus est non diu frui permissus est. Prius enim quam annus transiit insperata et subita morte percussus eam perdidit. October namque audivit eum gloriantem, secunda dies sequentis Augusti vidit eum expirantem. Siquidem illa die mane pransus in silvam venatum ivit, ibique sagitta in corde percussus, inpoenitens et inconfessus e vestigio mortuus est, et ab omni hominem mox derelictus. Quae sagitta utrum, sicut quidam aiunt, jacta ipsum percusserit, an, quod plures affirmant, illum pedibus offendentem superque ruentem occiderit, disquirere otiosum putamas; cum scire sufficiat eum justo judicio Dei prostratum atque necatum. Translation from *Eadmer’s History of Recent Events in England: Historia Novorum in Anglia*, tr. Geoffrey Bosanquet, foreword by R. W. Southern (London: Cresset Press, 1964), 120.

³⁹⁰ See Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, *The Curse on Self-Murder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 475-476, on the account of Orderic Vitalis. For an examination of a later period in regards to the accident/suicide categorization, see Alice Seabourne and Glen Seabourne, ‘Suicide or Accident – Self-Killing in Medieval England: Series of 198 Cases from the Eyre Records’, *British Journal of Psychiatry* 178 (2001): 42-47.

³⁹¹ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 116-117.

³⁹² Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 117: Quapropter dum nec malo corrigi voluit nec bono ad bene agendum attrahi potuit, ne in perniciem bonorum diutino furore saeviret, compendiosa illum aequus Arbiter et momentanea caede huic vitae subtraxit.

The second version of William II's death that Eadmer produced appears in the *Vita Anselmi*. Though the predominant focus is on Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury who was in self-imposed exile having disagreed with William over rent, investiture, and funding (in short: the authority of the Church over the Crown),³⁹³ the death of the monarch is an important event in the text. Eadmer mentions premonitions foretelling the king's demise, which Anselm is depicted as paying no heed to (though praying for William's safe return to the fold).³⁹⁴ The *vita* then asserts that Hugh, the lord abbot of Cluny, 'interjected, as a matter of assured truth, that during the previous night the king had been accused before the throne of God, judged, and had damnation passed upon him', and, given the authority of Hugh, they trusted his words.³⁹⁵ Hugh's vision foretelling William's death also appears in Gilo of Paris's *Vita Sancti Hugonis*.³⁹⁶ Though such visions are important in hagiography, also important is who

³⁹³ This state of affairs is lucidly discussed in the chapter 'The King as an Anomaly' in Garnett, *Conquered England*, 56-135.

³⁹⁴ Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and tr. R. W. Southern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 122: Inter haec Urbanus sedis apostolicae pontifex huic vitae decedit, et ad inducias quas de causa Anselmi regi dederat non pervenit. Quo tempore multa etiam de Regis interitu a multis praedicebantur, et tam ex signis quae nova et inusitata per Angliam monstrabantur, quam et ex visionibus quae pluribus religiosis personis revelabantur, quia ultio Divina in proximo eum pro persecutione Anselmi oppressura esset ferebatur. Sed Anselmus in nichil eorum animum ponens cotidie pro conversione et salute ejus Deum deprecabatur.

³⁹⁵ Eadmer, *Life of St. Anselm*, ed. and tr. Southern, 123-124: Ubi cum ante ipsum abbatem consedissemus, et de iis quae inter Anselmum et regem eo usque versabantur verba ut fit nonnulla hinc inde proferrentur intulit idem venerabilis abbas sub testimonio veritatis proxime praeterita nocte eundem regem ante thronum Dei accusatum, judicatum, sententiamque damnationis in eum promulgatam. Ex quibus verbis admirati non modice sumus, sed perpendentes eminentiam sanctitatis ac reverentiae ejus fidem iis quae dicebat nullatenus habere nequivimus, et ideo sola verborum ipsius fide contenti, qualiter hoc sciret percunctari omisimus. Translation by Southern.

³⁹⁶ 'Vie de Saint Hugues par le moine Gilon', in *Vie de Saint Hugues: Abbé de Cluny 1024-1109*, ed. A. L. Huiller (Solesmes: Imprimerie Saint-Pierre, 1888), 588-589: Rex bellicosus & ferox, tanti regis filius, Willelmus rex, secunda die mensis Augusti dum per saltus fugaces cervos sagittare gestiret, sagittam subito in cor suscepit, qua miles suus cervum impetebat. Mortem regis momentaneam pater Hugo prenuntiavit sic priusquam accidisset. Erat apud Marciniacum, adjuncto sibi collega consimili, preclaro videlicet Anselmo Cantuariensi archiepiscopo, qui propter justiciam ab archiepiscopatu semotus patris nostri jocundabatur solatio. Ibi dum mundi luminaria se vicarie animarent sermonibus melle dulcioribus, beatissimus Hugo divina revelatione commotus inquit: Quoniam dompnus Archiepiscopum de secretis Dei docere superfluum credimus, vos fratres que dico advertite. Aderant fratres boni testimonii Baldunius de Torniac, & Emerus sacerdos, & Beccensis Eustachius. Preterita, inquit, nocte, rex Anglorum Willelmus districti judicis sententia mortis proscriptioni est addictus, nec diu fallaci fruetur gloria. Quod predixit amator veritatis, probavit eventus infelicitatis. Eodem quippe anno rex, inimicos conculcans, manu amici vulnus excepit, & domesticus parans obsequium, incurrit nescienter homicidium. The main difference between Eadmer and Gilo is that the latter 'adds that three

receives and authenticate the visions. In Eadmer's own *vitae* of saints, it is 'usually persons of unimpeachable authority.'³⁹⁷ The classical author Macrobius, a standard medieval reference point, listed distinctions between types of dream: the highest was the *oraculum*, an otherworldly vision revealed to a figure of authority, the next, the *visio*, which is rooted in the everyday and can be received by lesser figures.³⁹⁸ Notably, regarding William's demise, Eadmer includes *visiones* concerning the king's imminent demise in addition to the *oraculum* from Hugh.³⁹⁹ Given Giles Constable's assessment that visions 'often served as a way of giving assurance and guidance and of resolving doubts and problems that an individual was unable to handle alone',⁴⁰⁰ this inclusion of multiple visions, of different categories, received by different classes of ecclesiastical society, indicates Eadmer's intention to stress the threat felt from William by the churchmen. When the king's actual demise is reported – and in this version the king is killed instantly when the arrow pierced his heart – Eadmer uses the event to emphasise the religious values of Anselm, who weeps at the news and wished 'that his own body had died than that the king had died in his present state'.⁴⁰¹

other monks were present, one from Bec', Noreen Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh: 1049-1109* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 194.

³⁹⁷ Eadmer, *Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald*, ed. and tr. Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), xxxii.

³⁹⁸ Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 22-23.

³⁹⁹ Eadmer, *Life of St. Anselm*, ed. and tr. Southern, 124: Postera die cum inde digressi Lugdunum venissemus, et instanti festo beati Petri quod colitur Kal. Augusti dictis matutinis nos qui circa Anselmum assidue eramus quieti indulgere cuperemus ecce quidam juvenis ornato ac vultu non vilis, clerico socio nostro qui prope ostium camerae jacebat, et necdum dormiens oculos tamen ad somnum clausos tenebat astitit, vocans eum nomine suo. 'Adam' inquit 'dormis?' 'Cui dum ille responderet, 'Non' dixit illi, 'Vis audire nova?' 'Et libens' inquit. At ille, 'Pro certo' ait 'noveris, quia totum discidium quod est inter archiepiscopum Anselmum et regem Willelmum determinatum est atque sedatum.' Ad quod ille alacrior factus ilico caput levavit, et apertis oculis circumspectans, neminem vidit. Sequenti autem nocte inter matutinas unus nostrum clausis oculis stabat et psallebat. Et ecce quidam illi cartulam admodum parvam legendam exhibuit. Aspexit, et in ea 'Obiit rex Willelmus' scriptum invenit. Confestim aperuit oculos, et nullum vidit praeter socios.

⁴⁰⁰ Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 35; a similar view is repeated at 128.

⁴⁰¹ Eadmer, *Life of St. Anselm*, ed. and tr. Southern, 126: Exin duo sui monachi ad Anselmum venerunt, nunciantes ei decessum praefati regis. Siqidem secunda die mensis Augusti qui post primam visionem quam Lugduni factam noviter retuli secundus, et post secundam primus illuxit idem rex mane in silvam venatum ivit, ibique illum sagitta in corde percussit, et nulla interveniente mora extinxit. Quo Anselmus

In these accounts, the suddenness of William II's death is presented as divine judgment on the king's behaviour. To explain the random accident in the forest, narratives were developed. The Peterborough Chronicle included the ominous appearance of blood in a village in Berkshire. Hugh of Flavigny's *Chronicon* uses this premonition to claim that William was aware of the omens telling him to reform, but ignored them, thus presenting the monarch, persevering in sin, as responsible for his demise. Eadmer, in *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, similarly presents the monarch as wayward, mocking the Church following the death of Pope Urban, corrected by divine judgment when he would not reform. Eadmer's other work, the *Vita Anselmi*, uses a multitude of visions, from one by Hugh, the Abbot of Cluny (used also by Hugh's biographer, Gilo, to stress the abbot's holiness), to those received by lowly monks, to emphasise the hand of the divine in the monarch's sudden demise.

4. 2. Retelling the Story: Huntingdon, Malmesbury, Orderic

Each of the authors of the famed generation of Anglo-Norman historians, in their tens or twenties when the events occurred, reiterated the established depiction of William II's death and burial as divine judgment on his negative rule. For Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, this meant amending the account of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; for William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis, this meant inserting new details to further condemn the dead ruler.

Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, presents a Latinised version of material from the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, amended to stress his personal concerns. Huntingdon emphasises the *contemptus mundi* theme, presenting the king's 'cruel life' closed by a 'wretched death' close to the 'historic pomp' of the monarch's

vehementi stupore percussus mox est in acerbissimum fletum concussus. Quod videntes admirati admodum sumus. At ille singultu verba ejus interrumpente asseruit quia si hoc efficere posset, multo magis eligeret seipsum corpore, quam illum sicut erat mortuum esse.

court.⁴⁰² The *Historia* contrasts the events in the New Forest, where Walter Tirel slew the king accidentally while aiming for a stag, with the ominous bubbling of blood at Berkshire,⁴⁰³ altering the order in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to present the event as a forgone conclusion. Then, after copying the assessment of the monarch from the Anglo-Saxon chronicle⁴⁰⁴ – albeit in Latin – Huntingdon inserts two new accusations: robbery and adultery.⁴⁰⁵ No mention is made of William’s conflict with Anselm; rather, Huntingdon includes the king’s treatment of Church property.⁴⁰⁶ William Burgwinkle reads this libel as Huntingdon creating ‘binary opposition, God/William’,⁴⁰⁷ a reading supported when the *Historia* claims ‘whatever was displeasing to God and to those who loved God was pleasing to this king and those who loved him’. To further condemn this ‘unspeakable debauchery’ carried out ‘unashamedly in the light of day’, Huntingdon alters the conclusion of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle to be more judgmental, stating the king was buried ‘on the day after his perdition’.⁴⁰⁸

William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum* is a more detailed and multifaceted account, using a variety of sources. As with the earlier texts discussed

⁴⁰² HA, 446-447: Millesimo centesimo anno, rex Willelmus, tercio decimo regni sui anno, uitam crudelem misero fine terminauit. Namque cum gloriose et patrio honore curiam tenuisset ad Natale apud Gloucester, ad Pascha apud Winceaster, ad Pentecosten apud Lundoniam, iuit uenatum in nouo foresto in crastino kalendas Augusti. Translation by Greenway.

⁴⁰³ HA, 446: Vbi Walterus Tirel cum sagitta ceruo intendens, regem percussit inscius. Rex corde ictus corruit, nec uerbum edidit. Paulo siquidem ante sanguis uisus est ebullire a terra in Bercescyre.

⁴⁰⁴ HA, 446, 448: Iure autem in medio iniusticie sue prereptus est. Ipse namque ultra hominem erat, et consilio pessimorum quod semper eligebat, suis nequam, sibi nequissimus; uicinos werra, suos exercitibus frequentissimis et geldis continuis uexabat. Nec respirare poterat Anglia miserabiliter suffocata.

⁴⁰⁵ HA, 448: Cum autem omnia raperent et subuerterent qui regi famulabantur, ita ut adulteria etiam uiolenter et impune committerent, quicquid antea nequitie pullulauerat, in perfectum excreuit, quicquid antea non fuerat, his temporibus pullulauit.

⁴⁰⁶ HA, 448: Inuisus namque rex, nequissimus Deo et populo, episcopatus et abbatis aut uendebat, aut in manu sua retinens ad firmam dabat. Heres autem omnium esse studebat. Siquidem in die qua obiit, in proprio habebat archiepiscopatum Cantuarie, et episcopatum Winceastrie, et Salesbirie, et undecim abbatias ad firmam datas.

⁴⁰⁷ William Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050-1230* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49.

⁴⁰⁸ HA, 448-449: Postremo quicquid Deo Deumque diligentibus displicebat, hoc regi regemque diligentibus placebat. Nec luxurie scelus tacendum exercebant occulte, sed ex impudentia coram sole. Sepultus autem est in crastino perdicionis sue apud Winceastre. Translation by Greenway.

above, included is the blood from the Berkshire village (named as Hampstead); it is, however, preceded by the Devil himself appearing.⁴⁰⁹ Like Hugh's *Chronicon*, the importance of these omens are stressed by depicting the king as disdainful and disbelieving.⁴¹⁰ Malmesbury however differs in noting the sources for the 'visions and prophecies which foreshadowed the king's violent death', claims he will use only those who are trusted (one being Eadmer). This point is part scholarly, part for emphasis, for in making it, he stresses that Eadmer had gone into exile with Anselm 'in whose person all religion in this country was in exile too'.⁴¹¹ As a consequence, Malmesbury includes the *oraculum* of Hugh, Abbot of Cluny that Eadmer records, from a different perspective,⁴¹² and then include a feature of Anglo-Saxon historiography: a dream received by the king himself, in which he 'was being bled, and a spurt of blood shooting up to the sky overcast the sun and brought darkness upon the day'.⁴¹³ Then, using the

⁴⁰⁹ *GRA*, 570: Tertio decimo anno, qui et extremus fuit uitae, multa aduersa. Hoc quoque maxime horrendum, quod uisibiliter diabolus apparuit hominibus in saltibus et deuuis, transeuntes allocutus. Preterea in pago Berrucscire in ulla Hamstede continuis quindecim diebus fons sanguinem tam ubertim manuit ut uicinum uadum inficeret. It is worthwhile here to note the utilisation of the figure of the devil in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. Pope Sylvester II - whose sudden rise from peasantry in Aurillac in old Auvergne to the Papal chair, broad scientific knowledge, and attempts to stamp out simony - is depicted as a sorcerer in league with the Devil (*GRA*, 293-294); the tale of the witch of Berkeley (*GRA*, 376-377) also features the Devil, when he carries off the witch in spite of her attempts to save herself. Both accounts have what Edward Peters calls "literary character" to provide an educational and theological point. For an analysis of Malmesbury's depictions of the two, see Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 28-33, and Watkins, *History and Supernatural*, 117-118, 164-168.

⁴¹⁰ *GRA*, 570: Audiebat ille haec, et ridebat, nec sua somnia de se nec aliorum uisa curans.

⁴¹¹ *GRA*, 572: Multa de ipsius nece et preuisa et predicta homines serunt, quorum tria probabilium relatorum testimonio lecturis communicabo. Edmerus, nostrorum temporum historicus, sinceritate ueritatis laudandus, dicit nobilem illum exulem Anselmum, cum quo pariter omnis religio exulabat, Marcenniacum uenisse, ut Hugonis abbatis Cluniacensis conscientiae querelas curarum suarum ingereret. Translation by Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom.

⁴¹² *GRA*, 572: Ibi cum de rege Willelmo sermo uolutaretur, abbatem predictum dixisse proxima nocte regem illum ante Deum ductum, et adiudicatum librato iudicio tristem dampnationis subisse sententiam. Id quomodo nosset nec ipse tunc exposuit nec aliquis audientium requisuit; ueruntamen pro contuitu religionis eius nulli presentium de fide dictorum inhesit ambiguum. Eius erat uita Hugo, eius famae, ut omnes eius suspicerent eloquium, mirarentur consilium, quasi ex caelesti adito insonuisset oraculum. Nec multo post, occiso ut dicemus rege, uenit nuntius ut sedem suam dignaretur archiepiscopus.

⁴¹³ *GRA*, 572-573: Pridie quam excederet uita, uidit per quietam se flebotomi ictu sanguine emittere; radium cruoris in caelum usque protentum lucem obnubilare, diem interpolare. Ita in clamata sancta Maria, somno excussus, lumen inferri precepit, et cubicularios a se discedere uetuit. Tunc aliquot horis antelucanis nonnichil uigilatum. Translation by Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom. For the Anglo-Saxon tradition, see Chaney, *Cult of Kingship*, 153-155. For Malmesbury and Anglo-Saxon historiography, see Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 167-170.

word *somnium* which Macrobius employed for dreams that ‘veils with ambiguity the true meaning of the information being offered’,⁴¹⁴ Malmesbury includes a dream received by a foreign monk in which the king entered a church and knawed at a crucifix until the figure of Christ kicked the monarch over, who promptly released fire from his mouth whose smoke reached the stars.⁴¹⁵ The *somnium* is confusing to the monk and the magnate to whom he reported it, but clear to Malmesbury and his intended audience. As with the blood in Berkshire, the *Gesta* records these premonitions and the king’s response. William II is presented as dismissive in public (laughing at the tale, and ordering the monk to be paid), but personally perturbed enough to wonder if he should hunt as he had planned.⁴¹⁶ In other contexts, this would show an understanding of importance of humour, displays of wealth, and banter in a court setting;⁴¹⁷ here, in the hands of a monastic chronicler, these positive features are used to question the king’s authority and judgment, while reiterating – with the other included incidents – the claim that by ignoring the premonitions, William II set himself on the path to an early death in the New Forest.

The *Gesta Regum Anglorum* is noticeably different than the earlier texts in providing a detailed account of the accident in the forest; the intention, however, is the same in presenting the monarch’s demise as fitting to his life and character. After a

⁴¹⁴ Quoted in Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, 23, which notes the *somnium* ‘is in fact the perfect middle term between revelation and deception. It reliably exposes a truth like the two higher kinds of dream [the *oraculum* and the *visio*], but it presents that truth in fictional form.

⁴¹⁵ *GRA*, 572: Paulo post, cum iam aurora diem inuehere meditaretur, monachus quidam transmarinus retulit Rotberto filio Haimonis, uiro magnatum principi, somnium quod eadem nocte de rege uiderat mirum et horrendum: quod in quondam aecclesiam uenerit superbo gestu et insolent, ut solebat, circumstantes despiciens; tunc, crucifixum mordicus apprehendens, brachia illi corroserit, crura pene truncauerit; crucifixum diu tolerasse, sed tandem pede ita regem depulisse ut supinus caderet; ex ore iacentis tam effusam flammam exisse ut fumeorum uoluminum orbes etiam sidera lamberent.

⁴¹⁶ *GRA*, 572, 574: Hoc somnium Rotbertus non negligendum arbitrates, regi confestim, quod ei a secretis erat, intulit; at ille cachinnos ingeminans ‘Monachus’ inquit ‘est, et causa nummorum monachiliter somniat. Date ei centum solidos.’ Multem tamen motus, diu cunctatus est an in siluam, sicut intenderat, iret, suadentibus amicis ne suo dispendio ueritatem somniorum experiretur.

⁴¹⁷ See the example of William the Conqueror examined by Andrew Cowell, *The Medieval Warrior Aristocracy: Gifts, Violence, Performance and the Sacred* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2007), 15-51.

satirical quip and the king's expense,⁴¹⁸ Malmesbury introduces Walter Tirel as a man attracted by the king's liberality – an ironic note, given that the monarch's worldliness caused his death, made further ironic by asserting only Tirel stayed with the king.⁴¹⁹ The hunt is depicted,⁴²⁰ though the tone is ambivalent. Given that elsewhere in the *Gesta* Malmesbury includes the tale of an abbot being removed from his see owing to his fondness for hunting and lavish hospitality affecting his ecclesiastical duties,⁴²¹ it is likely negative. Further irony is employed in depicting the fatal arrow. After the king fails to kill a stag, Walter 'conceived a noble ambition, that he should lay low another stag that happened to pass within shot', a noble ambition that leads to unintentionally doing God's work.⁴²² After using an interjection that Malmesbury only uses in referring to divinely ordained deaths,⁴²³ the *Gesta* opts for Eadmer's suggested story concerning the monarch's demise: the ruler hastened it by breaking off the shaft and falling on the

⁴¹⁸ *GRA*, 574: Itaque ante cibum uenatu abstinuit, seriis negotiis cruditatem indomitae mentis eructuans; ferunt ea die largiter epulatum crebrioribus quam consueuerat poculis frontem serenasse. For a discussion of irony in Malmesbury, see Rodney M. Thomson, 'Satire, Irony, and Humour in William of Malmesbury', in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100-1500: Essays in Honour of John O. Ward*, ed. Constant J. Mews, Cary J. Nederman, and Rodney M. Thomson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 115-127. The quality of William II's administration is noted in Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 191.

⁴¹⁹ *GRA*, 574: Mox igitur post cibum in saltum contendit, paucis comitatus; quorum familiarissimus erat Walterius cognomento Tirel, qui de Frantia liberalitate regis adductus uenerat. Is, ceteris per moram uenationis quo quemque casus tulerat dispersis, solus cum eo remanserat.

⁴²⁰ *GRA*, 574: Iamque Phebo in oceanum procliui, rex ceruo ante se transeunti, extento neruo et emissa sagitta, non adeo seuum uulnus inflixit, diutile adhuc fugitantem uiucacitate oculorum prosecutus, opposita contra uiolentiam solarium radorum manu.

⁴²¹ See his account of the removing of Malgar of Rouen from his see in 1085 (*GRA*, 494-495); for the relation of this to the later satirical motif of the hunting clergyman, see Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), 122-127.

⁴²² *GRA*, 574-575: Tunc Walterius pulchrum facinus animo parturiens, ut rege alias interim intento ipse alterum ceruum, qui forte propter transibat, prosterneret, inscius et impotens regium pectus (Deus bone!) letali harundine traiecit. Translation by Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom.

⁴²³ This is the only usage of the expression in the *GRA*. "Deus bone" appears twice in Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, in two very different contexts: one in a vision of Dunstan where he receives his prophecies concerning the future kings (*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and tr. Winterbottom, 38-39), and later when Roger the royal larderer is named the bishop of Hereford by Henry I, only to die eight days after his nomination (460-461). For the grammatical arrangement, see John Rauk, 'The Vocative of Deus and Its Problems', *Classical Philology* 92 (1997): 138-194.

wound.⁴²⁴ In depicting the death of the monarch, the *Gesta* stresses William's responsibility for the event.⁴²⁵

Malmesbury also provides a more detailed account of the burial, similarly to condemn the deceased monarch. The culprit flees.⁴²⁶ Those closest to the king do likewise for reasons of self-interest.⁴²⁷ Abandoned in a manner comparable to his father's corpse in Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,⁴²⁸ the deserted cadaver is used by Malmesbury to articulate *contemptus mundi* themes and criticise the court that William II lavished gifts upon. It is ironically those furthest socially from the king's court, the peasants (which Malmesbury refers to by the derogatory 'rusticanorum'),⁴²⁹ who transport the corpse, moving it unceremoniously by horse and cart, with the blood dripping the whole way to Winchester.⁴³⁰ This latter detail is probably a subtle condemnation of the monarch,⁴³¹ in the same manner the *Gesta* continues to state many nobles were present at the burial, but few were mourning.⁴³² Having noted that William was buried beneath the cathedral tower, the different versions of the *Gesta* provide different reflections on this detail. In the earliest versions, produced by 1126, Malmesbury notes that some claim the tower later collapsed because it had been wrong

⁴²⁴ *GRA*, 574: Sautius ille nullum uerbum emisit, sed ligno sagittae quantum extra corpus extabat effracto, moxque supra uulnus cadens, mortem accelerauit.

⁴²⁵ See the earlier comment at *GRA*, 504-505.

⁴²⁶ *GRA*, 574: Accurrit Walterius; sed quia nec sensum nec uocem hausit, perneciter cornipedem insiliens beneficio calcarium probe euasit.

⁴²⁷ *GRA*, 574: Nec uero fuit qui persequeretur, illis coniuentibus, istis miserantibus, omnibus postremo alia molientibus; pars receptacula sua munire, pars furtiuas predas agere, pars regem nouum iamiamque circumspicere.

⁴²⁸ *HE* IV, 106-109.

⁴²⁹ For the connotations of the term, see Tina Stiefel, *The Intellectual Revolution in Twelfth Century Europe* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 63.

⁴³⁰ *GRA*, 574: Pauci rusticanorum cadauer, in reda caballaria compositum, Wintoniam in episcopatum deuexere, cruore undatim per totam uiam stillante.

⁴³¹ An excess of blood was seen – like the red hair that gave William II's nickname 'Rufus', as a symbol of anger (see *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, tr. Joseph L. Baird and Radd K. Ehrman, vol 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 83-84). In another tradition, discussed in Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval Blood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 63-64, an injury that caused bleeding was considered more severe and more punishable than one that merely bruises; a wound that bleeds perpetually is, therefore, a particularly harsh judgment.

⁴³² *GRA*, 574: Ibi infra ambitum turris, multorum procerum conuentu, paucorum planctu terrae traditum.

to place such a wayward and wanton figure, who had died without receiving last rites, in such a sacred site.⁴³³ The later revised text, finished by 1135, has Malmesbury asserting he would refrain from repeating such opinions, stating the tower might have collapsed from being poorly built even if William had not been interred there.⁴³⁴

To explain this last detail, this study must comment on Malmesbury's intention when revising the text of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. Though some scholars view this as Malmesbury responding to accusations of credulity,⁴³⁵ it is more likely to be pedagogical rhetoric, as Malmesbury does not remove the claim but slyly alludes to it.⁴³⁶ Following this detail, Malmesbury includes a discussion of William's greed, which Malmesbury depicts with a Seutonian incident of the king desiring to celebrate Christmas in Poitiers because the Count of Poitou intended to mortgage his land for money to go to Jerusalem, and his desire for titles that were not his.⁴³⁷ Discussing the ecclesiastical response to William's reign, Malmesbury originally presented those in holy orders being unable to secure the deceased king's salvation; in the later revision, it claimed that they were working hard.⁴³⁸ The slight alteration was due to a change in

⁴³³ *GRA*, 574: Neque defuere opinones quorundam dicentium ruinam turris, quae posterioribus annis accidit, peccatis illius contigisse, quod iniuria fuerit illum sacrato tumulari loco qui tota uita petulans et lubricus moriens etiam Christiano caruerit uiatico.

⁴³⁴ *GRA*, 574: Secuta est posteriori anno ruina turris; de qua re quae opiniones fuerint parco dicere, ne uidear nugis credere, presentim cum pro instabilitate operis machina ruinam fecisse potuisset, etiamsi numquam ipse ibi sepultus fuisset.

⁴³⁵ Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, 39-40, 226.

⁴³⁶ Hayward, 'Importance of Being Ambiguous', 79: 'William declares that he means to refrain from repeating these frivolous rumours, but in truth he repeats the rumour, and by putting further distance between his own persona and the 'foolish talk' he strenghtens the insinuation that the tower's collapse was indeed caused by divine displeasure at Rufus's burial within its walls'.

⁴³⁷ *GRA*, 576: Obiit anno Dominicae incarnationis millesimo centesimo, regni tertio decimo, quarto nonas Augusti, maior quadragenario, ingentia presumens et ingentia, si pensa Parcarum euoluere uel uiolentiam fortunae abrumpere et eluctari potuisset, facturus. Tanta uis erat animi ut quodlibet sibi regnum promittere auderet. Denique ante proximam diem mortis interrogatus ubi festum suum in Natali teneret, respondit Pictauis, quod comes Pictauiensis Ierosolimam ire gestiens ei terram suam pro pecunia inuadaturus dicebatur. Ita paternis possessionibus non contentus, maiorisque gloriae spe raptatus, indebitis incubabat honoribus.

⁴³⁸ *GRA*, 576: (the later revision) Vir sacri ordinis hominibus pro dampno animae, cuius salutem reuocare laborent, maxime miserandus; stipendiariis militibus pro copia donatiuorum mirandus; prouintialibus, quod eorum substantias abradi sinebat, non desiderandus. Nullum suo tempore concilium fieri memini in quo delictis eneruatis uigor aecclesiasticus confirmaretur. Aecclesiasticos honores diu antequam daret deliberabat, siue pro commodo siue pro trutinando merito, utpote qui eo

audience: the first, containing direct criticisms, was intended for a regal audience (with prefaces for the Empress Matilda and King David of Scotland),⁴³⁹ the later, with their more ‘overtly veiled innuendo’⁴⁴⁰ and focus on ecclesiastical issues, was for a monastic audience.⁴⁴¹ Though different in tone, the message is the same: the death and burial of William II was a fitting conclusion to his life and reign.⁴⁴²

Orderic Vitalis’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* is similarly lengthy but tautly constructed criticism of the monarch expressed through its account of his death and burial. It too features detailed premonitions. While noting the king’s acquisition of wealth, Orderic notes visions received by ordained religious men were being discussed in ‘open conversation in market places and cemeteries, and were not concealed from the king himself’.⁴⁴³ As seen from the texts discussed above, dreams prior to the death

die quo excessit tres episcopatus et duodecim abbatias desolatas pastoribus in manu sua teneret. The earlier version had *nequeant* following *laborent*; other changes were *abradebat* rather than *abradi sinebat*, and *permisit* in place of *memini*. The later point about ecclesiastical offices was similarly altered, from ‘Sed quia in preceps pecuniae auiditate ferebatur, sacros honores sui iuris esse dictitabat’ to ‘Aecclesiasticos honores diu antequam daret deliberabat, siue pro commodo siue pro trutinando merito, utpote qui eo die quo excessit tres episcopatus et duodecim abbatias desolatas pastoribus in manu sua teneret’.

⁴³⁹ *GRA*, 2-13; of which see the discussion in R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings: General Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), xvii, 6-10; see also E. Könsgen, ‘Zwei unbekannte Breife zu den *Gesta Regum Anglorum* des Wilhelm von Malmesbury’, *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 31 (1975): 204-214.

⁴⁴⁰ Hayward, ‘The Importance of Being Ambiguous’, 79. This reading is more nuanced than the claim that the recension merely “toned down much that might have been offensive to the great” (Thomson and Winterbottom, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: General Introduction and Commentary*, xxv; also xxvi n. 17).

⁴⁴¹ For the audiences of William of Malmesbury’s texts, see Rodney M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 35-39. One should note the depiction in the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* of the king’s character (mostly of events taken from Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum in Anglia*), the briefest of accounts of his death (*Nec enim multo tempore transcurso luit dictorum et factorum petulantiam, sagitta uitalia traiectus, sicut alibi diximus*), within a lengthy discussion of whether one should discuss and dwell upon such iniquities, Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and tr. Winterbottom, 160-169. This is another example of Hayward’s claim that William of Malmesbury, while declaring he will refrain from such things, discusses them.

⁴⁴² Notably, the two versions are the same when complaining about William’s support for the antipope, *GRA*, 576: *Quin et accepta occasione qua inter se dissiderent Vrbanus in Roma, Wibertus in Rauenna, tributum Romanae sedi negauit; prouior tamen in Wiberti gratiam, quod fomes et incentium inter eum et Anselmum fuerat discordiae quod ille uir Deo dilectus Vrbanum apostolicum, alterum apostatam pronuntiaret.*

⁴⁴³ *HE* V, 284-285: *Mense Iulio dum regia classis regalis pompae apparatu instrueretur, et ipse peruicaciter immensa preciosi metalli pondera undecumque congerens prope fretum prestolaretur, horrendae uisiones de rege in coenobiis et episcopiis ab utrisque ordinibus uisae sunt unde in populis publice colloquutiones in foris et cimiteriis passim diulgatae sunt. Ipsum quoque regem minime*

of the king are a topos of the genre, expressing a desire for divine intervention.⁴⁴⁴ The *Historia* features a detailed dream, in which a female personification of the Church, begging at the feet of Christ, is told her pleas for vengeance towards William II for his crimes and transgressions will be soon answered.⁴⁴⁵ To stress the reliability of this dream,⁴⁴⁶ Orderic stresses the *relation autentica* – the transmission of the source – by emphasizing the merits of the nameless monk who received the vision, and the ecclesiastical figure who transmitted it to the king.⁴⁴⁷ After this, Orderic includes another type of text: a sermon from Fulchred, the abbot of Shrewsbury. As Augustine Thompson noted in regards sermons appearing in chronicle, ‘Even first-hand observers never report the whole event observed, rather they focus on the aspects that serve their narrative’,⁴⁴⁸ and this reading fits with Orderic’s account. The message is clear. After setting the scene of the sermon,⁴⁴⁹ Orderic presents Fulchred’s sermon. England is

latuerunt. Translation by Chibnall, who notes that the ‘both orders’ means secular ‘clerks and monks, rather than clergy and laity’.

⁴⁴⁴ Alexander Haggerty Krappe, ‘The Legend of the Death of William Rufus in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Ordericus Vitalis’, *Neophilologus* 12 (1927): 46-48; Peter Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersmann, 1981), 59-60.

⁴⁴⁵ HE V, 284, 286: Quidam monachus bonae fama sed melioris uitae in cenobio erat sancti Petri de Gloucestra qui huiusmodi somnium retulit se uidisse in uisione nocturna, ‘Videbam’ inquit ‘Dominum Ihesum in solio excelso sedentem, et gloriosam coeli militiam sanctorumque chorum ei assistentem. Dum uero in extasi supra me raptus obstupescerem, et nimis admirans ad insolita intenderem ecce quaedam splendidissima uirgo ante pedes Domini Ihesu procidebat, et his precibus suppliciter illum exorabat, “Domine Ihesu Christe Saluator generis humani, pro quo pendens in cruce preciosum sanguine tuum fudisti, clementer respice populum tuum miserabiliter gementem sub iugo Guillelmi. Scelerum uindex omniumque iudex iustissime, de Guillelmo precor uindica me et de minibus illius eripe, quia turpiter quantum in ipso est me polluit, et immaniter affligit.” Dominus autem respondebat, “Patienter tolera, paulisper expecta, quoniam in proximo tibi sufficiens adhibetur de illo uindicta.” Haec itaque audiens contremui, et caelestem iram principi nostro mox imminere non dubitauim, intelligens sanctae uirginis et Matris Æcclesiae clamores peruenisse ad aures Domini, pro rapinis et turpibus mechis aliorumque facinorum sarcina intolerabili, quibus rex et pedissqui euis non desistunt diuinam legem cotidie transgredi.’

⁴⁴⁶ For dreams being akin to monastic forgeries, see Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur*, 59-60.

⁴⁴⁷ HE V, 286: His auditis uenerandus Serlo abbas commonitorios apices edidit, et amicabiliter de Gloucestra regi direxit, in quibus illa quae monachus in uisu didicerat luculenter inseruit.

⁴⁴⁸ Augustine Thompson, ‘From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event’, in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 13-37 (25). Given that the audience is said to have included both clergy and laity, it is likely the sermon was in the vernacular, with scriptural allusions in Latin; given that Orderic’s account is solely in Latin, it is more probable – if it is not an invention – to be either a reportatio or a later reworking of the sermon. For the distinctions, see Thompson, 16-18.

⁴⁴⁹ HE V, 286: In eodem monasterio kalendis Augusti celebritas sancti Petri ad Vincula solenniter peracta est et personarum utriusque ordinis ingens globus ibidem conglomeratus est. Tunc Fulcheredus

depicted as a woman inflicted with leprosy, suffering from pride, lust and greed.⁴⁵⁰ ‘Not much longer’ Fulchred fumes, ‘will effeminates govern’, as God ‘will strike Moab and Edom with the sword of visible vengeance and will overthrow the mountains of Gilboa with a terrible disturbance’, and sinners will not be spared.⁴⁵¹ If the Fulchred’s sermon is by Orderic, and in all likelihood it is, it displays his use of the bible for illuminating typologies and allusions.⁴⁵² William II had already been compared to Moab in the *Historia*,⁴⁵³ and the other reference to the Book of Judges concerns were Saul fell on his sword. Re-emphasising this point, the sermon closes with the prophetic point that ‘the bow of divine anger is bent against the wicked’ unless one’s life is amended.⁴⁵⁴ Orderic concludes with his own comment, confirming that such premonitions were divine, by noting ‘immediately the scourge began to have effect, as events showed’.⁴⁵⁵

The depiction of the events surrounding William II’s death is likewise judgmental. The king is depicted eating with ‘suis parasitis’, preparing for post-dinner

Sagiensis feruens monachus, Scrobesburiensis archimandrite primus, in diuinis tractatibus explanator profluus, de grege seniorum electus in pulpitem ascendit, sermonem ad populum de salutare Dei fecit. This mentioning of a pulpit is earlier than the example given in Leo Carruthers, “‘The Word Made Flesh’: Preaching and Community from the Apostolic to the Late Middle Ages”, in *Speculum Sermonis: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Medieval Sermon*, ed. Georgiana Donavin, Cary J. Nederman and Richard Utz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 3-27 (11).

⁴⁵⁰ HE V, 286: Ibi preuaricatores diuinae legis palam redarguit, et quasi prophético spiritu plenus inter caetera constanter uaticinatus dixit, ‘Anglia prophanis ad conculcationem datur in haereditate, quia replete est terra iniquitate. Totum corpus maculatur multiformis lepra nequitiae, et a capite usque ad pedes occupauit illud languor maliciae. Effrenis enim superbia ubique uolitat, et omnia si dici fas est etiam stellas celi conculcat. Discinta libido uasa fictilia sed et aurea coinquinat, et insatiabilis auaricia quaeque potest deuorat.[?]’

⁴⁵¹ HE V, 286-287. En subitanea rerum instabit immutatio. Non diu dominabuntur effeminate. Dominus Deus publicos sponsae suae hostes iudicare ueniet, Moab et Edom rumfea manifestae ultionis percutiet, et terribili commotione montes Gelboe subuertet. Ira Dei transgressoribus ultra non parcat, iam celestis ultio super filios infidelitatis. Translation by Chibnall.

⁴⁵² Mégier, ‘Divina pagina’; Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and his Readers’.

⁴⁵³ HE V, 250: Huiusmodi utique collectionibus grandia regi xenia presentabantur, quibus extranei pro uana laude ditabantur; filii autem regni propriis rebus iniuste nudati contristabantur, et ad Deum qui per Aoth ambidextrum perempto Eglon rege pinguissimo de manu Moab liberauit Israel clamantes lamentabantur.

⁴⁵⁴ HE V, 286, 288: Ecce arcus superni furoris contra reprobos intensus est et sagitta uelox ad uulnerandum de pharetra extracta est. Repente iam feriet, seseque corrigendo sapiens omnis ictum declinet.

⁴⁵⁵ HE V, 288-289: Haec et multa his similia populo feria in templo Dei dicta sunt, et extemplo flagella prosequi exhibitione operum cepta sunt. Translation by Chibnall

hunting.⁴⁵⁶ Chibnall translates the term as ‘his intimates’, though ‘his guests’ or ‘his spoungers’ may be more suitable. In such a setting, the monarch is depicted unintentionally made remarks that foretold his death. Presented with six arrows, he hands two to Tirel, claiming ‘It is only right [...] that the sharpest arrows should be given to the man who knows how to shoot the deadliest shots’.⁴⁵⁷ The king’s accidental murderer, described as man skilled in arms and a close friend of the king,⁴⁵⁸ is subject to another ironic episode. The king, having been read the letters of abbot, containing the vision of the monarch’s demise, laughs and says to Tirel ‘Walter, do what is right in the business you have heard’, to which Tirel replies ‘So I will, my lord’,⁴⁵⁹ presumably confirming his desire to do his monarch’s wishes, but unintentionally carrying out the divine judgment.⁴⁶⁰ As in earlier texts, the warning signs also mark the waywardness of William II in his refusal to pay heed. The letters are also dismissed as being the ‘dreams of snoring monks’ and the ‘snores of dreams of little old women’, and not worth following.⁴⁶¹ The slaying itself is similarly depicted in a moral fashion –

⁴⁵⁶ *HE V*, 288-289: In crastinum Guillelmus rex mane cum suis parasitis comedit, seseque post prandium ut in Nouam Forestam uenatum iret preparauit. Translation by Chibnall.

⁴⁵⁷ *HE V*, 288-289: Cumque ilaris cum clientibus suis tripudicaret, ocreasque suas calciaret quidam faber illuc aduenit, et sex catapultas ei presentauit. Quas ille protinus alacriter accepit, per opus artificem laudauit, nescius futuri quattuor sibi retinuit, et duas Gualterio Tirello porrexit. ‘Iustum est’ inquit rex ‘ut illi accutissimae denture sagittae qui letiferos inde nouerit ictus infigere.’ Translation by Chibnall. For this reading, see Barlow, *William Rufus*, 423.

⁴⁵⁸ *HE V*, 288: Erat idem de Francia miles generosus, Picis et Pontisariae diues oppidanus, potens inter optimates et in armis acerrimus, ideo regi familiaris conuiua et ubique comes assiduus.

⁴⁵⁹ *HE V*, 288-289: Denique dum de pluribus inutiliter confabularentur, et domestici clientes circa regem adunarentur quidam monachus de Gloucestra affuit, et abbatis sui litteras regi porrexit. Quibus auditis rex in cachinum resolutus est et subsannando supradictum militem sic affatus est, ‘Gualteri, fac rectum de his quae audisti.’ At ille, ‘Sic faciam domine.’ Translation by Chibnall.

⁴⁶⁰ This is my suggestion to Chibnall’s note, *HE V*, 289 fn 6, that these ‘words are cryptic, and it is not clear what Orderic believed their significance to be’.

⁴⁶¹ *HE V*, 288: Paruipendens itaque monita seniorum, immemor quod ante ruinam exaltur cor, de serie litterarum quas audierat dixit, ‘Miror unde domino meo Serloni talia narrandi uoluntas exhorta est qui uere ut opinor bonus abbas et matures senior est. Ex simplicitate nimia michi tot negociis occupato somnia stertentium retulit et per plura terrarium spacia scripto etiam inserta destinauit. Num prosequi me ritum autumat Anglorum, qui pro sternutatione et somnio uetularum dimittunt iter suum seu negotium?’ The king uses the term “*somnio*,” the category of dreams which Macrobius saw as ambiguous. The usage that Orderic provides the king is therefore dismissive, despite Orderic using the same category – in addition to “*uisione nocturna*” – to describe the dream of the monk from St. Peter at Gloucester. Likewise, the mentioning of “old women” alludes to contemporary debates regarding the role, and reliability, of women in regards to miracles.

clear enough for it to be glossed in the manuscript for later study.⁴⁶² Setting the scene, and explaining the workings of the hunt,⁴⁶³ Orderic presents the scene of the death as monstrous, first by using the word *ferus* (beast) where Malmesbury used the word *cervus* (stag) for the animal that ran between them, and then, claiming it is ‘dreadful to relate’, notes the monarch died at once having fallen to the ground.⁴⁶⁴

This burial is also bad. After noting the confusion⁴⁶⁵ – and a brief digression⁴⁶⁶ – Orderic presents the cadaver of William II in the same manner – and using the same language – as he did earlier describe the abandoned corpse of William I. Nobles flee from the wood to secure their property, leaving some of the ‘humbler attendants’ to cover the ‘king’s bloody body as best they might with wretched clothes’ and carry him ‘like a wild boar struck with spears’ to Winchester.⁴⁶⁷ The hunter is ironically presented as the hunted. Further shame is given on the corpse when only the poor appear with the clergy and monks, mourning him only because of his station; those high in the Church, ‘considering his squalid life and dreadful death, ventured to pass judgment, declaring that he was virtually past redemption and unworthy of absolution’ because they were

⁴⁶² Evans, *Death of Kings*, 51 suggests the gloss mentioned in *HE V*, 290 fn 1, stating ‘De obitu seu interitu Guillelmi Rufi regis Anglorum’ (‘Of the death or killing of William Rufus, king of England’) is evidence that suggestions of murder ‘were already in circulation in the middle ages’; more likely the note was intended to draw attention to the passage concerning William II for moral readings rather than suggesting a conspiracy. For Orderic’s intended audience, see Chibnall, *World of Orderic Vitalis*, 216-217.

⁴⁶³ *HE V*, 290: His dictis celer surrexit et cornipedem ascendens in siluam festinauit. Henricus comes frater eius et Guillelmus de Britolio aliique illustres ibi fuerunt, in saltum perrexerunt, et uenatores per diuersa rite loca dispersa sunt. The reading that Orderic is explaining how a hunt works is the mentioning of custom.

⁴⁶⁴ *HE V*, 290: Cumque rex et Gualterius de Pice cum paucis sodalibus in nemore constituti essent, et armati praedam auide expectarent subito inter eos currente fera rex de statu suo recessit, et Gualterius sagittam emisit. Quae super dorsum ferae setam radens rapide uolauit, atque regem e regione stantem letaliter uulnerauit. Qui mox ad terram cecidit, et sine mora pro dolor expirauit.

⁴⁶⁵ *HE V*, 290: Vno itaque prostrate terrigena, fit multorum commotio maxima horribilisque de nece principis clamor perstrepat in silua.

⁴⁶⁶ The digression, *HE V*, 290, 292, concerns Henry seizing the treasure and his coronation.

⁴⁶⁷ *HE V*, 292-293. Mortuo rege plures optimatum ad lares suos de saltu manicauerunt, et contra futuras motiones quas timebant res suas ordinauerunt. Clientuli quidam cruentatum regem uilibus utcumque pannis operuerunt, et ueluti ferocem aprum uenabulis confossum de saltu ad urbem Guentanam detulerunt. Translation by Chibnall. The terms *manicare* and *clientuli* are also used in the account of William I, see *HE IV*, 102.

unable to lead him onto the right path.⁴⁶⁸ The judgment, using the word ‘biothanatus’ suggestive of violence and damnation,⁴⁶⁹ is clear: church bells do not ring, alms are not given to the poor to assist his soul, and his only mourners are members of his court and hangers-on lamenting their loss of income (and wish to kill Tirel).⁴⁷⁰ In contrast to William II’s bad demise and burial, Orderic notes that the monarch’s accidental murderer had a decent life, produced an heir, before having a good death as a penitent on route to Jerusalem.⁴⁷¹ In presenting a summary of Tirel’s life and death soon after William’s, Orderic stresses the difference in their respective ends: one God strikes down suddenly, the other much later becomes a martyr of the faith. The good life gets the good death; the bad life, the bad death.

Regarding three texts concerned with the death and burial of William II, we see a restating and an embellishment of the established image of the monarch. In Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum*, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is Latinised and expanded to include new accusations. In Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, more

⁴⁶⁸ HE V, 292-293: Clerici autem et monachi atque ciues dumtaxat egeni cum uiduis et mendicis obuiam processerunt, et pro reuerentia regiae dignitatis in ueteri monasterio sancti Petri celeriter tumulauerunt. Porro aecclesiastici doctores et prelati sordidam eius uitam et tetrum finem considerantes tunc iudicare ausi sunt et aecclesiastica ueluti biothanatum absolute indignum censuerunt, quem uitales auras carpentem salubriter a nequitiiis castigare nequiuerunt. Translation by Chibnall.

⁴⁶⁹ See Murray, *The Curse on Self-Murder*, 475-476; Evans, *Death of Kings*, 41-42.

⁴⁷⁰ HE V, 292: Signa etiam pro illo in quibusdam aecclesiis non sonuerunt, quae pro infimis pauperibus et mulierculis crebro diutissime pulsata sunt. De ingenti erario ubi plures nummorum acerui de laboribus miserorum congesti sunt elemosinae pro anima cupidi quondam possessoris nullae inopibus erogatae sunt. Stipendarii uero milites et nebulones ac uulgariae scrotae questus suos in occasu moechi principis perdidit, eiusque miserabilem obitum non tam pro pietate quam pro detestabili flagitiorum cupiditate planxerunt, Gualteriumque Tirellum ut pro lapsu sui defensoris membratim discernerent summopere quesierunt.

⁴⁷¹ HE V, 292, 294: Porro ille perpetrato facinore ad pontum propere confugit, pelagoque transitio munitiones quas in Gallia possidebat expetiit, ibique minas et maledictiones maliuolentium tutus irrisit. Hic Adelidem filiam Ricardi de sullimi prosapia Gifardorum coniugem habuit, quae Hugonem de Pice strenuissimum militem marito suo peperit. Denique post multos annos Ierusalem expetiit, et in uia Dei poenitens Gualterius obiit. Mathew Kuefler, ‘Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France’, in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 179-212 (195), notes William II is ‘an excellent if negative example, according to Orderic, of the sodomitical dangers inherent in this unmarried and impious lifestyle’ in a text that is ‘both a conscious dedication to family and lineage and a conscious devotion to ecclesiastical authority’. Kuefler uses Geoffroi, the count of Perche, as Orderic’s ‘model of manhood’; I suggest Tirel could be another exemplary figure.

visions are included (including one attributed to the king himself) along with an account of the monarch's death in the New Forest, a critical depiction of his burial, and an insinuation that the interring of his corpse underneath the main tower of Winchester cathedral caused it to collapse. In Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, visions and a sermon are included along with ironic comments made by the monarch himself to imply the king's death was preordained, and the contrast between his death and burial with the life and death of his accidental murderer, Tirel, is used to stress one's exemplary life in comparison with the other's negative existence. These three authors use these new versions to restate the earlier message: the ignoble death of William II was divine condemnation of his life.

4. 3. The Lasting Effects of a Contemporary Dispute

The texts discussed above, depicting the demise and burial of William II, present him as an enemy of the Church. Other evidence, however, presents a more complex picture. He donated gifts – admittedly originally from Harold Godwinson to Waltham Abbey – to his father's two churches at Caen,⁴⁷² was generous to Battle Abbey,⁴⁷³ and he did something for Durham cathedral to remember his obit.⁴⁷⁴ During his reign, religious houses were founded in Chester and Shrewsbury to assist colonisation of the Welsh.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Barlow, *The Godwins*, 110.

⁴⁷³ Hollister, 'Strange Death', 639; see for example, *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and tr. Searle, 98-99. Brooke, *Churches and Churchmen*, 149 asserts this chronicle was 'notable for the absence of invective against Rufus and his exactions'; *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, 106-107, shows, contrary to the claim, irony in the creator being killed by his creation (the New Forest).

⁴⁷⁴ 'Excerpta ex obituaria ecclesiae Dunelmensis' (Durham B. iv. 24), 135-148 (144), and 'Excerpta ex obituaria minori ecclesiae Dunelmensis' (British Museum Ms. Harl. 1084), 149-152 (151), in *Liber Vitae Ecclesiae Dunelmensis; nec non obituaria duo ejusdem ecclesiae*, ed. J. Stevenson (London: Nichols, 1841). Barlow, *William Rufus*, 431-432, notes this, along with recordings in Normandy establishments, display 'surprisingly careless recordings of such a memorable event', and connects the memorializing of William II to Ranulf Flambard. Such ecclesiastical memorialising is similarly politicized; see for example the absence of William II (but the mention of his brother Henry) in Robert Curthose's 1088 grant to Mont-Saint-Michel, in *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Donington: Tyas, 2006), 147-148; for a reading of this text, see William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose: Duke of Normandy (c. 1050-1134)* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 107.

⁴⁷⁵ Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1998), 189.

William had a relationship with religion,⁴⁷⁶ one that emphasised his legitimacy and authority, and his positions seem to stem from an imitation of Charlemagne's concept of kingship.⁴⁷⁷ His maligned court was similarly not irreligious: some of his loyal servants founded cells in England (rather than in Normandy, the territory of William's brother, Robert),⁴⁷⁸ and, owing to the court infrequently visiting to Gloucester, St. Peter's Abbey received benefactors from the court who had no link to the area,⁴⁷⁹ and one member named his son after St. Edmund.⁴⁸⁰ Some ecclesiastical establishments, therefore, profited from William II and his court.

The anti-clerical William is a construct of a contemporary dispute. His military successes, praised by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,⁴⁸¹ was partly financed by his taxing of the Church and renting out their land. Unfortunately for his reputation, William ruled in an era when the Gregorian reforms aimed to make the church independent of states and international, with the power being centralized in the figure of the Pope. This theological debate shapes the argument of many of the texts. Hugh of Flavigny's *Chronicon*, though in appearance a world chronicle, was a polemic supporting Gregory VII's strictures against the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV,⁴⁸² and, consequently, his

⁴⁷⁶ See the detailed account in Emma Mason, 'William Rufus and the Benedictine Order', *ANS* 21 (1999): 113-144.

⁴⁷⁷ For the connection between William II and Charlemagne in regards to Forest Law, see the chapter 'A New Look at the New Forest' in Wendy Marie Hoofnagle, 'Creating Kings in Post Conquest England: The Fate of Charlemagne in Anglo-Norman Society' (Ph.D. Thesis: Connecticut: University of Connecticut, 2008), 157-217; there may also be a parallel with regards to the image of Charlemagne – contrary to historical evidence – being against the trial by ordeal, and the judgments of William II on the matter.

⁴⁷⁸ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 189.

⁴⁷⁹ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 59.

⁴⁸⁰ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 73. The knight's name was Ivo, see 'De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi' in *Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 96, vol. 1 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890), 26-92 (77-78).

⁴⁸¹ Mason, 'William Rufus', 6-7; see also the employment of classical allusions to Julius Caesar and Roman military terms, discussed by J. O. Prestwich, *The Place of War in English History, 1066-1214* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 88; for Prestwich's own view of William's abilities, see 18-19.

⁴⁸² Patrick Healy, *The Chronicle of Hugh of Flavigny: Reform and the Investiture Contest in the Late Eleventh Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 6, 139.

depiction of English history is shaped by the Gregorian Reform dispute.⁴⁸³ The writings of Eadmer are also adamantly pro-reform, with the history altered to criticise lay investiture⁴⁸⁴ (while suppressing the name of the accidental killer, who was a benefactor of Bec and supportive of Anselm)⁴⁸⁵ As a consequence, William II's negative character traits embody the actions that Anselm wishes to prevent,⁴⁸⁶ and attitudes that would be positive for a king – such as his dealings with Jews,⁴⁸⁷ and his dismissal of trial by ordeal⁴⁸⁸ – are prevented negatively owing to Eadmer's religious adherence using them

⁴⁸³ Hugh's theological stance is apparent when he laments the English clergy obeying papal letters only with royal consent (Hugh, *Chronicon*, 8, 474-475), nor comprehends the bishops who showed almost universal support for William II at the Council of Rockingham (given their social connections to the monarch, Mason, 'William Rufus', 14). Hugh's depiction of William II parallels his depiction of Henry IV: the wild dogs rampant in London (*Chronicon*, 8, 496) in spite of royal decrees trying to control them, are reminiscent of Hugh's description of Henry's excommunicated advisors returning to the king as being akin to a dog returning to its vomit (Heany, *Chronicle of Hugh*, 9; *Chronicon*, 425). Fantastic tales are included immediately after the William II's death – such as the monk who becomes impregnated by another monk, dies because of the growth, and is buried outside of the cemetery (*Chronicon*, 8, 496; appearing soon, 495-496 after the story about the strong wind that damaged a monastery, scaring monks who had been sharing a bed to death), and the royal clerk attempting to serve a pig consecrated to the devil to various people to woo them to worship the devil (*Chronicon*, 8, 496). These themes, homosexuality and opposition to God, became associated with William II.

⁴⁸⁴ Note the opening statement of Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 2, and the assessment in R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 248 that Eadmer 'he distorted the whole picture of Anselm's early years to suggest an awareness of the incompatibility between the political structure of the Church in relation to the king [...] anything in the *Historia Novorum* before 1100 which reports Anselm's consciousness of this theme bears the marks of retrospective assessment'.

⁴⁸⁵ Barlow, *William Rufus*, 421.

⁴⁸⁶ For entries in Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia* regarding blaspheming (30, 39), breaking promises (25, 38), dismissive after Anselm's criticism of young men (48-59), aware of risk of punishment (33).

⁴⁸⁷ Eadmer presents William II as attempting to turn a Christian convert back to Judaism and failing (but still demanding payment from his Jewish father) in Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 100-101. For the role Jews played in the English kingdom, see Robert C. Stacey, 'Jewish Lending and the Medieval English Economy', in *A Commercialising Economy: England 1086 to c. 1300*, ed. Richard H. Britnell and Bruce M. S. Campbell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 78-101, and for a broader context, see Joe Hillaby, 'Jewish Colonisation in the Twelfth Century' in *Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 15-40.

⁴⁸⁸ Following the trial by ordeal determining the innocence of the fifty men (a number Barlow, *William Rufus*, 111, notes is an allusion to the fifty righteous men of Sodom) accused of having killed and eaten the king's deer, William II responds in Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 102: *Igitur cum principi esset relatum, condemnatos illos tertio iudicii die simul omnes inustus manibus apparuisse, stomachatus taliter fertur respondisse, 'Quid est hoc? Deus est justus iudex? Pereat qui deinceps hoc crediderit. Quare, per hoc et hoc, meo iudicio amodo respondebitur, non Dei, quod pro voto cujusque hinc inde plicatur.'* Eadmer not only does not fathom the role of anger in the performance of kingship (discussed in Gerd Althoff, 'Ira Regis: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 59-74), but also, in his attempts to present William II as unbelieving in the role of trial by ordeal,

to present the monarch as acting independently of God.⁴⁸⁹ Though not all were supportive of the reforms – the secular clergyman Huntingdon, who was married and had inherited his ecclesiastical position from his father, unsurprisingly omits any mention of Anselm in the king's death, given that the archbishop would have been opposed to his existence⁴⁹⁰ – the death of the monarch during an unresolved ecclesiastical dispute with his archbishop was widely interpreted as the divine taking sides.

The sudden death of William was also subject to smaller, local concerns that negatively shaped his image. For Eadmer, the 'misleading emphasis'⁴⁹¹ on the binary between Anselm and the monarch was intended to placate the monks at Canterbury. Abandoned by their archbishop's self-imposed exile,⁴⁹² Eadmer attempted to explain the situation by writing Anselm's life to imitate that of his esteemed predecessor of the archbishopric, Dunstan. Consequently, William II was given the critical attributes of Edgar.⁴⁹³ Gilo uses the death of William to articulate to Cluniac values,⁴⁹⁴ while other

omits that the monarch wanted to try the bishop of Le Mans by such a process; see Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 77, 95.

⁴⁸⁹ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 101-102: sed quaeque, acta simul et agenda, suae soli industriae ac fortitudini volebat ascribi. Quae mentis elatio ita excrevit in eo, ut, quemadmodum dicebatur, crederet et publica voce assereret nullum sanctorum cuiquam apud Deum posse prodesse, et ideo nec se velle, nec aliquem sapienter debere, Beatum Petrum, seu quemlibet alium, quo juvaret interpellare[.]

⁴⁹⁰ For Henry and Anselm, see Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 41-47, and Kirsten A. Fenton, 'Writing Masculinity and Religious Identity in Henry of Huntingdon', in *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 64-76.

⁴⁹¹ Southern, *Saint Anselm*, 247.

⁴⁹² For an example of such criticism, see Walter Fröhlich, 'The Letters Omitted from Anselm's Collection of Letters', *ANS* 6 (1984): 52- 71 (70)

⁴⁹³ For Eadmer's writing on Dunstan, see Mark Philpott, 'Eadmer, his Archbishops and the English State', in *The Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell*, ed. J. R. Maddicott and D. M. Palliser (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), 93-107 (96-97). In addition to causing exile of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the kings, Edgar and William II, are also depicted as visiting princesses (who were veiled as nuns) at nunneries; see Mason, 'William Rufus', 7.

⁴⁹⁴ Another death to stress such values is that of Durannas, a bishop punished in the afterlife for his noisy mirth. He is freed from such pains by seven of St. Hugh's men consciously taking part in a week of silence. 'Vie de Saint Hugues par le moine Gilon', 591-592; for a reading of this, see Scott G. Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism: The Cluniac Tradition c. 900-1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50-51.

chroniclers attached the monarch's sudden death to their own disputes regarding properties and politics⁴⁹⁵ – Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* as prime example, using the monarch's behaviour as one of many land disputes to teach a message to a local knight who had been seizing the abbey's property.⁴⁹⁶ It is understandable that the demise of William II could become an *exemplum* for a variety of purposes, from gossip⁴⁹⁷ to moral consideration.⁴⁹⁸

4. 4. A Different Perspective, A Different Death: Gaimar

A different account of the king's death and burial appears in Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, the oldest historiographical work in French that survives. Though the reading of Gaimar that follows is indebted to the reappraisal of his work by John Gillingham,⁴⁹⁹ this study queries Gillingham's presentation of the *Estoire* as having a value system oppositional to the ecclesiastical authors. Gaimar's verse chronicle, written for a female aristocratic patron (with the hope for further commissions),⁵⁰⁰ presents a unique depiction of William II's demise. Though it runs counter to the texts discussed above, Gaimar's vernacular *Estoire* retains the values that are inherent in the depictions of good and bad deaths in the ecclesiastical Latin texts.

⁴⁹⁵ Criticism of the chronicler's own abbot is included in 'Chronicon Monasterii de Hida, juxta Wintoniam', in *Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, ed. Edward Edwards (London: Longman, 1886), 283-321 (302-304). The seizure of abbey lands at Leckhampsted by aristocrats is subtly connected to the death of William II in *The Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis: The History of the Church of Abingdon*, ed. and tr. John Hudson, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 60-62. Similarly, the connecting of William II's death to the New Forest in *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and tr. Searle, 106-107, is connected to disputes with Henry II regarding hunting rights of the abbey, see for the forging of charters Dolly Jørgensen, 'The Roots of the English Royal Forest', *ANS* 32 (2010): 114-128 (124).

⁴⁹⁶ Hayward, 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous', 101.

⁴⁹⁷ Walter Map, *De nugis curialium: Courtier's Trifles*, ed. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 466-467.

⁴⁹⁸ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. and tr. Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 118.

⁴⁹⁹ Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 113-122, 233-258.

⁵⁰⁰ For the influence of the commission on the text, see Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 111-112. For the patron, Constance FitzGilbert, and her patronage, see Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 38-40.

The monarch, his reign, and his kingdom are presented in glowing terms, and a jealous foreign knight, not divine judgment, explains his sudden death. In Gaimar's account of the monarch's death, the kingdom and its ruler are presented in glowing terms, and divine punishment is replaced with a jealous knight. In contrast to the earlier accounts that stress theft and war, Gaimar's *Estoire* stresses the peace and hospitality that the monarch brought to the land.⁵⁰¹ The law is upheld, and the forest, though strictly regulated, abounds with wildlife that all the wealth in Rome could not calculate the numbers.⁵⁰² This playful quip at the expense of the papacy shows Gaimar regarding the reign of William as one of a golden age rather than one fractious with tension with the Church. The monarch too is depicted as happy and fond of hunting, with no insinuation of violence or anger.⁵⁰³ When his death is mentioned, the idea that it was the will of God appears in only a single half-line ('sicom Deu plout') – and this was likely to have been inserted not to stress a moral point, but rather to rhyme with William's own reign ('regnout').⁵⁰⁴ The monarch is shown using displays of wealth, like hunting, to strengthen social ties,⁵⁰⁵ and it is in this feature that Gaimar claims brought about his death. It is not however a judgment on the monarch, but rather Walter Tirel, whom the

⁵⁰¹ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 336: Meis quant il out piece regné / e le païs bien apeisé, / e tel justice e drait teneit / [ke] nulls par tort rein ne perdeit / ne nuls francs hom n'ert esguaré / ne suffratus en son regné, / car par son dreit ordeinement / aveit fait son comandement / ke cil ki franchement tenaient, / si lur ostel ecundissant / a nul franc home ki fust nez, / tut en fussent desheritez, / e li viandes – e les hostels – / fust a francs homes comunels; / tuit le franc home ki eust mester / i eüssent tel recovrer.

⁵⁰² Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 336, 338: De l'altre part aveit asis / ses justisers par son païs; / par ses forestz, ses foresters: / ja n'i entrast chien nē archers, / e si archers i ert entrez, / s'il estait pris, mal ert menez, / e les chens perdeient les piez: / ja n'en fust nul esparniēz, / pur les forestz le rei garder / les fasait l'om espeleter. / Donc vâissez par ces boscages / cerfs, chevriz, daims e porcs salvages, / levres, gupilz e salvagines / ad tel plentē par ces guastines / sol les millers n'acuntast home / pur trestut l'or ki est en Rome.

⁵⁰³ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 338: Li reis amout mult ses deduiz, / ja ne finest ne jur ne nuit. / Tuzjurs ert liez e menout joie, / barbe aveit russe e crine bloie; / pur ço le cunt e di a quei / il out le surnun del Rus Rei.

⁵⁰⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 338: Cest rei gentil par grant baldur / teneit son regne par honur. / El treszime an k'il si regnout / [i]donec avint, sicom Deu plout, / li reis estait alé chascer / vers Brokehe[r]st, e archeier – / ço est en la Nove Forest / un liu ke ad nun Brokehe[r]st.

⁵⁰⁵ For hunting and social bonding, see John Meddings, 'Friendship among the Aristocracy in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS* 22 (2000): 187-204 (200).

monarch is generous towards owing to being a foreigner.⁵⁰⁶ After misreading William's witty responses to his loaded questions concerning his homeland, chooses to slay the monarch.⁵⁰⁷ The criticism is not directed against William II and his court, but rather against a figure unfamiliar with the *habitus* of such a group.

The death and burial are also different in presentation and attitude to the ecclesiastical chroniclers. Gaimar depicts the hunt dramatically rather than with any moral to assert.⁵⁰⁸ As Tirel flees after shooting the fatal arrow, the fallen king cries out to be given the host; though far from a church and a priest, huntsmen hand him grass and flowers to act as communion, and Gaimar asserts judgment 'is in God's hands, and it is right and proper that it should be' while consoling his audience that the monarch had taken consecrated bread the previous Sunday, 'and this should surely stand him in good stead'.⁵⁰⁹ Gillingham notes that Gaimar's insistence that the king begged for

⁵⁰⁶ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 338: Privéement estait alez, / Walter Tirel aveit menez; / Walter esteit un riche hom, / de France ert per del region, / Peiz esteit son, un fort chastel, / assez aveit de son avel. / Al rei estait venu servir / dons e soldees recuillir; / par grant cherté ert recuilli, / assez ert bien del cheri: / pur ço k'estranges hom estait, / le gentil rei le cherissait.

⁵⁰⁷ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 340, 342: Ensemble vont li dui parlant, / de mainte chose esbaneiant / tant ke Walter prist a gaber / [e] par engin al rei parler. / Demandat lui tut en riant / a quei il sujurnout [i]tant: / 'Reis, quant tu es si pöestifs, / a quei n'eschalces tu ton pris? / Ja n'as tu nul vaisin proçain / ki contre tai ost drescer main, / car si sur lui aler voleies, / tuz les alters mener purries. / Tuit sunt ti home, a tei aclin, / Breton, Mansel e Angevin, / e li Flemenc tienent de tei, / cil de Boloigne te unt pur rei: / Eüstace, cil de Boloigne, / Poez bien mener en ta bosoigne; / Alein le Nier, cil de Bretagne, / poez bien mener en ta compaigne. / Tant as aïes e grant genz / mult me merveile ke tant atenz / ke aucune part ne movez guere / e ne conquers fors de ta terre.' / Li reis repont asez brevement: / 'Desci k'al Mans merrai ma gent, / en occident puis m'en irrai, / a Peiters ma feste tendrai / a cest Noël ki ore vendrat; / si jot ant vif, mon siéd serrat.' / 'Ço est fort chose', dist Walter, / 'al Mans aler puis repaier / e Peiters feste tenir. / De male mort puissant morir / li Burgeinon e li Franceis / si ja sugét sunt a Engleis!' / Li reis par gab li aveit dit, / e cil ert fel e mult requit: / en son quer tint la felunie, / purpensat sei de un' estutie: / s[ë] il ja lui veer purreit, / tut autrement le pleit fereit.

⁵⁰⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 342: En la forest estait li reis / en l'esspesse joste un mareis: / talent li prist d'un cerf berser / k'en une herde vit aler. / Dejuste un arbre est descenduz, / il meismes ad son arc tenduz. / Partut descendent li baron, / li alter aceignent d'environ. / Walter Tirel ert descenduz / trop pres del rei juste un sambuz, / après un tremble s'adossat. / Sicum la herde trespassat, / e la grant cerf a mes li vint, / entesat l'arc k'en sa main tint: / une saiete barbelee / ad tret par male destine[e]. / Ja avint si k'al cerf failli, / descil k'al quer le rei ferit; / une saiete el quer li vint, / mes ne savom ki l'arc sustint; / mes ço disaient li altre archer / k[ë] ele eissi de l'arc Walter; / semblant en fu, kar tost fu.

⁵⁰⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 342, 343: Il eschapat; li reis chaï, / par quatre faiz s'est escriez, / le corpus domini ad demandez, / mes il ne fu ki li donast; / loinz de muster ert en un wast. / E nepurgquant un veneür / prist des herbes od tut la flur, / un poi en fist al rei manger, / issi quidat l'acomenger. / En Deu est ço e ester deit: / il aveit pris pain ben[ë]it / le di[e]maigne dedevant: / ço li deit ester bon guarant. Translation by Short.

communion, and possessed ‘good warrant’, makes it clear the author ‘was well aware that many people, ecclesiastics in particular, took a very different view of [the king] Rufus’s fate’.⁵¹⁰ In contrast to the ‘bad’ death in the chronicles, where he dies wordless and unrepentant, Gaimar provides him with words – that may or not allude to the dying protagonist in *La Chanson de Roland*⁵¹¹ – and possible salvation that present his as a ‘good’ end.

His burial is likewise turned ‘good’ by Gaimar. Instead of abandoning the corpse of their slain king to look after their own estates, Gaimar depicts the barons tearing their hair out with grief, lamenting their monarch’s death, until one decides suggests they make the corpse a bier to show their love for their dead king.⁵¹² Though the named characters existed,⁵¹³ the vocabulary employed⁵¹⁴ and the focus on the responses of the minor characters to the main event shows the closeness of the *Estoire* to the style of medieval romance.⁵¹⁵ As such, rather than use the king’s body to express the

⁵¹⁰ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 244. See also Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 211.

⁵¹¹ In Geoffrei Gaimar, *L’Estoire des Engleis*, ed. Alexander Bell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 200, William II cries three times (‘Par treis feiz s’est escriez’) for communion. Hoofnagle, ‘Creating Kings’, 185-186, connects this to the three cries of the dying Roland in *La Chanson de Roland*. Given that Gaimar later mentions three barons, it may be a numerological feature. For such elements, see Jean Flori, ‘Des chroniques aux chansons de geste: l’usage des nombres comme élément de typologie’, *Romania* 117 (1999): 396-422.

⁵¹² Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 344: Ore avint si morz fud li reis. / De ses barons out od li treis / ki descenduz erent od lui: / li fiz Richard erent li dui, / quens Gilebert e dan Roger – / cil furent preisé chevaler – / e Gil[e]bert de l’Egle od els. / Cil detir[er]jent lur chevols / e firent dol a desmesuré; / unc ne fu mes tel demené. / Robert i vint, le fiz Heimun, / riche e gentil, noble baron. / Cist fit tel dol, tant demenat, / e dit sovent: ‘Ki m’oscirat? / Mielz voil morir ke vivre plus!’ / Donc se pasma si chaï jus; / quant il revint, detort ses mains, / tant par devint febles e vains / ke pur un poi ne rechaï. / De tutes parz grant dol oï: / li valletz e li ven[è]or / i ont ploré e fait dolor. / [E] Gil[e]bert de l’Egle dist: / ‘Teisez, seignurs, pur Jesu Crist! / Ceste dolor leissez ester, / n’i ad nient del recouvrer: / mes ke tuzjurs menum tel plur, / jamés n’avrum un tel seignur! / Ki l’ad amé ore i parrat, / de fere bere m’aiderat.’

⁵¹³ Church, ‘Aspects’, 19, notes Gilbert de Laigle was ‘one of the king’s household knights and a man of proven ability’.

⁵¹⁴ Elizabeth Freeman, ‘Geoffrei Gaimar, Vernacular History, and the Assertion of Authority’, *Studies in Philology* 93 (1996): 188-206 (193), asserts the word ‘chevaler’ is connected to the era in which Gaimar wrote, suggesting it therefore shows him placing on the past social qualifications of the 1130s. The term however appears as a noun and an idea in the earlier *La Chanson de Roland*, ed. F. Whitehead (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 136 (glossary) mentions lines 25, 594, 960, 2418, 3074, 3176, 3890.

⁵¹⁵ For the motif of reactions in such literature, see Frank Brandsma, ‘Mirror Characters’, in *Courtly Arts and the Art of Courtliness*, ed. Keith Busby and Christopher Kleinhenz (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), 275-282.

contemptus mundi theme like the ecclesiastical chroniclers, Gaimar displays the baron's building of the bier to confirm social bonds.

The huntsmen and attendants construct a bier and crucifixes (secured with their horses' straps) and arrange flowers and ferns on the bier,⁵¹⁶ while the knights give gifts to the lord (one of which was given the day before to the knight by the king himself).⁵¹⁷ The gift giving, loathed by the ecclesiastical chroniclers, here is used to stress the qualities of the deceased ruler. In a similar manner, the king's corpse is transported not by the peasants of Malmesbury's *Gesta* and Orderic's *Historia*, but by all classes of society, in order.⁵¹⁸ The ecclesiastical service likewise depicts all ranks of society carrying out the rituals to lament the loss of their king.⁵¹⁹ Like the chroniclers framing the facts concerning William II's death and burial to suit their theological views, Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* embellishes the reality to suit its generic requirements.⁵²⁰

Gaimar's positive depiction of the life and demise of William II stands in stark contrast with the negative versions that appear in the chronicles. In contrast to the

⁵¹⁶ Church, 'Aspects', 27-28, notes these were 'presumably' an 'attempt to represent the quatrefoils that would have adorned the feretory on which the dead king might have expected to make his last journey'.

⁵¹⁷ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 344, 346: *Donc veïssez vallez desendre / e ven[ë]jors lur haches prendre / tost furent trenché li fusel / de quai firent li mai[e]nel; / dous blest[e]runs trovent trenches, / mult sunt leger e bien secchez, / ne sunt trop gros, mes longs estaient, / tut a mesure les conreient. / De lur ceintures e de peitrels, / lient estreit les mai[e]nels, / puis firent un lit sur la bere / de beles flurs e de felgere. / Dous palefreis unt amenez / od riches freins, bien enselez, / sur ices dous couchent la bere – / n'ert pas pesante, mes legere – / puis i estendent un mantel / envols de paille tut novel: / le fiz Heimon le defublat, / Robert, ki son seigneur amat. / Sur la bere couchent le rei / ke portouent li palefrei. / Ensepelit fu de un turet / dunt Willam[e] de Munfichet / le jor devant ert abudé; / n'aveit esté k'un jor porté / le mantel gris dunt il l'ostat, / desur la bere estendu l'at.*

⁵¹⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 346: *Donc veïssez barons a pié / aler plurant e desheité – / il ne voleient chevalcher / pur lur seigneur ke ourent si cher – / e li valet après alouent / plurant e mult se dementouent, / li veneür tut ensemment / e disaient: 'Chaitif dolent! / Ke ferums nus? Ke devendrum? / Jamés tel seigneur nen avrom!'*

⁵¹⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 346, 348: *Tresk'a Wincestre n'ont finez, / ilokes unt le rei posez. / Enz el mustur [de] saint Swithun, / la asemberent li baron / od le clergié de la cite / e li evesque e li abbé. / Li bons eveskes Walkelin / gueitat le rei tresk'al matin, / od lui moignes, clers e abbez; / bien fu serviz e purchantez. / L'endemain funt tel departie / tel ne vit [ainz] home de vie, / ne tant messes ne tel servise / n'i ert fet tresk'en Deu juïse / pur un sul rei cum pur li firent. / Tut autrement l'ensepelirent / ke li baron n'avei[e]nt fet / la u Walter out a lui treit. / Ki ço ne creit, alt a Wincestre! / Oïr purra si vair pot estre!*

⁵²⁰ If an audience member followed Gaimar's advice, he or she would learn that Bishop Walchelin died in 1098 and the bishopric was vacant at the time of William II's death (*ASC T*, 234; Hollister, 'Strange Death', 648); see also Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 244.

premonitions, divine judgment, abandoned corpse, and ecclesiastical condemnation, Gaimar presents a loved ruler who, though his reign is cut short by a jealous foreigner, continues to hold together his kingdom through the rituals of his burial. It is clear that the account in the *Estoire* was shaped by generic conventions (needing to entertain rather than lecture)⁵²¹ and the lesser nobility that he was writing⁵²² (noted in the sympathetic depiction of hunting,⁵²³ and in the rejection of *contemptus mundi* in favour of ‘seigneurial consumption’⁵²⁴). Consequently, the text provides ‘a wholly secular and superbly self-possessed celebration of the world’s delights, values, and activities’⁵²⁵ of the aristocratic circles that commissioned and enjoyed the work. The image of the monarch – via his death and burial – is therefore that which was adhered to by the emerging knightly class.

4. 5. Conclusion

William II death in the New Forest occurred during an unresolved dispute concerning the relationship between the monarch and the Church with Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had gone into self-imposed exile. This consequently shaped the understanding of the monarch and his death. The sudden nature of his death was

⁵²¹ Paul Dalton, ‘The Accession of King Henry I, August 1100’, *Viator* 43 (2012): 79-109 (82): ‘Gaimar’s account of Rufus’s death is doubtless also distorted, written as it was partly in order to entertain and to highlight chivalric values and virtues, but devoid of such moral overtones’.

⁵²² The family of the patron is discussed in Ian Short, ‘Gaimar’s Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Liber vetustissimus*’, *Speculum* 69 (1994): 323-343 (336).

⁵²³ Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex*, 111. Note Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and tr. Short, 352, for Gaimar’s account of what he could write about: Ore dit Gaimar k’il tressailli, / mes s’il uncore s’en volt pener, / des plus bels faiz pot vers trover: / ço est d’amur e dosnaier, / del gaber e de boscheier / e dé festes e des noblesces, / des largetes e des richescs / e del barnage k’il mena, / des larges dons k[ë] il dona: / d’ïço devreit hom bien chanter, / nient leissi[e]r ne trespasser. On this episode, see R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 230, ‘It is true that Geoffrey Gaimar tells us that he could say much of the feasts and the jokes and gallantry of his court. But he never did so, and it is hard to see what there was to joke about’, and Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 257-258, who says this is prime example of Gaimar’s irony. Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 257-258.

⁵²⁴ Peter Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 34-35.

⁵²⁵ A. R. Press, ‘The Precocious Courtesy of Geoffrey Gaimar’, in *Court and Poet*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess (Liverpool: Cairns, 1981), 267-276 (268); Press later states the “joy de mon of our first troubadour is here [...] Chrétien de Troyes’ *joie de la cour* is here too,” 273.

explained by the inclusion of premonitions (Peterborough Chronicle), which in turn were used to emphasise the monarch's waywardness when he rejected such portents and refused to change his views and behaviour (*Chronicon*), thereby presenting his sudden death as evidence of divine judgment. This reading of the incident was emphasised by Eadmer in his *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, who also included a variety of visions (such as one mentioned by Gilo of Paris), as further evidence for William II's demise as being a bad end.

Later chroniclers followed this pattern. One omitted aspects to suit his own theological tastes, while adding further accusations against the monarch (Huntingdon), as another provided a detailed account of the king's last moments –including an account of the monarch's own dream – to insinuate a negative reading of the ruler (Malmesbury), and another inserted lengthy visions and sermons along with ironic comments to present the king's death as a negative *exemplum*, while stressing the later good life and death of his accidental murderer Walter Tirel (Orderic).

The survival of Geoffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* provides a strikingly different account of William II's death and burial. In this version, the monarch and his rule is glowingly praised, and the scene of his death provides no condemnation of the monarch other than lamenting his good nature accommodating his jealous murderer. The text uses the burial to stress the social bonds of all classes, reinforced by the rituals during William's burial. This account, showing a different set of responses and values to the other sources discussed, shows that a negative image of William and his death was not universal, and that any demise, even one with all the motifs of condemnation, could be recast as a 'good' end.

5. 'Then this land immediately grew dark'⁵²⁶

Portraying the Close of the Reign of Henry I

The reign of Henry I was one of consolidation. Having been provided with only money on the death of his father, William I, Henry took control of his brother William II's kingdom after his surprise death in the New Forest in 1100, and seized the Duchy of Normandy after defeating his other brother Robert in 1106 at the Battle of Tichebray (and imprisoning him until his death in 1134). He thus amalgamated the territory that was divided on his father's demise. The question of who would succeed, however, remained a difficult question for Henry. The death of his only legitimate son, William Adelin,⁵²⁷ in the White Ship disaster of 1120 saw him put forward his only other legitimate child, Matilda, as his successor,⁵²⁸ urging his barons swear oaths to support her in spite of her gender and her marriage to their notable rival, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou. The couple however sided with a rebellion in Normandy against the monarch, and it was during this dispute that Henry, having crossed the sea to resolve this issue in Normandy, became fatally ill and died. One of the barons who took an oath to Matilda, Stephen of Blois, Henry's nephew, promptly usurped the throne, triggering a lengthy civil war.⁵²⁹

Henry was still ruling when many of the major historical works of the twelfth century were being produced. As a consequence, elements that would have appeared as

⁵²⁶ *ASC T*, 263.

⁵²⁷ As noted in the introduction, depictions of Adelin's death follow a similar pattern to the discussed kings: each account displaying the interests (and prejudices) of the author, his context, and audience; given that Adelin never ruled, this study has not been included. The claim that the wreck was deliberate was put forward by Chandler, 'The Wreck of the White Ship.'

⁵²⁸ For the illegitimate children of Henry see Kathleen Thompson, 'Affairs of State: the Illegitimate Children of Henry I', *JMH* 29 (2003): 129-151. For the possible influence of his father (and his own disputes with brothers), see 139-140.

⁵²⁹ The succession issue and the civil war are deftly considered in Judith A. Green, 'Henry I and the Origins of the Civil War', in *King Stephen's Reign*, ed. Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 11-26 (26).

critical of the monarch – such as his adherence to a swift, violent kind of justice⁵³⁰ – was positively proclaimed as being profitable for the lasting order of his kingdom.⁵³¹ Though he similarly was involved in disputes with Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was able to manipulate the Church for political and financial gain,⁵³² unlike his brother, his reputation was positive, influenced by his patronage of many religious houses.⁵³³

This study notes four different attitudes and intentions in the changing depictions of Henry's death and burial. The first is immediate: responses by those whose religious communities he had supported when alive (Peter the Venerable, Orderic Vitalis). The second is political, influence of the civil war, with the opposing sides using the monarch's death for different purposes (*Historia Novella*, *Gesta Stephani*, the Peterborough Chronicle). The third is the changing view of a single author, influenced by the cruelties of the conflict (Huntingdon). The final section concerns two saints lives that feature Henry's demise, showing the changing symbolic weight of the monarch's death.

5. 1. The Death of the Patron: Peter the Venerable, Orderic Vitalis

Henry was generous in his patronage of religious houses, and this generosity influenced their attitude to the recently deceased king. Analysis of personal correspondence, and, later, a *historia*, shows how the monarch's death was presented and recorded by those he had supported.

⁵³⁰ See two of C. Warren Hollister's articles: 'Royal Acts of Mutilation: The Case against Henry I', *Albion* 10 (1978): 330-340, and 'The Rouen Riot and Conan's Leap', *Peritia* 10 (1996): 341-350.

⁵³¹ Alan Cooper, "'The Feet of Those that Bark Shall be Cut Off': Timorous Historians and the Personality of Henry I', *ANS* 23 (2000): 47-68. For a different reading, see Björn Weiler, 'William of Malmesbury, King Henry I, and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*', *ANS* 31 (2009): 157-176.

⁵³² Hollister, 'William II, Henry I and the Church'.

⁵³³ The extent, and reasoning, of Henry's patronage is discussed in Judith A. Green, 'The Piety and the Patronage of Henry I', *HSJ* 10 (2002): 1-16.

The earliest account of the monarch's death appears in a letter from Peter the Venerable, the Abbot of Cluny.⁵³⁴ It was for Henry's sister, who had retired to Cluny Abbey in 1120,⁵³⁵ Adela of Blois – the mother of Stephen, who would usurp the throne. Peter had met Henry, who had long supported the Cluniacs, in Rouen in 1131.⁵³⁶ After a standard salutation,⁵³⁷ Peter expresses grief and regret at bearing the news of Henry's death.⁵³⁸ After these partly formal courtesies, the abbot informs Adela of the details of Henry's death: the king, confined to bed for eight days near Rouen, had the archbishop of the said city assisting him in sacraments and penitence until he died.⁵³⁹ This is, as noted earlier in this study, a 'good' death that is akin to a monk: aware, penitent, confessing, and accompanied by an ecclesiastical figure to aid with the rites.⁵⁴⁰ The burial though, Peter informs the dead king's sister, is having difficulty. Henry commanded that his body be taken for burial in Reading, an abbey that the king had founded. Normandy however is engulfed in civil war, and news from England has not

⁵³⁴ The original letter no longer exists. The text survives in what the editor, Giles Constable, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), vol. 2, 50, called 'most important surviving manuscript of the works of Peter the Venerable', MS. Douai Bibliothèque municipale, 381, was completed less than ten years after the death of Peter in 1156. Constable, noting the care and quality of the manuscript, has described how it was intended to be the authoritative corpus of Peter the Venerable. The text is therefore likely to be accurate.

⁵³⁵ For a detailed study of Adela, see Kimberly A. LoPrete, *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord (c. 1067-1137)* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); for the letter, see 415-416, 434-435, and 525 n 137.

⁵³⁶ For the meeting of Peter and Henry in Rouen in May 1131, see *Letters of Peter the Venerable*, vol 2. 138-139, 260; for their relationship between Peter the Venerable and Henry I, see Dietrich Lohrmann, 'Pierre le Vénérable et Henri Ier, roi d'Angleterre' in *Pierre Abélard, Pierre Vénérable: les courants philosophiques, littéraires et artistiques en Occident au milieu du XIIe siècle*, ed. René Louis, Jean Jolivet, Jean Châtillon (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 1975), 191-203. For the relation between Cluny and secular rulers, see Giles Constable's preface to *Crux imperatorum philosophia: Imperial Horizons of the Cluniac Confraternitas, 964-1109* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1976), vii-xiv.

⁵³⁷ *Letters of Peter the Venerable*, vol 1, 22: Venerabili et karissimae sorori nostrae dominae Adelaë, frater Petrus humilis Cluniacensium abbas, salutem, et omnem a domino benedictionem.

⁵³⁸ Ibid: Quoniam de obitu super dilecti nostri domini regis Anglorum, nichil adhuc dilectioni uestrae mandauimus, causa haec fuit, quoniam et multos meror quo nondum nos expedire possumus hoc prohibuit, et tantae calamitatis nos primos relatores esse, non immerito piguit.

⁵³⁹ Ibid: Verum quia si quid scimus uos scire placuit, noueritis nichil nos aliud adhuc noscere potuisse, quam per octo dies in quadam uilla iuxta Rothomagum lecto eum decubuisse, dominum Rothomagensem archiepiscopum ei assidue adhesisse. Munitum ab eo omnibus aecclesiasticis sacramentis in optima paenitentia et fideli confessione, iiii nonas decembris de saeculo migrasse. The Latin has been amended, following Constable's apparatus, to follow MS. Douai Bibliothèque municipale, 281.

⁵⁴⁰ Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 30; Binski, *Medieval Death*, 29-33.

been forthcoming;⁵⁴¹ runners, Peter asserts, have been sent to Rouen and Winchester to report information.⁵⁴² The closing statement of the letter well summarises the abbot's attitude toward their deceased patron.

Pro regis defuncti aeterna salute tanta constitutumus, quanta nunquam Cluniaci pro alio constituta sunt. Quid uos pro eo agere debeatis, superfluum est ut nobis uidetur mandare.

For the eternal salvation of the dead King we have arranged services as great as have ever been arranged for anyone at Cluny. I think it unnecessary for me to tell you what you should be doing for him.⁵⁴³

Memories of Henry's patronage spare his soul from oblivion and the torments of the afterlife. The final line, in what seems to be the closest Peter gets in the letter to mentioning the fact that Henry was her relative, is a request for her to continue praying for the soul of the her brother (and patron).

Another sympathetic account of Henry's death appears in the thirteenth book of Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Henry was known to this author, having feasted at Orderic's abbey in Saint-Évroult and given privileges to monks.⁵⁴⁴ The king was therefore a close benefactor, rather than a distant subject for moral exegesis.⁵⁴⁵ His demise is consequently a 'good' one. After preparing his huntsmen for a hunt the next day, Henry becomes critically ill and lies dying.⁵⁴⁶ He confesses his sins to his

⁵⁴¹ *Letters of Peter the Venerable*, vol 1, 22: Corpus eius sicut disposuerat Rothomagum delatum, et inde a Roberto comite filio suo apud Radingas tumulandum, uersus Angliam deportatum est. Normannia tota ciuilibus et externis iam bellis fremit. De statu regni transmarini, nichil adhuc certi audimus. Nam qui nobis haec retulerunt, citissime a Normannia aufugerunt.

⁵⁴² *Ibid*: Misimus tamen iam cursores duos, unum domino Rothomagensi, alium domino Vuintoniensi, qui festinanter quicquid de eis et ab eis cognouerint, nobis in proximo renuntient.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid*. The emendation is slight: 'iiii' replaces 'quarto'. Translation from the third edition of R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen: 1135-1154* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 12-3

⁵⁴⁴ *HE VI*, 180-181.

⁵⁴⁵ For the view that Orderic was favourable to Henry because the monarch was protective – in many ways – of the liturgy, see Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I: theocratic ideology and didactic narrative', in *Contemporary reflections on the medieval Christian tradition: Essays in honor of Ray C. Petry*, ed. George H. Shriver (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974), 119-134.

⁵⁴⁶ *HE VI*, 448: Interea Henricus rex Anglorum vii kalendas Decembris in castrum Leonis uenit, ibique uenatores ut in siluam sequenti die uenatum irent secum constituit. Sed interueniente nocte protinus aegritudinem incurrit, et a feria tertia usque ad dominicam letali morbo laborauit. The passage appears after the sudden illness and surprise recovery of Louis VI.

chaplains, and then summons the Archbishop of Rouen for spiritual counsel.⁵⁴⁷ With the ecclesiastical figure providing advice, Henry revokes certain punishments and orders money to be given to his household and to his soldiers.⁵⁴⁸ This generosity contrasts with Orderic's depiction of his father, who required many pleas before he released some he had imprisoned, and his brother, who left his mercenaries (and prostitutes) bitter with lack of money. With the worldly concerns dealt with, Henry is depicted turning to spiritual matters. He gives instructions concerning where he desired to be buried, implores others to devote themselves to peace and the poor, and then, after confession, penance, and absolution, and receiving anointment with holy oil and being given the Eucharist, he dies.⁵⁴⁹ This is an exemplary deathbed.

Orderic also provides Henry with an exemplary burial. In contrast to the abandoned corpses of William I and William II, Orderic presents the bishops pressing the aristocrats into swearing to escort the body of the deceased monarch to the coast.⁵⁵⁰ The *Historia* makes it clear that the church wishes for Henry's burial to be 'good'. The body is respectfully escorted to the cathedral church, where it is received with ceremony to the tears of 'men and women of every rank and status'.⁵⁵¹ After describing how

⁵⁴⁷ *HE VI*, 448: Interea prius capellanis suis reatus suos confessus est, deinde Hugone archiepiscopo Rotomagensi accersito de spirituali consilio locutus est.

⁵⁴⁸ *HE VI*, 448: Admonitus omnes forisfacturas reis indulsit, exilibus reditum et exhereditatis auitas hereditates annuit. Rodberto autem filio suo de thesauro quem idem seruabat Falesiae, sexaginta milia libras iussit accipere, famulisque suis atque stipendiariis militibus mercedes et donatiua erogare.

⁵⁴⁹ *HE VI*, 448: Corpus uero suum Reddingas deferri precepit, ubi cenobium ducentorum monachorum in honore sanctae et indiuduae Trinitatis condiderat. Denique catholicus rex de seruanda pace et tutela pauperum omnes obsecrauit, et post confessionem poenitentiam et absolutionem a sacerdotibus accepit, oleique sacri unctione delinitus et sancta eucharistia refectus Deo se commendauit, sicque kalendis Decembris dominico incipiente nocte hominem excessit.

⁵⁵⁰ *HE VI*, 448: Affuerunt ibi quinque comites, Rodbertus de Gloucestra, Guillelmus de Guarenna, Rotro de Mauritania, Gualerannus de Mellento et Rodbertus de Legrecestra, aliique proceres et tribuni, nobilesque oppidani, quos omnes coniurauit Hugo archiepiscopus cum Audino Ebroicensi episcopo, ne corpus domini sui relinquerent nisi ex communi consilio, sed omnes illud usque ad mare conducerent honorabili cuneo. Chibnall's translation, *HE VI*, 448, is somewhat erratic in stating the counts were 'made to swear to each other'; *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy by Orderic Vitalis*, tr. Thomas Forester (London: Bohn, 1853-1856), IV, 150 is more accurate.

⁵⁵¹ *HE VI*, 448-451: Igitur feria secunda de castro Leonis Rotomagum Regis soma detulerunt, et uiginti milia hominum ne in funereis ei felicitas exequiis deesset comitati sunt. In metropolitana sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae basilica cum ingenti tripudio susceptum est, et a cunctis ordinibus utriusque sexus multarum copia lacrimarum effusa est. Translation by Chibnall.

Henry's body was embalmed and filled with balsam, and his entrails were buried in Notre-Dame du Pré (a church his mother founded, and he completed),⁵⁵² Orderic depicts – in contrast to the anarchy that followed his father's and brother's death – the knights looking after the peace.⁵⁵³ In all likelihood, those Orderic names were responding in the same manner as their less-praised predecessors, running off to look after their own territories.⁵⁵⁴ The *Historia*, however, deliberately presents them as doing good to honour the king. In a similar manner, the uncertainty that Peter the Venerable recorded concerning the transportation is not mentioned. Orderic makes little of the difficulties transporting the king's cadaver across the channel for its burial at Reading; rather, he stresses the assistance and respect paid to the corpse.⁵⁵⁵ Though the *Historia* goes on to describe the country as being on the brink of civil war, and laments the monarch's death – who Orderic is adamant is with God – in verse,⁵⁵⁶ the chaos the

⁵⁵² *HE* VI, 450: Ibi noctu a perito carnifice in archipresulis conclauis pingue cadauer apertum est, et balsamo suaue olenti conditum est. Intestina uero eius Ermentrudis ad uillam in uase delata sunt; et in aeclesia sanctae Mariae de Prato quam mater eius inchoauerat sed ipse perfecerat reposita sunt.

⁵⁵³ *HE* VI, 450: Deinde prouido consultu sapientum Guillelmo de Guarenna Rotomagus et Caletensis regio commissa est, quae utiliter aliquandiu ab eo protecta est. Guillelmus de Rolmara et Hugo de Gornaco aliique marchisi ad tutandos patriae fines directi sunt.

⁵⁵⁴ The marcher lords look after their own territories, and William of Warenne looks after his inherited lands in upper Normandy; for the latter, see C. Warren Hollister, 'The Taming of a Turbulent Earl: Henry I and William of Warenne', *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 3 (1976): 83-91.

⁵⁵⁵ *HE* VI, 450: Rodbertus uero de Sigillo cum aliis quibusdam clericis et Rodbertus de Ver ac Iohannes Algaso aliique milites de Anglia et satellites ac ministri Regis conglobati sunt, et per Pontem Aldemari atque Bonamuillam feretrum Regis Cadomum perduxerunt, ibique diu fere quattuor ebdomadibus prosperum flamen ad nauigandum prestolati sunt. Interea cadauer Regis in choro sancti prothomartiris Stephani seruatum est, donec post Natale Domini missis illuc monachis impositum nauis et transuictum est, atque a successore regni et episcopis ac principibus terrae in Radingiensi basilica honorifice sepultum est.

⁵⁵⁶ *HE* VI, 450: Ecce ueraciter descripto qualiter obierit gloriosus pater patriae, nunc dactylicis uersibus breuiter pangam contumacis erumnas Normanniae, quas misera mater miserabiliter passa est a uipera sobole. Quae nimirum mox ut rigidi principis cognouit occasum in Aduentus Domini prima ebdomade, in ipsa die ut rapaces lupi ad praedas et nefandas depopulationes cucurrit audissime. For the verse, *HE* VI, 450, 452: Scepstriger inuictus, sapiens dux, inclitus haeros / Qui fouit populos iusto moderamine multos, / Proh dolor occubuit, dolor hinc oritur generalis. / Publica Normannis clades simul instat et Anglis. / Diuitiis et iusticia, sensu, probitate, / Strenuitas eius manifesta refulsit ubique. / Nullus eo melior princeps dominatur in orbe, / Tempore quo nimium scelus in toto furit orbe, / Vt reor e cunctis fuit is melioribus unus, / Hoc attestantur speciales illius actus. / Aeclesiae tutor pacisque serenus amator, / Viuat in aeternum cum Christo rege polorum. Amen.

For a brief discussion of this 'Gebets-Planctus', see Lothar Bornscheuer, *Miseriae Regum: Untersuchungen zum Krisen- und Todesgedanken in den herrschaftstheologischen Vorstellungen der ottonisch-salischen Zeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), 180-181.

followed the king's demise is not seen as judgment on the monarch.⁵⁵⁷ Nothing interrupts or questions Orderic's depiction of Henry as being a good ruler, and this is epitomized by the *Historia*'s account of his 'good' death.

Henry's generous patronage influenced how his death was regarded by those he had supported. The letter Peter the Venerable sent to the dead king's sister, the nun Adela, reveals the gracious attitude Cluny had towards its deceased patron. With Orderic, the difference between his presentation of Henry's death and burial in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and those of his father and his brother. The reason is likely to have been Orderic's role. A recent theory has suggested that Orderic was likely the cantor of Saint-Évroult.⁵⁵⁸ In addition to the obvious influence of this role – the cantor had control over the library and the scriptorium – the cantor was responsible for 'preparing the necrology and notices of deaths'.⁵⁵⁹ If Orderic was the cantor of Saint-Évroult, it would explain why he, like Peter the Venerable, was concerned with how Henry's death could be marked and memorialized, rather than moralized.

5. 2. (Dead) Body Politic: Peterborough Chronicle, *Historia Novella*, *Gesta Stephani*

The civil war that followed influenced the later accounts of Henry's death and burial.⁵⁶⁰

The Peterborough Chronicle errs in its accuracy to present the incident as an ominous

⁵⁵⁷ Orderic's later verse, rather, wishes for another monarch like Edward: *HE VI*, 452: *Principe sublato monachorum supplicat ordo, / Fletibus ad ueniam scelerum flectendo sophyam. / Summe Deus cohibe ne possint seui patrare, / Ceu cupiunt rabidi famulantes pernicipiei. / Ecce furit rabies, uocat et trahit ad scelus omnes, / Comprime ne ualeant actu complere quod optant. / Christe ducem prebe qui pacem iusticiamque / Diligat ac teneat, populumque tuum tibi ducat. / Iusticiae uirga turgentum percute dorsa, / Vt secreta tibi tua plebs posit famulari. Semper amen.*

⁵⁵⁸ Charlie Rozier 'Orderic Vitalis as Cantor of Saint-Evroult', at the *Orderic Vitalis: New Perspectives on the Historian and his World* conference held at Durham University, April 2013, and 'The Cantor-Historians of the Anglo-Norman 12th Century' at the Leeds International Medieval Congress, July 2013, and 'The Importance of Writing Institutional History in the Anglo-Norman Realm, c. 1060-c. 1142, with special reference to Eadmer's *Historia Novorum*, Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de exordio*, and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis' (Ph.D Thesis: Durham: Durham University, 2014).

⁵⁵⁹ Margot E. Fassler, 'The Office of the Cantor in Early Western Monastic Rules and Customaries: A Preliminary Investigation', *Early Music History* 5 (1985): 29-51 (50).

⁵⁶⁰ For the influence of the civil war on hagiographical texts of this period, see Paul Antony Hawyard, 'Geoffrey of Wells's *Liber de infantia sancti Edmundi* and the "Anarchy" of King Stephen's Reign',

sign of future chaos. Other authors took sides in the conflict. William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella* used the monarch's demise to support Matilda's claim to the throne, while the anonymous author of the *Gesta Stephani* used the same event to support Stephen's claim.

The Peterborough Chronicle, written in blocks up to 1154, provides an increasingly bleak image of the kingdom. The events surrounding Henry's death are used to comment on the events that followed. The entry for 1135 begins by recording Henry went across the sea, and 'while he lay asleep on the ship, the day darkened over all the lands, and the sun became as if it were a three-night-old moon – and stars around it at midday'.⁵⁶¹ In truth, the eclipse occurred in 1133. The shortened distance between the astronomical event and the king's death is used to create a striking connection. After noting men's fears that something important would follow the eclipse, Henry dies, and the Chronicler notes 'Then this land immediately grew dark because every man who could immediately robbed another'.⁵⁶² The terse account provides no explanation for the king's departure, nor his death; it only gives an sense of approaching gloom. The literal darkness of the eclipse is presented as an omen of metaphorical darkness.

The monarch's burial provides the Chronicler the chance to deplore what followed Henry's death. After noting the royal cadaver was taken to England and buried at Reading, the text praises Henry, claims 'no man dared do wrong against another', that 'he made peace for man and beast', and that 'no man dared say anything but good

in *St Edmund King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint*, ed. Anthony Bale (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2009), 63-86.

⁵⁶¹ *ASC E*, 133: M.cxxxv. On þis gaere for se king Henri ouer sae aet te Lammasse; ⁊ ðat oþer dei þa he lai an slep in scip, þa þestrede þe daei ouer al landes, ⁊ uuard þe sunne suilc als it uuare thre niht ald mone, an sterres abuten him at middaei. Translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 263.

⁵⁶² *ASC E*, 133: Wurþ/en men suiðe ofuundred ⁊ ofdred, ⁊ saeden ðat micel þing sculde cumen herefter; sua dide, for þat ilc gaer warth þe king ded ðat oþer daei efter Sancte Andreas massedaei on Normandi. Ða þestre sona þas landes, for aeuric man sone raeuede oþer þe mihte. Translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 263

to whoever carried their load of gold and silver'.⁵⁶³ This *topoi* of praise for rulers – discussed in the chapter on William I – here is presented as a sly dig at the usurper Stephen.⁵⁶⁴ In the later entry for 1137, in which the chronicler laments that the saints appear to be sleeping as atrocities happen, the text begins by noting Stephen went to Normandy with Henry's treasury 'but he distributed it and scattered it stupidly', so 'no good was done for his [Henry's] soul'.⁵⁶⁵ The standard distribution of alms, expected at the death of a monarch, is here presented as being squandered the successor.

William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella* also manipulates details concerning Henry's death and burial for effect. Malmesbury claims that the Henry departed for Normandy on the fifth of August, the anniversary of his coronation, and presents this as an ominous sign that Henry 'should go on board, never to return alive, on the day when he had been crowned in the distant past to reign so long and so happily'.⁵⁶⁶ This is followed by a portentous eclipse and earthquake.⁵⁶⁷ Malmesbury, however, has smudged the dates⁵⁶⁸ to create ominous signs, and, by presenting Henry as being in

⁵⁶³ *ASC E*, 134: Ða namen his sune 7 his frend 7 brohten his lic to Engleland 7 bebiriend in Redinge. God man he wes, 7 micel aeiwe of him: durste nan man misdōn wið oðer on his time; pais he makede men 7 daer; wua sua bare his byrthen gold 7 sylure, durste nan man sei to him naht but god. Translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 263.

⁵⁶⁴ This follows the reading of Timothy Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Janet L. Nelson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 42-43.

⁵⁶⁵ *ASC E*, 133: M.cxxxvii/. Ðis gaere for þe \king/ Stephne ofer sae to Normandi 7 there wes underfangen, forþi ðat hi uuenden ðat he sculde ben alsuic alse the eom wes, 7 for he hadde get his tresor, ac he todeld it 7 scatered soflice. Micel hadde Henri king gadered gold 7 syluer, 7 na god ne dide me for his saule tharof. Translation by Swanton, *ASC T*, 263.

⁵⁶⁶ *HN*, 22-23: Anno tricesimo secundo regni pridie transacto, Henricus nonis Augusti, quo die quondam apud Westmonasterium coronae culmen acceperat, Normanniam nauigauit. Vltimus ille fatalisque regi transitus fuit. Mira tunc prorsus prouidentia Deitatis rebus allusit humanis, ut eo die nauem ascenderet, numquam uiuus reuersurus, quo dudum coronatus fuerat tam diu et tam feliciter regnaturus. Translation by Potter.

⁵⁶⁷ *HN*, 22: Erant tunc ut dixi nonae Augusti et feria quarta. Prosecuta sunt elementa dolore suo extremum tanti principis transitum. Nam et sol ipsa die hora sexta tetra ferrugine, ut poetae solent dicere, nitidum caput obtexit, mentes hominum eclipsi sua concutiens; et feria sexta proxima primo mane tantus terrae motus fuit ut penitus subsidere uideretur, horrifico sono sub terriis ante audito. Vidi ego et in eclipsi stellae circa solem, et in terrae motu parietem domus in qua sedebam bifario impetu eleuatum tertio resedissee.

⁵⁶⁸ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, vol. 3, *The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucestershire Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. and tr. P. McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 208: Anno .xxxiiii. ex quo rex Anglorum Henricus regnare cepit, feria .iiii., die etiam ipso secundum anni reuolutionem quo frater et predecessor illius, Willelmus, scilicet Rufus rex, interfectus est et ipse Henricus primo regni sui suscepit gubernacula, tale constat contigisse spectaculum. For calendars seen

Normandy for three years, he removes the reason for the king's travels (which he deliberately passes over).⁵⁶⁹

When presenting the monarch's deathbed, Malmesbury is similarly selective with the facts. Henry's death is depicted as exemplary.⁵⁷⁰ Though the *Historia Novella* asserts the monarch took ill while hunting,⁵⁷¹ the rest is similar to Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Hugh, the archbishop of Rouen, is summoned, as is his son, Robert, Earl of Gloucester (whom the text praises).⁵⁷² Here, Malmesbury is being selective. Robert had previously been presented in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* as an exemplary figure, in part owing to being a patron of the chronicler.⁵⁷³ The praise is slyly included here, for Robert had sided, contrary to Henry's deathbed wish for Matilda to receive the kingdom,⁵⁷⁴ with Stephen against Matilda, before changing sides.⁵⁷⁵ Malmesbury,

and written by Malmesbury, see W. H. Stevenson, 'A Contemporary Description of the Domesday Survey', *EHR* 22 (1907): 72-84 (81); the hand is identified as Malmesbury's in Neil R. Ker, 'William of Malmesbury's Handwriting', *EHR* 59 (1944): 371-376 (375).

⁵⁶⁹ *HN*, 22: Fuit ergo rex in Normannia triennio continuo, et tanto plus quantum est inter nonas Augusti, quo die, ut dictum est, mare transiuit, et kalendas Decembris, qua nocte decessit. Nec uero dubitandum, multa eum quae non immerito scribi deberent, in Normannia gessisse; sed consilium fuit preterire quae ad nostram notitiam non integer peruenere. Opiniones reditus eius in Angliam multae, siue fato quodam siue diuina uoluntate omnes frustratae.

⁵⁷⁰ Judith A. Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of York* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 220: 'is clearly an account of a "good death", with no references to any unpleasant physical symptoms'.

⁵⁷¹ *HN*, 22, 24: Regnauit ergo annis triginta quinque, et a nonis Augusti usque ad kalendas Decembris, id est, mensibus quattuor, diebus quattuor minus, apud Leonas exercitio uenationis intentus, ualitudine aduersa correptus decubuit.

⁵⁷² *HN*, 24: Qua in deterius crescente, euocauit ad se Hugonem, quem primo ex priore de Lewis abbatem apud Radinges, mox Rotomagensem archiepiscopum, fecerat, merito sibi et heredibus suis pro tantis beneficiis obnoxium. Optimates rumor egritudinis celeriter contraxit. Affuit et Rotbertus filius eius, comes Gloecestriae, qui, pro integritate fidei et uirtutis eminentia, uicturam in omne seculum memoriam sui nominatim promeruit.

⁵⁷³ *GRA*, 798-801; see also Hayward, 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous', 92.

⁵⁷⁴ *HN*, 24: A quibus de successore interrogatus, filiae omnem terram suam citra et ultra mare legitima et perhenni successione adiudicauit, marito eius subiratus, quod eum et minis et iniuriis aliquantis irritauerat. Septimo incommodi die transacto, nocte iam intempesta naturae cessit.

⁵⁷⁵ For the debate concerning William's presentation of Robert of Gloucester, see Robert B. Patterson's two articles 'William of Malmesbury's Robert of Gloucester: A Re-evaluation of the *Historia Novella*', *American Historical Review* 70 (1965): 983-997, and 'Stephen's Shaftesbury Charter: Another Case against William of Malmesbury', *Speculum* 43 (1968): 487-492, Joe W. Leedom, 'William of Malmesbury and Robert of Gloucester Reconsidered', *Albion* 6 (1974): 251-265, David Crouch, 'Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and the Daughter of Zelophehad', *JMH* 11 (1985): 227-243. For Malmesbury's manipulation of laws of war to present his patron in a better light, see Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 39-41.

however, deliberately focuses on the dying monarch. Though he claims he will refrain from discussing his character because he has written about it elsewhere,⁵⁷⁶ he proceeds to show how Henry died in a Christian manner by inserting a letter from the archbishop of Rouen to Pope Innocent II.⁵⁷⁷ Given Henry's support to both the archbishop, whom he previously given a rank for in two of English ecclesiastical establishments he patronised,⁵⁷⁸ and has sided with Innocent during a dispute,⁵⁷⁹ the letter is understandably sympathetic in its account. After a greeting and exposition,⁵⁸⁰ the letter describes the ritualized manner of Henry's death: renunciation of sin and the receipt of absolution.⁵⁸¹ It is, as a modern scholar has said, 'a model Christian death'.⁵⁸² After displaying adoration, debts are paid and alms are distributed in the manner standard to a monarch's demise,⁵⁸³ and the king dies at peace; the text however, like the Peterborough Chronicle above, uses this detail to criticise his successors, by noting the wealth was not distributed.⁵⁸⁴ By including this letter, and providing a statement

⁵⁷⁶ *HN*, 24: Cuius magnanimos mores hic dicere supersedeo, quia in quinto libro regalium gestorum plenissime illos contextui.

⁵⁷⁷ *HN*, 24: Quam Christiane obierit, haec subsequens epistola supradicti Rotomagensis archiepiscopi docebit. The letter also appears amongst other papal correspondence in Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 137; see R. M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College Oxford* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011), 68-69.

⁵⁷⁸ At Lewes and Reading, see *HN*, 24 (footnote 572). At the request of the monarch to revive it, Hugh, despite possible doctrinal misgivings, was a supporter of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Ryan P. Freeburn, *Hugh of Amiens and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 74-75.

⁵⁷⁹ Henry recognized Innocent as pope at the Council of Reims in 1131, siding against the powerful antipope Anacletus II. Freeburn, *Hugh of Amiens*, 207.

⁵⁸⁰ *HN*, 24: De domino meo rege non sine dolore memorando, pie paternitati uestre notificandum duximus, qui subita preuentus egritudine, nos missis quam citissime legatis suis, egritudinis suae solatiis uoluit interesse.

⁵⁸¹ *HN*, 24: Venimus ad ipsum, et cum ipso plenum meroribus confecimus triduum. Prout ei dicebamus ipse ore proprio sua fatebatur peccata, et manu propria pectus suum percutiebat, et malam uoluntatem dimittebat. Consilio Dei et nostro et episcoporum emendationem uitae suae obseruaturum sese promittebat. Sub ista promissione, eo firmiter annuente, pro nostro eum officio tertio et per triduum absoluimus.

⁵⁸² Edmund King, *King Stephen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 42.

⁵⁸³ Green, *Henry I*, 220.

⁵⁸⁴ *HN*, 24, 26: Crucem Domini adorauit; corpus et sanguinem Domini deuote suscepit. Elemosinam suam disposuit ita dicendo: "Soluantur debita mea, reddantur liberationes et solidatae quibus debeo. Reliqua indigentibus distribuuntur." Vtinam sic fecissent qui thesauros eius tenebant et tenent! Tandem illi auctoritatem de unctione infirmorum, quam aeclesia a beato Iacobo apostolo suscepit, studiose proposuimus, et ipsius pia petitione oleo sancto eum inunximus. Sic in pace quieuit. Pacem det ei Deus, quia pacem dilexit.

verifying its contents,⁵⁸⁵ Malmesbury presents Henry's demise as a 'good' death. In doing this, Malmesbury is able to assert both the legitimacy of Matilda, and present his patron in a flattering light.

Henry's funeral is also depicted respectfully. In contrast to the dead king's predecessors in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, the monarch's cadaver is respectfully escorted to Rouen.⁵⁸⁶ The corpse is disemboweled in the cathedral, 'lest it should rot with lapse of time and offend the nostrils of those who sat or stood by it',⁵⁸⁷ and the innards, as also noted by Orderic, were interred with in a church the king supported that was founded by his mother.⁵⁸⁸ This burying of entrails in one location and the corpse in another was a tradition among other ruling families.⁵⁸⁹ Ecclesiastical authors could easily present the monarch's death, far from where he wished to die, and the preparation and transportation of his corpse, as divine criticism of the ruler.⁵⁹⁰ As with Orderic's account, Malmesbury's depiction contains no criticism; it uses the situation to stress the dead king's generosity. Likewise, though the difficult weather prevents the body being escorted,⁵⁹¹ no divine judgment is inserted. When the transportation and the burial are possible, no interruptions are noted; the only connections made are to the deceased's

⁵⁸⁵ *HN*, 26: Haec prefatus Rotomagensis archiepiscopus de fide regis Henrici morientis uere contestatus est.

⁵⁸⁶ *HN*, 26: Funus regaliter curatum, proceribus uicissim portantibus Rotomagum usque delatum est.

⁵⁸⁷ *HN*, 26-27: Illic in quodam recessu aeclesiae maioris exinteratum est, ne diurnitate corruptum nares assidentium uel astantium exacerbaret. Translation by Potter.

⁵⁸⁸ *HN*, 26: Reliquiae interaneorum in cenobio sanctae Mariae de Pratis iuxta urbem humate; quod ipse, ut audio, a matre sua inchoatum, non paucis compendiis honorauerat.

⁵⁸⁹ Salian monarchs had their corpses buried at Speyer, and their entrails buried in important churches that were close to where they died. For the example Emperor Henry III, in Estella Weiss-Krejci, 'Heart Burial in Medieval and Post-Medieval Central Europe', in *Body Parts and Bodies Whole*, ed. Katherina Rebay-Salisbury, Marie Louise Stig Sorensen and Jessica Hughes (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 119-134 (122).

⁵⁹⁰ Janet L. Nelson, 'La mort de Charles le Chauve', *Médiévales* 31 (1996): 53-66 (62-66) discusses the allusions of Antiochos, who died a horrible death in the mountains, in the accounts of Charles the Bald who died while crossing the Alps, with the sole nuance being 'La putréfaction du corps d' Antiochos précéda sa mort, tandis que celle du corps de Charles la suivit'.

⁵⁹¹ *HN*, 26: Corpus Cadomi seruatum, quousque serenas auras paulo clementior hiemps inueheret, quae tum aspera inhorrebat.

patronage.⁵⁹² This, likewise, is used by Malmesbury to make a political point against Henry's successor Stephen, who did not distribute the alms that Henry had arranged.

A different presentation of Henry's death occurs in the *Gesta Stephani*. As the editorial title provided by its earlier editor Duchesne implies, it concerns the deeds of the other side of the civil war: Stephen, King of England and Duke of Normandy. In order to praise the usurpation, the *Gesta* omits any mention of the monarch's deathbed and plans for succession and focuses instead on how 'the grievous calamity' of his death 'made the entire aspect of the kingdom troubled and utterly disordered'.⁵⁹³ The kingdom that was once a place of peace of order was suddenly transformed into 'a home of perversity, a haunt of strife, a trainting-ground of disorder, and a teacher of every kind of rebellion'.⁵⁹⁴ The homiletic contrasts between the golden age of Henry's reign and the present day are made apparent by the litany of crimes the author depicts.⁵⁹⁵ One complaint concerns the forests. Unlike 'The Rime of King William', that had complained about the severity of the deceased monarch, the author of the *Gesta Stephani* complains, in a sermon-like tone that includes quotations from the prophet

⁵⁹² *HN*, 30: Anno Dominicæ incarnationionis millesimo centesimo tricesimo sexto, regis Henrici corpus, lenibus flabris spirantibus, statim post Natale Domini impositum nauî Angliam deuectum est; et apud Radingense cenobium, quod foris prediorum magnitudine et intus religiosorum monachorum ordine decorauerat, presente regni successore, humatum est.

⁵⁹³ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. K. R. Potter, introduction and notes by R. H. C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 2-3: Cum rex Henricus, pax patriæ gentisque suæ pater, ad extrema deueniens morti debitum exsoluisset, luctuosum infortunium uniuersam regionis faciem turbidam reddidit et omnino confusam. See Björn Weiler, 'Kingship, Usurpation and Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Europe: the Case of Stephen', *ANS* 22 (2001): 299- 326 (315-316).

⁵⁹⁴ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. Potter, 2-3: Vbi namque, eo regnante, iudicii caput, iuris inerat domicilium; ibi, eodem ruente, iniquitatis copia, totiusque malitiæ succreuit seminarium. Angliæ siquidem, iustitiæ prius sedes, pacis habitaculum, pietatis apex, religionis speculum, peruersitatis postea locus, dissensionis recessus, inquietudinis disciplina, omnisque rebellii effecta est magistra.

⁵⁹⁵ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. Potter, 2: Rupta protinus in populo ueneranda sanctæ amicitiae foedera; dissoluta mutuae cognationis coniunctissima uincula; quosque diutinae tranquillitatis uestierat toga, illos bellicus stridor, Mauorcus furor inuasit. Nouo enim quisque saeuiendi raptus amore, in alterum crudele debacchari, tantoque sese gloriosiore aestimare, quanto in innocentes nocentius insurgebat. Legis quoque institutis, quibus indisciplinatus coeretur populis, ex toto neglectis, immo et adnullatis, ad omne illicitum effrenati, quicquid flagitii mente occurrebat, promptissime peragebant. Vt enim uerbis propheticis utar, 'a planta pedis usque ad uerticem non erat in eis sanitas', quia a minimis usque ad summos animæ morbo aegrescentes uel raptum committebant, uel raptui aliis assentiendo parebant.

Isaiah, that the lack of order is resulting in the disappearance of animals.⁵⁹⁶ The interregnum is depicted as bringing chaos to the land.⁵⁹⁷ Into this disorder steps Stephen, presented as being ‘favourably received by all’ when he appears in London, asserting that ‘he would gird himself with all his might to pacify the kingdom for the benefit of them all’.⁵⁹⁸ The contrast between the chaos brought by Henry’s reign and the start of Stephen’s is deliberate. A later manuscript of the *Gesta Stephani* re-emphasises this point by depicting the death of Stephen resulting in Henry II succeeding to power without any disputes,⁵⁹⁹ justifying the usurper’s actions.

These three sources depict the death of Henry in a manner that suits their assessment of the chaotic civil war that followed. The Peterborough Chronicle presented the monarch’s demise as bringing metaphorical darkness that had been warned of in ominous eclipse, and used the account of the king’s burial to criticise his successors by recording that the treasure intended to be alms had not been distributed. Malmesbury’s *Historia Novella*, after depicting the problems as divinely ordered (through smudging the dates), presents the monarch’s death and burial as a ‘good’ death

⁵⁹⁶ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. Potter, 2, 4: Ferae quoque, quae in tota prius regione, tanquam in indagine reclusae, cum summa pace reseruabantur, nunc quaquaversum turbari, a quolibet passim dispergi, ab omnibus, abiecto metu prosterni. Et haec quidem minor, nec multum conquerenda iactura, sed admodum tamen stupenda, quomodo tanta ferarum milia, quae antea copioso grege uniuersam terram affluenter inundarant tam repente fuerint adnullata, ut de tam innumero examine uix duas postmodum simul reperires. Vbi tandem coepit grandis haec et indicibilis copia adeo extenuari, ut ‘rarissima’, ut aiunt, ‘auis’ esset uel unam ubiuis locorum feram conspicari, in seipos truculenter conuersi alios spoliare; res possessas sibi uicissim diripere; insidias et necem alterutrim moliri; utque per prophetam dicitur, ‘uir immisericorditer in uirum, unusquisque irruere in proximum suum.’

⁵⁹⁷ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. Potter, 4: Quicquid enim sceleris ira urgente sub pace dictabatur, nunc, uindictae arrepto tempore, ad effectum quamceleriter deducebatur: quia odiosa similtas sese publice retegens, quicquid occulte secum palliarat in lucem nunc proferens aperte declarabat.

⁵⁹⁸ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. Potter, 6-7: His igitur auditis, et ab omnibus gratiose, nulloque aperte contradicente, receptis, de regno eum suscipiendo in commune consultum consciuere, regemque, omnium ad hoc concordante fauore, constituere; firmata prius utrimque pactione, peractoque, ut uulgius asserebat, mutuo iuramento, ut eum ciues quoad uiueret opibus sustentarent, uiribus tutarentur; ipse autem ad regnum pacificandum ad omnium eorumdem suffragium toto sese conatu accingeret. Translation by Potter.

⁵⁹⁹ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and tr. Potter, 240: Sed post aliquantulum tempus felicius et gloriosius Angliam remeauit; quoniam, postquam rex Angliam pacificauit totumque regnum in manu habuit, leui febricula tactus ex hac uita discessit, et dux cum gloria Angliam remeans, ad regni apicem cum summo honore, cum fauore omnium sibi diadema imposuit.

not only to praise the dead ruler, but also imply his praised patron followed the wishes of Henry and to denigrate the action of Stephen. In the *Gesta Stephani*, the chaos following Henry's death is stressed to justify Stephen's usurpation. Though Henry was repeatedly presented as a good ruler, the details of his death and burial depended upon the political interpretation the author held in regards to the civil war that followed.

5. 3. Moralising the Monarch: Huntingdon's Dead Henries

Politics and their influence aside, the earlier form of judging the ruler negatively by depicting his death as bad and his burial as problematic persisted.⁶⁰⁰ Two accounts of King Henry's demise appear in Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. The first discusses the monarch's death, the second his burial. These two accounts will be examined separately.

Huntingdon's first depiction of Henry's death appears at the close of book seven of his *Historia*. Huntingdon notes that the monarch had intended to return to England, but had to remain in Normandy owing to disputes with his son-in-law Geoffrey (caused, Huntingdon claims, by Matilda).⁶⁰¹ Recording that the king's mood was effected by this situation, Huntingdon notes that the disputes 'were said by some to have been the origin of the chill in his bowels and later the cause of his death'.⁶⁰² The *Historia* presents Henry as being responsible for his own demise. Having returned from hunting, and against earlier advice not to consume such a dish, 'he ate the flesh of lampreys, which always made him ill, though he always loved them'.⁶⁰³ This causes a humour, which

⁶⁰⁰ For other accounts, including later versions, of Henry's death, see Lohrmann, 'Der Tod König Heinrichs'.

⁶⁰¹ *HA*, 490: Anno trigesimo quinto, rex Henricus moratus est in Normannia. Et sepe non rediturus in Angliam redire proponebat, sed detinebat eum filia eius discordiis uariis, que oriebantur pluribus causis inter regem et consulem Andegauensem, artibus scilicet filie sue.

⁶⁰² *HA*, 490-491: Quibus stimulationibus rex in iram et animi rancorem excitatus est, que a nonnullis causa naturalis reffrigidationis, et postea mortis eius causa, fuisse dicte sunt. Translation by Greenway.

⁶⁰³ *HA*, 490-491: Cum igitur rex a uenatu redisset, apud Sanctum Dionisium in silua Leonum, comedit carnes murenarum, que semper ei nocebant, et semper eas amabat. Cum autem medicus hoc comedi prohiberet, non adqueiuit rex salubri consilio. Secundum quod dicitur, 'Nititur inuetitum semper cupimusque negata.' Translation by Greenway.

chills the monarch's body, which causes a convulsion.⁶⁰⁴ The choice of lampreys is deliberate. According to Gerald of Wales, it was a dish regarded as a luxury for the rich.⁶⁰⁵ Though in the prolonged focus on the king's ailments shows Huntingdon's interest in medicine⁶⁰⁶ – likewise apparent in his recently rediscovered verse herbal *Anglicanus ortus*⁶⁰⁷ – the lampreys indicates Huntingdon's attachment to history as a compendium of moral lessons. This is repeated in the poem that follows. After 'imploing the muse to grant him a memorial, if he has deserved it', Huntingdon proceeds to compare the dead king positively in a hyperbolic manner to classical divinities.⁶⁰⁸ The apparent absurdity of this text can be explained by what is not present in the poem.⁶⁰⁹ Unlike the verse obituaries that Huntingdon provided for other monarchs, such as Alfred, described as an everlasting scepter for Christ,⁶¹⁰ and Edgar, said to know how to seek the true kingdom from the fleeting earthly variant,⁶¹¹ Henry's sceptre is described as being in darkness. Huntingdon includes no Christian context the recently deceased, slyly presenting the monarch as damned. The moral insertion of lampreys into the narrative, and the removal of Christian imagery, shows Huntingdon's *Historia* continuing the use of judging the monarch by his death.

⁶⁰⁴ *HA*, 490: Hec igitur comestio pessimi humoris illatrix, et consimilium uehemens excitatrix, senile corpus letaliter refrigidans, subitam et summam fecit perturbationem.

⁶⁰⁵ Gerald of Wales, *The First Version of the Topography of Ireland*, tr. John J. O'Meara (Dundalk, 1951), 18.

⁶⁰⁶ *HA*, 490: Contra quod natura renitens excitauit febrem acutam, ad impetum dissoluendum materiei grauissime. Cum autem restare ui nulla posset, decessit rex magnus, cum regnasset triginta quinque annis et tribus mensibus, in prima die Decembris.

⁶⁰⁷ Henry of Huntingdon, *Anglicanus ortus: a verse herbal of the twelfth century*, ed. and tr. Winston E. Black (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2012).

⁶⁰⁸ *HA*, 490-492: Et iam in tanti fine Regis, finem libro dicabimus. Cui tamen, si meruit, musam memoriare dare conprecemur: Rex Henricus obit, decus olim, nunc dolor orbis. / Numina flent numen deperiisse suum. / Mercurius minor eloquio, ui mentis Apollo, / Iupiter imperio, Marsque uigore gemunt. / Ianus cautela minor, Alcides probitate, / Conflictu Pallas, arte Minerua gemunt. / Anglia que cunis, que sceptro numinis huius. / Ardua splenderat, iam tenebrosa ruit. / Hec cum rege suo, Normannia cum duce marcet. / Nutriit hec puerum, perdidit illa uirum. Translation by Greenway.

⁶⁰⁹ This reading follows Cooper, 'The Feet of Those that Bark Shall be Cut Off', 49.

⁶¹⁰ *HA*, 296-299.

⁶¹¹ *HA*, 322-323.

The second account, depicting the monarch's burial, appears in the tenth book of the *Historia*. It begins with a discussion of the monarch's reign. Echoing earlier praise of the monarch, written when the king was still alive,⁶¹² Huntingdon records the 'frank opinions of the people' that appeared after the king's death that praised three values: wisdom, military victories, and wealth. Given that the latter is provided with the statement 'in which he had far and away surpassed all his predecessors', irony is apparent.⁶¹³ In the early versions of the tenth book, direct criticism appears when Huntingdon lists three vices (with examples of each) commonly attached to the dead monarch: greed, cruelty, and debauchery.⁶¹⁴ Though Huntingdon notes such tales were embellished by the *vulgus* (common people), the crimes are given more attention, and more specific examples, than the praises. Though in a later revision of the *Historia* Huntingdon omits this passage and inserts an explanation of the monarch's methods, claiming that 'different people expressed different views',⁶¹⁵ clear criticism of the monarch still remained unaltered in the *Historia*'s depiction of the monarch's burial.

⁶¹² See *HA*, 454, 456.

⁶¹³ *HA*, 698-699: Defuncto igitur Henrico rege magno, libera ut in mortuo solent iudicia populi depromebantur. Alii eum tribus uehementer irradiasse splendoribus asserebant. Sapientia summa. Nam et consilio profundissimus et prouidentia conspicuus et eloquentia clarus habebatur. Victoria etiam. Quia exceptis aliis que egregie gesserat, regem Francorum lege belli superauerat. Dicuiciis quoque. Quibus omnes antecessors suos longe longeque precesserat. Translation by Greenway, who notes there is 'perhaps an implied criticism here' owing to its echo of Isaiah 29:15 'Vae qui profundi estis corde, ut a Domino abscondatis consilium'.

⁶¹⁴ *HA*, 698, 700: Alii autem diuerso studio tribus illum uiciis inficiebant. Cupiditate nimia qua – ut omnes parentes sui – pauperes opulentus tribus et exactionibus inhians, delatoriis hamis intercipiebat. Crudelitate etiam, qua consulem de Moretoil cognatum suum in captione positum exoculauit. Nec sciri facinus tam horrendum potuit, usque quo mors secreta Regis aperuit. Nec minus et alia proponebant exempla que tacemus. Luxuria quoque, quia mulierum dicioni Regis more Salomonis continue subiacebat. Talia uulgus liberum diuersificabat. Huntingdon is the sole source that asserts William of Mortain was blinded. For William's relationship with Henry, see Kerrith Davies, 'The Count of the Côtentin: Western Normandy, William of Mortain, and the Career of Henry I', *HSJ* 22 (2012): 123-140.

⁶¹⁵ *HA*, 698-701: Alii autem diuerso studio, quibus erat mens humili lesisse ueneno, summa nimia cupiditate repletum asserebant, qua populum tributis et exactionibus inhians, delatoriis hamis intercipiebat. Sed hec affirmantes non attendebant quod licet summe probitatis esset, unde timori omnibus circumhabitantibus erat, tamen ipsa thesauri maximi copia timorem ipsius non mediocriter hostibus augebat. Terrasque suas, mari intercalatas, summa pace et felicitate regebat, et quot habitacula inerrant, tot inerrant castella. Sic diuersi diuersa sentiebant. Translation by Greenway, who suggests this revised version 'was presumably composed after c. 1153, when it was clear that Henry II was going to succeed Stephen', and noted that the length is the same as the replaced passage, suggesting 'that in his autograph copy Henry [of Huntingdon] made an erasure and wrote over it'.

After a brief account of the civil war, in which ‘what Henry had done – in the manner of a tyrant or a king – seemed, by comparison with worse, to be the summit of excellence’,⁶¹⁶ Huntingdon returns to the monarch’s cadaver.⁶¹⁷ The text records that after being escorted to Rouen, the monarch’s ‘entrails, brains, and eyes were buried together’.⁶¹⁸ Unlike Orderic and Malmesbury, no mention is made of his mother’s church that he had supported. Also different is the treatment of the body. Where Orderic mentions fragrant balsam, and Malmesbury mentions a desire to avoid unpleasant smells, Huntingdon stresses the putrid details. The rest of the monarch’s cadaver is cut, covered in salt, and wrapped in ox hide in an attempt to stop ‘the strong persuasive stench, which was already causing the deaths of those who watched over it’.⁶¹⁹ Unlike the purity of a saint’s corpse, whose holiness can heal, Henry’s foul remains cause illness and death. In spite of wrapping linen around his head, the man ‘hired for a great fee to cut off the head with an axe and extract the stinking brain’ was badly rewarded, for, as Huntingdon tartly quips, ‘He was the last of many whom King Henry put to death’, dying because of his dealings with the cadaver.⁶²⁰ The *Historia* then depicts the later attendants as worried about a foul liquid leaking through the hides.⁶²¹ This dwelling on the foulness serves a moral purpose. By depicting the corpse in this manner,

⁶¹⁶ *HA*, 700-701: Successu uero temporis atrocissimi quod postea per Normannorum rabiosas prodiciones exarsit, quicquid Henricus fecerat, uel tyrannice uel regie, comparatione deteriorum uisum est peroptimum. Translation by Greenway.

⁶¹⁷ *HA*, 702: Corpus autem regis Henrici adhuc insepultum erat in Normannia. Rex namque Henricus prima die Decembris obierat.

⁶¹⁸ *HA*, 702-703: Cuius corpus allatum est Rotomagum. Et ibi uiscera eius et cerebrum et oculi consepulta sunt. Translation by Greenway.

⁶¹⁹ *HA*, 702-703: Reliquum autem corpus cultellis circumquaque dissectum, et multo sale aspersum coriis taurinis reconditum est, causa fetoris euitandi, qui multus et infinitus iam circumstantes inficiebat. Translation by Greenway.

⁶²⁰ *HA*, 702-703: Vnde et ipse qui magno precio conductus securi caput eius diffiderat, ut fetidissimum cerebrum extraheret, quamuis lintheaminibus caput suum obuoluisset, mortuus tamen ea causa precio male gauisus est. Hic est ultimus e multis quem rex Henricus occidit.

⁶²¹ *HA*, 702: Inde uero corpus regium Cadomum sui deportauerunt. Vbi diu in ecclesia positum, in qua pater eius sepultus fuerat, quamuis multo sale repletum esset et multis coriis reconditum, tamen continue ex corpore niger humor et horibilis coria pertransiens decurrebat, et uasis sub feretro susceptus a ministris horrore fatiscens abiciebatur.

Huntingdon stresses his *contemptus mundi* theme when directly addressing his reader in the homily concerned with Henry's changing fortunes that follows.⁶²²

The detailed and graphic accounts of Henry's demise and burial included in the *Historia* leads to question Huntingdon's motives in continuing this established trope of a monarch's negative death. This is pertinent, particularly considering when the *Historia* finally records Henry's burial at Reading, Huntingdon records the respect paid to the corpse by both political and religious figures.⁶²³ The construction of the *Historia* provides a likely answer. Between the account of Henry's death and his burial are two texts. The first is a letter by Huntingdon addressed to Henry, containing, after a lengthy list of dead kings, a message to focus on the eternal kingdom of Heaven rather than the transient kingdom on earth.⁶²⁴ The second, a letter to Walter, the archdeacon of Leicester, entitled *De Contemptu mundi*, is concerned with reversals of fortune of notable men⁶²⁵ and is 'virtually a sermon'.⁶²⁶ Given that the letter to Henry is likely to have been written after the king had died,⁶²⁷ it is probable that Huntingdon is rewriting history to present himself as critical of the king while the monarch was still ruling.⁶²⁸ By including these texts, Huntingdon continues the major theme that his *Historia*

⁶²² *HA*, 702: Vide igitur quicumque legis, quomodo regis potentissimi corpus, cuius ceruix diademata auro et gemmis electissimis, quasi Dei splendore, uernauerat, cuius utraque manus sceptris preradiauerat, cuius reliqua superficies auro textili tota rutilauerat, cuius os tam deliciasissimis et exquisitis cibis pasci solebat, cui omnes assurgere, omnes expauescere, omnes congaudere, omnes admirari solebant: uide, inquam, quo corpus illud deuenerit, quam horribiliter deliquerit, quam miserabiliter abiectum fuerit!

⁶²³ *HA*, 704: Tandem reliquie regalis cadaueris allate sunt in Angliam, et sepulte sunt infra duodecim dies Natalis apud abbatiam Redinges, quam rex Henricus fundauerat, et multis possessionibus ditauerat. Ibi rex uenit Stephanus a curia sua, quam tenuerat apud Lundoniam in ipso Natali, contra corpus patris sui, et Willelmus archiepiscopus Cantuarie, et multi presules et proceres, et sepelierunt regem Henricum, cum debita tanto uiro reuerentia.

⁶²⁴ The message appears at *HA*, 556.

⁶²⁵ *HA*, 584-619.

⁶²⁶ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 167.

⁶²⁷ Diane Greenway, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the Manuscripts of his *Historia Anglorum*', *ANS* 10 (1987): 103-126 (110).

⁶²⁸ Cooper, 'The Feet of Those that Bark Shall be Cut Off', 50.

intends to impart: all things are reduced to nothing.⁶²⁹ While his contemporaries dealt with the most recent monarch's death to accommodate politics or patronage, Huntingdon continued to present the death and burial in his established, negative fashion.

5. 4. The Dead in the Lives of Others: *Vita Petri Venerabilis*, *Vita Wulfrici*

After being subject to patronage, politics, and the continued historiographical motif of a monarch's death and burial being presented in a negative fashion in chronicles, Henry's demise appears in another type of text: the saint's *vita*. Even though these accounts are both brief and later than the accounts discussed above, they require attention because they show, in a different format, how the historical figure of the dead Henry was regarded and how his death was utilised for moral teaching.

The first is not an account of his death and burial, but rather a depiction of the dead king. It has been included because it provides an insight into how Cluny's relationship with their patron – depicted in the letter from Peter to Adela discussed above – developed. The passage appears *Vita Petri Venerabilis* (c. 1160s), written by the Cluniac monk Rodulfus. It shows that the role of the patron to his church is not severed by his death.⁶³⁰ A knight receives a vision of the dead Henry, who tells him to Peter the Venerable not to cease saying prayers for his soul. The knight obeys, and is promptly thanked by the dead king.⁶³¹ A much-later composite manuscript features a

⁶²⁹ *HA*, 702, 704: Vide rerum euentum ex quo semper pendet iudicium. Et disce contempnere quicquid sic disternatur, quicquid sic adnichilatur.

⁶³⁰ Marc Saurette, 'Peter the Venerable and Secular Friendship' in *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 281-308 (287 fn 24).

⁶³¹ Rodulfus, *Vita Petri Venerabilis*, *PL* 189: 15-28 (25), chapter 13 (*Henricum Anglorum regem a tormentis liberat*), with small emendations: De rege Anglorum Henrico seniore multis notum est quanta bona Cluniaco contulerit. Hic ad ultimam hominum conditionem deductus, viam universae carnis ingressus est, et quia potentes potenter tormenta patiuntur, tormentis severioribus addictus est. Contigit autem quadam die ut cuidam militi suo quoniam idem rex quasi vivus super equum nigrum cum magna multitudine secum equitantium obviaret. Quem ut miles vidit, obstupuit, et magna voce clamare coepit: *Nonne tu es dominus meus rex? - Ego, inquit, sum - Nonne mortuus es? Vere inquit, mortuus, et morti aeternae deputatus fuissem, nisi dominus Petrus abbas Cluniacensis cum suis subvenisset; sed quia adhuc ejus auxilio indigeo, per fidem quam dum in saeculo viverem mihi debebas, te conjuro, ut*

text entitled ‘*Miraculum terrificum de primo Henrico anglorum rege filio Willi*’, in which the patron is temporarily rescued from Hell each evening by Cluniac prayers.⁶³² Over time, the importance, and authority, of the patron diminishes, as the claims of the order increases.

The second text is John of Ford’s *Vita Wulfrici* (before 1185). The text uses the death of Henry to stress the attributes of the holy man Wulfric. Having received news that King Henry will cross to France, Wulfric replied ‘He will go, but he will not come back; or if he does, it will not be complete or whole’. In response to a query from the troubled king whether he had said that sentence, the holy man replied ‘If I said it, I don’t regret it, for I did not speak it myself’ – the inference being that Wulfric received the message externally and repeated it as a prophet would. Later, the holy man informs his local lord that the king had died, having received the information divinely before the news had spread. The king himself, though presented as ignoring the omen, is said to ‘find mercy with God, because he had fought for peace and justice during his life and had built the abbey of Reading with royal munificence’.⁶³³ This account of a miracle shows the historical incidents surrounding Henry’s demise and burial (his departure for Normandy, the return of only some of his corpse for burial) being used to stress the prophetic qualities of Wulfric.

quantocius ad fratres, qui in monasterio Sancti Pancratii habitant, curras, et quid vidisti a me ex parte mea eis dicas, quatenus amico meo patriuo Cluniacensi abbati ista per litteras designent, et ut mei memor sit, et a beneficio non cesset, donec me audiat sibi gratias referentem, deprecentur. Quod ita factum est. Pater vero haec audiens, et totis viribus ut subveniret assurgens, eleemosynas, missas, tricenaria, et cetera bona, quibus peccatores solent juvari, iussit per totum orbem in suis domibus pro rege, augmentari, quoad usque diceret: Sufficit. Factum est hoc quoadusque idem rex Patri et aliis multis apparuit, gratias referens de liberatione sua.

⁶³² Green, ‘The Piety and Patronage’, 1. For the manuscript, Cambridge MS. Ff. 1. 27, see *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1857), vol. 2, no. 1160, 318-329 (324-325).

⁶³³ John of Ford, *Vita Wulfrici Haselbergiae*, ed. Maurice Bell ([London]: Somerset Record Society, 1933), 116-117, chapter 90 (*De Morte Regis Henrici quam Prophetavit*);

These two texts, one written for an order concerned with an ecclesiastical figure, one written to commemorate a local holy man,⁶³⁴ differ greatly in details. The first shows the attitude towards the former patron in decline as the establishment asserts itself. The second shows an international event in relation to the small prism of a local miracle. Both however use the dead Henry for the same point: to stress the abilities of the intercessors.

5. 5. Conclusion

In contrast with the earlier kings examined in this study, Henry's death occurred after many of the major histories of the Anglo-Norman period had been composed. His demise therefore provides the opportunity to examine how the death was immediately recorded and understood before it was historicized. Being contemporary with a major figure (Peter the Venerable) and a chronicler (Orderic Vitalis), Henry's death was not immediately presented in terms of a good death/bad death structure, nor was it used to provide any comment on the ruler or his reign. Rather, memorialising the patron and concern for his soul was of greater importance. This may explain the sympathy shown towards the deceased monarch in contrast with other Anglo-Norman kings.

The account recorded in the Peterborough Chronicle establishes how the crises that followed led to ominous events being interpreted as premonitions to the demise. Also visible is how a detail regarding the burial – the alms not being distributed – could contain political connotations and judgments. The events of the civil war influenced the presentation of the monarch's death and burial, with one (Malmesbury) presenting a deathbed scene to claim continuation from the old monarch to the new (while asserting

⁶³⁴ As Henry Mayr-Harting noted, John of Ford's *Vita Wulfrici* is not like most hagiographies, 'written neither to enhance the prestige of a great Benedictine house by showing its association with a holy person, nor to point up its property rights' nor with the purpose of 'bolster[ing] one of its shrines or relics', but rather from intentions 'purely moral and academic', in 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', *History* 60 (1975): 337-352 (338).

his patron had always been on the side of Matilda), while the other (*Gesta Stephani*) omitted such a scene choosing instead to present Henry's death as a plunge into chaos. After patronage, politics influenced the presentation of the monarch's demise.

The old historiographic habits, however, continued. Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* followed the tradition of depicting the monarch's demise and burial as a moral *exemplum*. While stressing the *contemptus mundi* theme, the text presented the king's cadaver as the opposite to a saint's relics – killing, not healing, those nearby. In the final texts discussed in this study, the dead monarch is used to stress the miraculous ability of the subject of the *vita*. As with the motif of criticising the monarch in how he met his death to emphasise the need to focus on spiritual matters, this latter use of the king in the texts reveals that after patronage and politics, the religious pattern re-emerged and was dominant.

Conclusion

Not one of the kings examined in this study had a death and burial that was depicted in the same manner throughout the sources. Each of them had these events altered, embellished, and changed in the various sources. The death of the monarch became a key feature in defining the ruler's life.

Edward's sudden demise, soon after the consecration of Westminster Abbey whose rebuilding he supported, became increasingly detailed. The inserted elements were signs that signified his saintliness: close adherence to religious ritual, and deathbed prophecies. His death and burial became progressively more akin to a 'good' death.

The uncertain end of Harold during the Battle of Hastings became closely associated with criticism of his claims to the kingdom. The early Norman textual sources, though disagreeing about the method in which he was killed, used the burial of his remains to stress the qualities of the victor, William I. Later sources included a motif of divine judgment – an arrow from the skies – that continued this negative assessment of the short-reigned monarch. Later stories suggesting that he became an anchorite and died a religious end were a means to correct this.

The mixed accounts of William I's death and burial gave different assessments of the man's cruelty while acknowledging the role of the divine in his successful conquest. The moment of his death in the narratives provided a chance to air grievances, be they in poetry or the form of inserted speeches or symbolic elements such as the foul stench that emerged from his exploded stomach that overpowered the incense at his funeral.

The sudden death of William II while hunting in the New Forest became seen as a fitting conclusion to a life spent in disagreement with the Church. The unexpected event, occurring while the monarch was in a dispute with Anslem, Archbishop of Canterbury, was explained as an act of God and supposedly foretold by sermons, prophecies, and dreams (barring one source, Gaimar's *Estoire*, who claimed it was the work of a jealous foreigner).

The death of Henry, which triggered a civil war, was first shaped by his patronage of the establishments that recorded his demise, and then by the conflict his death caused as authors on different sides depicted it in different ways for political purposes. When the conflict rescinded in memory, depictions of the dead Henry returned to the issue of his patronage. Rather than attempting to establish the 'historic' death, this study has examined these different accounts to understand the historiography and mentalities of the era.

The death of the monarch was recorded and understood through a paradigm set by religious values. It was understood through a fixed dichotomy. There was the good death, and there was the bad death. The model for the good death was one that would occur in a monastic setting, in which the dying person would set one's earthly affairs in order and then proceed with religious rituals. These rites stressed the continuation of the monastic community over the individual, while preparing the dying man for his desired entry into the kingdom of heaven. In the figure of the king, this meant acts of religious piety and patronage, and, important for the stability of the kingdom, arranging the issue of succession. After the moment of death, the corpse itself was used as a means to judge the life of the deceased. It was an indicator of sanctity. The cadaver of a saint was said to be incorrupt and sweet smelling. The bad death was the reverse: one that was sudden, with death unprepared for (and with warnings to repent and prepare

unheeded), that left a state of chaos, and a cadaver that was foul. Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon's depiction of the death of Henry I is the epitome of this manner. The burial of the corpse was, being a religious rite, another feature that had a good paradigm (carried out successfully), and a bad one that fell short (interrupted, irreligious). This model was widespread. Notably, when Gaimar wanted to present William II in a good light contrary to the earlier authors, he did not reject the pattern that was used by the critical chroniclers but rather deliberately reversed it and presented the monarch's demise and burial as a chronicler would present a 'good' death.

The categories of 'good' and 'bad' death, though having fixed attributes, could be used to suit the intention of the author more than recording 'historical' facts. The death of Edward – likely to have been suddenly afflicted by a stroke, and dying heirless in disagreement with his wife's family, leaving his kingdom at risk of invasion – could easily have been presented as a 'bad' death. It became, however, increasingly embellished with characteristics of a 'good' demise: awareness of what will come (to the extent of being capable of prophecy on his deathbed), organising his legacy, and adhering to the religious rituals. Likewise, the sudden death of a ruler like William II, likely to have been an accident, could be easily recast as divinely ordained, presented as being foretold by visions and omens. The assessment of the monarch via this method, therefore, records not the actions of the ruler himself, but rather the opinion of the chroniclers. As with the pattern of the 'good' death and 'bad' death, judgment of the ruler was heavily influenced by religious values. Monarchs who were seen as greatly assisting the Church were likely to be presented by the religious authors as having a 'good' demise, and those rulers who were seen as in conflict with the Church were likely to be rewarded with a 'bad' end. The contrasting depictions of the death and

burial of William II and his brother Henry, who both patronised the Church but repeatedly came into conflict with it, show that the judgment was not always objective.

In many of the cases, the monarch's demise was conscientiously depicted as falling far short of the idealised death. When recording the treatment of the cadaver, the king's corpse was frequently described in terms that were deliberately oppositional to those of a saint's remains (foul smelling rather than sweet, corrupted rather than pristine, fragmented rather than whole). Though the differing accounts of Henry's demise in the texts produced in the polemics from opposing sides of the civil war showed that such depictions could have political connotations, the use of such a motif was predominantly for theological purposes. The monarch's death provided the chroniclers with an *exemplum* that could clearly articulate the theme of *contemptus mundi*, the contempt of the world. The demise of the ruler, as seen in these texts, shared a similar meaning despite each having its own unique details, by following this pattern. This similarity stems from the authors all being part of the historiographic tradition that was inherited from the Church. Taking motifs from biblical and classical sources, and using them in a manner of historical writing as exemplified by Bede, these authors used historical events as a means to teach moral and religious values. Good deeds were held up for imitation, and bad ends were recorded as warnings. Though this tradition was predominantly monastic, members of the secular clergy, such as Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, using texts produced in monasteries, copied this conception of the value of their work, and adhered to such a reading of the purpose of history as monastic writers such as William of Malmesbury. This was the fixed perspective on viewing such events.

With this style of historical writing, the death of the king was a key part in assessing the monarch's virtues and vices, and thus became an indispensable part of

defining the ruler's life. In depicting their deaths and burials within a religious and moral framework the authors expressed their assessments of the rulers' lives. Examining these various accounts, the inherited historiographical forms, the affiliations of the authors, and the mentalities of the era become apparent.

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