

HOLINESS AND HOPEFULNESS:
THE MONASTIC AND LAY AUDIENCES OF ABBO OF FLEURY'S
PASSIO SANCTI EADMUNDI AND ÆLFRIC OF EYNHAM'S
LIFE OF ST. EDMUND, KING AND MARTYR

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The vita of King Edmund of East Anglia has a long history of redaction. Edmund's earliest appearance is in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 870. His vita reached its most complex form in a version prepared for Henry VI by John Lydgate around 1434. This redaction history encompasses chronicle and hagiography, and the number of episodes in the vita increased dramatically over five and a half centuries. The two earliest hagiographical redactions of Edmund's life, Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* and Ælfric of Eynsham's *Life of St. Edmund, King and Martyr* from the *Lives of the Saints*, have a close relationship, with Ælfric using Abbo as a self-acknowledged source. The exact nature of this relationship, however, needs fuller consideration to show the place of the Edmund legend within the tradition of Benedictine hagiography in which both Abbo and Ælfric wrote.

Ælfric's redaction is frequently called an abbreviation of Abbo's *Passio* that preserves all major elements of the earlier version (Edwards, Introduction 6; Grant 6; McKeehan 22; Stouck 267). The basic narrative Abbo and Ælfric share is as follows: Virtuous King Edmund of East Anglia faces invading Danes led by captains Hinguar and Hubba. After the Danes attack, Edmund surrenders himself for martyrdom rather than submitting to the Danes as pagan masters. He is shot full of arrows and beheaded. The Danes then discard Edmund's head in the woods. As Edmund's followers later search for it, the head calls out to them. When they at last find it, a wolf guards it from other creatures that might try to eat it. The head and body are hastily buried but later exhumed intact and incorrupt. More miracles follow.

One oddity of Abbo's and Ælfric's redactions is the mere ten years that elapsed between them. In the past, scholars such as Judith Grant (6) and G. I. Needham (15-18) have explained this immediacy of reception as reflecting Ælfric's desire to educate the laity and the need to streamline the story for preaching. These purposes are indeed a major

part of Ælfric's work, but interpreters of the *Lives of Saints* and *Catholic Homilies*, including several of the contributors to Paul Szarmach's collection *Holy Men and Holy Women*, more recently have identified political purposes underlying many of Ælfric's vitae, even as he abbreviates his source materials.¹ Although Edmund's life has not been a focus for many of these discussions, it is no exception. Examinations both of textual clues and of the historical contexts of monastic reform and Viking invasion indicate that Ælfric's abridgment of Abbo's *Passio* redefined holy kingship as being able to meet the practical needs of the laity in addition to fulfilling religious ideals.² This change in emphasis points toward a larger English Benedictine use of the Edmund legend for communicating the order's concerns with holy kingship over the course of the Middle Ages.

REFORMING MONKS AND KINGS (ABBO PREFACE 1-51; ÆLFRIC 1-4)³

Abbo and Ælfric provide very specific contexts at the outset of their redactions. Abbo's *Passio* was born of tenth-century Benedictine reform. Prior to this earliest hagiographical redaction, oral traditions had preserved and developed Edmund's cult. Abbo's opening recounts how he heard the legend from Archbishop Dunstan of Canterbury while visiting Ramsey Abbey to teach during 985-87. Dunstan claimed to have heard the story in his youth from Edmund's elderly armor-bearer at the court of Athelstan. Abbo, in turn, recorded the legend at the request of the Ramsey monks with whom he was staying so as to preserve the story for them and for future generations.

Abbo's reform mission to Ramsey is at the heart of the *Passio*. Reform had become necessary for a number of reasons. One factor was the Viking invasions of the ninth century—like the one that purportedly killed King Edmund—that had nearly decimated monasteries in parts of England and France because the wealth and the weak defenses of monasteries made them good targets. In England, monasticism in the east declined, especially in the areas of the East Midlands and East Anglia associated with Edmund. Another set of factors came from the concerns of the royalty. From a spiritual standpoint, monks represented an organized force for offering prayer on behalf of a king. Politically, monks could also provide doctrinal support for royal policy. Furthermore, monks' renunciation of family ties increased their loyalty to the king whereas a secular bishop with ties to a noble house would have had other conflicting interests. Thus, the self-interest of monarchies as well as the

decline caused by Viking attacks helped to set monastic reform efforts into motion. Revitalization began in France with the ascent of Odo to Cluny's abbacy in 942. Reforms spread from Cluny to other monasteries, including Abbo's home at Fleury. They revolved around the incorporation of Benedict of Aniane's *Concordia regularum*, a monastic rule that made particularly prominent use of Benedict's Rule (Clark 39-46).⁴

These French reforms spread, giving much needed support to the tenth-century efforts in England. In addition to the material decline caused by the Danish invasions, discipline in English monasteries had eroded through the attempts of noblemen to intimidate monasteries into supporting their own political agendas. The presence in the monasteries of secular clerks, who had not taken monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, had also become widespread. In reestablishing a regular standard of conduct in English monasteries, Dunstan and his fellow archbishops Æthelwold of Winchester and Oswald of Worcester were key participants. In preceding years, all three had spent time at monasteries in France or had opportunities to host visiting brethren from France associated with the Cluny reforms. Thus, they had firsthand chances to observe the movements that so prominently featured Benedict's Rule. Scholars generally agree that, as a result of these observations, Æthelwold came to write the *Regularis Concordia*, another rule that prominently features Benedict's and was used for governing tenth-century English monasteries (Clark 43-46).⁵

Abbo was originally from Fleury Abbey in France but became involved in these turbulent English reforms through a welcome summons to teach in England. The year 985 had brought a disputed abbacy to Fleury. Although his name is never specifically mentioned, scholars suggest that the highly educated Abbo was embroiled in these events. It is possible that Abbo was a rejected candidate for the Fleury abbacy or had been called upon to use his rhetorical skills to support one side or the other. Whatever the case, Abbo agreed to go to England when Archbishop Oswald, who had learned Benedictine reform through Fleury, sent a request for a teacher at the abbey of Ramsey. It seems likely that Abbo's departure may have been related to Fleury's disputed abbacy because his great learning was an asset not to have been sent away lightly. Proposed interpretations for this move include his being "exiled," by the elected abbatial candidate, or Abbo removing himself from the scene out of disappointment or by the desire to diffuse a heated dispute. Since Abbo was recalled to Fleury and elected as its next abbot

within three years, his composition of the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* along with other accomplishments at Ramsey Abbey may have been viewed as further increasing his suitability for the Fleury abbacy. In the interim, his helpfulness to the Ramsey monks as a teacher was indisputable. Abbo was considered a master of all seven liberal arts and well-suited to teaching Latin (Dachowski 58, 62-64, 72, 75).⁶ The *Passio* complements these pedagogical skills by providing examples of Latin prose, rhetorical style, and fine theological distinctions on the nature of kingship.

Ælfric of Eynsham's redaction of Edmund's vita in the Old English *Lives of the Saints* continues the reforming spirit of Abbo's *Passio* but reorients itself to the concerns of the Anglo-Saxon laity. The *Lives of the Saints* is dedicated to the nobles Æthelweard and Æthelmær, a father and son who had intense interests in devotional literature. Additionally, as mentioned both by Needham (16) and by Ann Williams (39), Ælfric's preface to the *Lives of the Saints* as a whole reflects an interest in translating and abbreviating all its legends for a more general lay audience. Ælfric's abbreviations also change the emphasis of Abbo's themes to reflect the increasing turbulence of the ten intervening years of Æthelred Unræd's reign. In effect, Edmund as king provides the strength of character that Æthelred did not. Evidence for this context of Æthelred's reign appears in Ælfric's first sentence, which reports that his source text was written by Abbo in "Æpelred cynincges dæge" ["Æthelred the king's day"] (Ælfric 60-61). This concern for a particular moment in history fits with the larger selection of vitae in the *Lives of Saints*. As Malcolm Godden points out, Edmund is just one of many of Ælfric's saints whose legends spring from ecclesiastical or secular history, and Edmund is selected over ahistorical or solitary figures ("Aelfric" 108). If Ælfric is especially aware of the historicity of his material and its sources, it seems reasonable to suggest that he is equally concerned with the historicity of his own moment.

Many of Æthelred's problems had their origin in the reigns of his father, King Edgar of England, and half-brother, Edward the Martyr. King Edgar, who reigned from 959 to 975, provided crucial support for the monastic reforms of Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald by endorsing their work and allotting them power over multiple bishoprics, thereby creating an environment in which they could work. Edgar's appointments served to create a network of monastic institutions loyal to his own crown, but a faction of nobles who had lost land to the monastic reforms also emerged. This faction would cause difficulties for both the monasteries and Edgar's son, Æthelred Unræd (the "Unready" or more

accurately “ill-counseled”). A child-king who had to rely on his father’s advisors, Æthelred succeeded his half-brother, Edward the Martyr, in 978. As his epithet denotes, Edward had been murdered by members of Æthelred’s own household, thus tarnishing Æthelred’s reign with ill-repute from its outset. The deaths of many of Edgar’s advisors, including Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald, in the 980s and early 990s further eroded the strength of Æthelred’s early years (Hollister, Stacey, and Stacey 86-90, 108-09).

During the ten years between Abbo’s and Ælfric’s Edmund redactions, invading Danes contributed to a deteriorating state of affairs. Renewed invasions had already begun by 980, even before Abbo’s visit to Ramsey, and would increase in conjunction with other problems of Æthelred’s rule. Another ongoing challenge came from the Anglo-Saxon nobles who feuded among themselves and with the monasteries. This internal strife under the reigns of the young Edward the Martyr and Æthelred led to a weakened royal power in raising resistance against the Danish invaders. Some nobles incurred further blame for rising to positions of counsel for Æthelred and using their authority for personal gain (Williams 26, 43).

Æthelred’s responses to the Danes also proved problematic. The year 991 was a turning point because it brought the defeat of Ealdorman Byrhtnoth at the Battle of Maldon. The event set the stage for Æthelred’s response of tribute payments to the Danes. In this same year, Æthelred paid Danish leaders £10,000 not to attack the Anglo-Saxons and, indeed, to protect them from other enemies.⁷ Arrangements in 991 also included provisions and winter quarters. This first *gafol* payment only temporarily assuaged the Danes because Æthelred again paid *gafols* in 994, 1002, 1007, and 1012. The *gafols* may have had the opposite effect of encouraging Danish threats of invasion by suggesting that the great tribute payments reflected even greater wealth possessed by the Anglo-Saxon people. This seems especially true since Swein Forkbeard finally invaded England in 1013, only a year after receiving the last of Æthelred’s *gafol* tributes (Hollister, Stacey, and Stacey 110-11; Williams 44-47, 151-53).

When Ælfric translated Abbo’s *Passio* between 995 and 997, Æthelred had made only two of his tribute payments. However, this early policy of paying off the Danes instead of fighting may have elicited criticism of Æthelred even at that early time (Stafford 26; Williams 46-47). Furthermore, these occasions may have been enough to provide premonitions of what was to come with three more *gafols*, the 1013

invasion, and Æthelred's subsequent flight to Normandy. Thus, Ælfric's opening allusion to "Æþelred cynincges dæge" sets up Æthelred's and Edmund's reigns for comparison. Next to St. Edmund, Æthelred Unræd may pale in comparison, and the grounds for lauding Edmund's behavior, as abbreviated from Abbo's version, set him up as the complete antithesis to Æthelred. That is, in Ælfric's redaction, Edmund as a king becomes everything that Æthelred is not.

MONASTIC AND LAY AUDIENCES (ABBO 1.1-2.20; ÆLFRIC 5-13)

Abbo's and Ælfric's audiences appear clearly in their respective Edmund redactions. The *Passio* reflects Abbo's mission to teach at Ramsey Abbey. Although the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* is dedicated to Dunstan, the request for Abbo to write came from the Ramsey monks. In Abbo's words, "they began to press me urgently . . . that I would reduce to writing the Passion of the miracle worker, Eadmund, king and martyr" (6-7). The Ramsey monks' urgency adds significance to the commission because Abbo shows them taking control when Dunstan would not. Dunstan was very active in the Benedictine reforms of tenth-century England, but his personal reforming spirit was centered more on building programs and political involvement than on commissioning saints' lives (Thacker 237-38). By the time Abbo heard the story of Edmund, Dunstan was well over seventy years old. He would die within three years of Abbo's visit. With Dunstan's advanced age and approaching death in mind, the monks' urgency makes sense as a desire to preserve the story of Edmund as a holy exemplar. They might have feared its loss would undercut the reform efforts (Winterbottom 1). The resistance the tenth-century changes faced from disenfranchised nobles adds further urgency to Abbo's writing situation because some of the monastic foundations of East Anglia, the region of Edmund's martyrdom, had been attacked by these nobles (Blair 354; Clark 46).

The opening description of the land of East Anglia that provides the link between the prefatory letter to Dunstan and Abbo's proper *vita* also bespeaks a monastic audience. This geographic description of the region in which Edmund lived is very consistent with other works written for monks. Bede, who was often studied and mimicked throughout the Middle Ages, had used a similar technique in the opening chapters of his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* a few centuries earlier (Bede 44-47, 62-64; Clark 201-02). Ælfric, however, omits any description of East Anglia, which points toward the shift in audience for his redaction.

Ælfric wrote the *Life of St. Edmund, King and Martyr* for an audience that was more general than Abbo's. In his opening chapter, Ælfric briefly recounts how Abbo learned the story of Edmund from Dunstan, leaving out the role of the monks at Ramsey, before stating that upon receiving Abbo's Latin *Passio*, Ælfric and his brethren translated it into English. Many of Ælfric's works are written in Old English, which strongly suggests that their purpose was for educating the laity or commenting on socio-political events. His two series of *Catholic Homilies* (~989 and ~992), *Colloquy* (~992), and *Lives of Saints* (completed by 998) are examples of these lay-targeted works (Hurt 9; Needham 12). When viewed collectively, these works create a liturgical calendar of key saints and festivals for an Anglo-Saxon Church that opened religious observances to a larger segment of society (Lapidge 115-19).

Additionally, Ælfric makes explicit reference to his educative purposes in these works. The preface to the first series of *Catholic Homilies* includes this explanation:

Rash, or rather, presumptuous, though it is to have done so, nevertheless I have translated this volume out of Latin books (that is to say holy scriptures) into the language to which we are accustomed, for the edification of the unlearned who know only this language, either through reading it, or hearing it read. (qtd. in Needham 16)

Ælfric's emphasis here on vernacular translation suggests an interest in the laity because Latinity was a mark of the emerging identity of the Benedictine order (Clark 191). Educative concerns also appear in the *Lives of Saints*' preface:

This volume also I have translated from Latin into the language in ordinary use in England, desiring to benefit others, by strengthening them in faith through reading this narrative, who are willing to take the trouble either to read this work, or to listen to it read. (qtd. in Needham 16)

Again, Ælfric's concern for education is clear. Additional evidence for the *Lives of Saints*' general lay audience appears in its preface, where he writes, "I have shortened the longer narratives, as regards the language, but not the sense, in case the fastidious should be bored by their being

told in our language at as great length as in Latin” (qtd. in Needham 18). Such passages all point to an intended audience that included the laity.

Ælfric’s lay patrons for the *Lives*, Æthelweard and Æthelmær, also form a specific audience for his work. The fact that the general preface is addressed to them, along with a later reference to Æthelweard as requesting the inclusion of a particular legend, indicates that Ælfric undertook the *Lives* at their direction. In conjunction with these dedications, Ælfric also shows political purpose through his comments on kingship: “no man can make himself king, but the people have the choice to choose as king whom they please; but after he is consecrated as king, he then has dominion over the people, and they cannot shake his yoke from their necks” (qtd. in Williams 17). Ælfric issues this warning on the duties of the ruled in selecting a king while the cult of Edward the Martyr, Æthelred’s murdered predecessor, was developing. Æthelweard and Æthelmær had been supporters of Edward, placing them in the camp of nobles who were wary of Æthelred’s ascent from its beginning. Here and in later writings, Ælfric shows his support for Æthelweard and Æthelmær’s faction. Even beyond Ælfric’s statements against Æthelred on their behalf, there is, as Williams has argued, considerable evidence for antagonism between Æthelmær and Æthelred (17, 69, 121).

At the beginning of Æthelred’s reign, Æthelweard was an ealdorman in the western shires. The positions of ealdormen had originated when local kings pledged loyalty to an overking in the earlier days of Anglo-Saxon England. In later times the local kings were reduced to upper-ranking noblemen who ruled English shires on behalf of the king. The responsibilities of these ealdormen included mustering and leading local troops in battle and overseeing the king’s court twice a year, making the position one of privilege and honor (Hollister, Stacey, and Stacey 92-93). Æthelred, however, denied any hereditary rights to the title of ealdorman, and five sons of ealdormen were deprived of their fathers’ titles between 978 and 1002. Æthelmær was among these sons after his father Æthelweard died in 998. It was not until 1006 that Æthelred appointed him ealdorman of the western shires.⁸ This late appointment did not resolve much between Æthelmær and Æthelred, for Æthelmær and his army defected to Swein Forkbeard when the Danish leader invaded England in 1013 (Williams 66, 120-21). While most of these events occurred after Ælfric wrote his *Lives of Saints*, they do show how themes of good kingship in Ælfric’s *Edmund* speak to long-standing frustrations of Æthelweard and Æthelmær that go beyond Ælfric’s general educative purpose for non-Latin speaking audiences. These

frustrations also load Ælfric's statement, "Æþelred cynincges dæge," with significance as it places a reader in a mindset for comparing Æthelred to Edmund.

EDMUND AND THE DANES (ABBO 3.1-6.22, ÆLFRIC 14-38)

The effects of Abbo's and Ælfric's different audiences become apparent as they begin their examinations of Edmund's character and person. Abbo is lavish in his praise of Edmund. He was descended "from the noble stock of the Old Saxons," "sincerely" Christian, "of a comely aspect," "affable and winning in speech," modest, and admirably kind (14-15). Animal imagery reinforces these traits, describing Edmund as having "the gentleness and simplicity of a dove" and "the wariness and sagacity of a serpent" (Abbo 16-17). These explicit allegorical associations with the dove and serpent point to an emblematic symbolism in Abbo's *vita* that reinforces larger truths about what Edmund's life represents (Hill 45-47).⁹ A twelfth-century Latin *Bestiary*, though post-dating Abbo, may convey some of the associations these animals had for readers of the *vita*. Specifically, the turtledove is chaste and spreads squills, a kind of leaf that wolves do not like, in order to protect its young (White 145-46). The mention of wolves is particularly appropriate since Abbo compares the Danes to wolves later in the *vita*. The serpent comparison also fits Edmund since attributes mentioned for the serpent in the *bestiary* include wisdom and the ability to renew itself by shedding its skin (White 187). The idea of self-renewal might be a kind of resurrection, which Edmund's incorrupt body comes to symbolize after his martyrdom.

In effect, Abbo depicts Edmund as having it all: virtue in lineage, looks, and behavior. The characterization is so extreme that one critic objects, "Abbo makes Edmund a wholly unbelievable stereotype who rather complacently seeks martyrdom knowing he will be rewarded in Heaven" (Hurt 81). Arguably, this point could apply to any saint, but with Edmund's perfection also extending to his lineage and looks, which have less of an impact on his narrative, the stereotype seems especially blatant. The role lineage and looks do play on the life, however, is to illustrate an ideal of holiness fitting to a monastic audience's high standards of personal conduct. The tendency for saints' lives to idealize their subjects establishes an extreme which such an audience can use as a standard to strive for and, as Hill points out, offers a form of "escapism" from the ambiguity of actual life (39-40). Furthermore, such idealization

serves an even more specific purpose for Abbo: by accenting the martyr's innocence, the guilt of his attackers is increased (Rollason 16). Ælfric too employs these *topoi* of idealization, holiness, and guilt, but in less overt ways according to the different needs of his Anglo-Saxon lay audience.

Extreme evil opposes Edmund's extreme goodness in Abbo's *Passio*. Abbo says that the Devil wished to break the East Anglian king, comparing the testing of Edmund to that of Job: "as in the case of St. Job, to test his patience became the aim of the enemy of the human race, who cherishes a grudge against the good, which is all the deeper, because he lacks every impulse toward good-will" (Abbo 16-17). Thus, Edmund is part of a cosmic conflict between good and evil, and a personal, demonic force specifically targets him.

The Devil's instruments in persecuting Edmund are the Danes, and Abbo accordingly barbarizes them for the fulfillment of this role. Just as Abbo idealizes Edmund to accent his innocence, he also demonizes the Danes to accent their guilt. The Danes are cannibals who "[paid] no respect to the chastity of wife and maid . . . [and] snatched [the babe] from its mother's breast [and] in order to multiply the cries of grief, slaughtered [it] before her eyes" (Abbo 18-21). Such barbarism accents Edmund's piety because it maximizes the contrast between Edmund and his murderers.

Like Abbo, Ælfric gives descriptions of Edmund and the Danish invasion. However, Ælfric's portrait of Edmund does not idealize his appearance or status to nearly the same degree as Abbo's, focusing only on Edmund's character and behavior:

He was humble and devout, and continued so steadfast
that he would not yield to shameful sins,
nor in any direction did he bend aside his practices,
but was always mindful of the true doctrine
'If thou art made a chief man, exalt not thyself,
but be amongst them as one of them.'
He was bountiful to the poor and to widows even like a father,
and with benignity guided his people
ever to righteousness, and controlled the violent,
and lived happily in the true faith. (Ælfric 62-63)

Notably lacking from this idealized portrait of Edmund in Ælfric's redaction are Abbo's references to Edmund's noble lineage and good looks. These omissions are significant because they ignore the

characteristics of inheritance and beauty that Æthelred possessed as part of his claim to the throne; as Byrhtferth of Ramsey once wrote, Æthelred was “graceful in manners, beautiful in face and comely in appearance” (qtd. in Williams ix). The effect of these omissions, in turn, is that kingly behavior and example, especially as they relate to his people, become all the more important to Edmund’s portrait. Thus, Æthelred pales in comparison to Edmund, without even his lineage and physical attractiveness to support him. This emphasis on behavior as the most important quality in a king fits with a theological belief apparent elsewhere in Ælfric’s work that promotes active expressions of faith over private contemplation of the divine. It is a perspective that runs contrary to the emerging identity of the Benedictine order, but it coincides well with the value Ælfric places on teaching, especially since the express purpose of the *Lives of Saints* is to make the Christian faith more accessible to the laity (Clayton 158-67). This emphasis on conduct also reinforces an expectation of egalitarianism that appears through Ælfric’s redaction.

Ælfric’s presentation of the invaders as noticeably less severe than Abbo’s is another modification he makes to Edmund’s vita. Ælfric simply says the Danish leaders, Hinguar and Hubba, are “associated by the devil,” rather than going so far as to call them the Devil’s instruments for testing and destruction (Ælfric 62-63). Additionally, Ælfric does not demonize the Danes to the same extreme as Abbo. Ælfric’s description of the invasion notes that the Danes “slew the people, / men, women, and witless children, / and shamefully tormented the innocent Christians” (Ælfric 62-65). This description is not nearly as graphic as Abbo’s description of the Danes slaughtering infants before their mothers’ eyes. The effect is to diminish Edmund as an extreme example of otherworldly holiness. It leaves the emphasis on him as the good king to his people—something Æthelred had not been.

In characterizing the Danes, Abbo and Ælfric both make use of the significant image of the wolf. The comparison of the Danes to a wolf emphasizes the speed and stealth with which the Danes attack their victims. Abbo greatly elaborates on this image:

Just as the wolf is accustomed to steal in the evening down to the plains, and to return with haste by night to his lair in the woods, so it was the practice of the Danish and Alanic people, always intent upon a career of theft, never to risk open and fair fight with their enemies. (Abbo 22-23)

Stealth and deception define the actions of the Danes in Abbo. Similarly, Ælfric says, “And the aforesaid Hingwar suddenly, like a wolf / stalked over the land,” stressing the careful, sinister movements of Edmund’s foes (Ælfric 62-63). The image of the wolf reinforces what Abbo and Ælfric describe, in varying degrees of detail, as the prime attributes of the Danes. These attributes have larger cultural connotations, for the *Bestiary*’s entry on the wolf describes the creature as “a rapacious beast, and hankering for gore,” closely associated with the Devil (White 56, 59). Abbo in particular draws on such associations through his specific references to the Danes as demonic agents. However, the image of the wolf is significant to both writers because it anticipates the actual wolf that guards Edmund’s head, symbolically representing Edmund’s ultimate triumph over the Danes. Still, the emphasis falls differently based on what Ælfric eliminates. Abbo develops his subject’s character through metaphor and simile throughout his legend, comparing Edmund to a dove and a serpent, as mentioned previously, and later to a hedgehog. His comparison of the Danes to wolves makes his fourth animal allusion. Ælfric, on the other hand, uses only the wolf and the hedgehog images, thus causing his repetition of the wolf simile to take on heightened resonance. The image highlights the oppression of the Anglo-Saxons by the Danes and the saint’s eventual triumph over them. For the laity, this triumph is the most important facet of Edmund’s *vita* and stands apart from the theological significances that the other animals hold for Abbo’s monastic audience.

HINGUAR’S CHALLENGE (ABBO 7.1-9.42; ÆLFRIC 39-80)

As both narratives continue, the Danes invade East Anglia and Hinguar, their chieftain, sends a messenger to Edmund, demanding submission. Abbo’s Edmund speaks on holiness and reflects theologically on the proper role of a Christian king. The messenger announces the success of the Danes’ conquest and issues Hinguar’s demands:

The storms and tempests of the deep subserve the purpose of our fleets; and cannot turn from the accomplishment of their settled intentions men who, by grace and favour of the elements, have never suffered injury from the awful thunders of heaven, or from the oft-repeated lightening flash. Submit therefore with all

of your people to this greatest of monarchs [Hinguar] whom the elements obey. (Abbo 24-25)

This passage depicts a pagan theology wherein Hinguar's greatness includes his ability to master storms at sea. It is an even greater conquest than that of East Anglia. When an attending bishop advises submission, Edmund offers a contrasting royal theology that rests upon three points: (1) Edmund is a baptized Christian, (2) his rule has been confirmed by the clergy, and (3) he has been acclaimed as king by the East Anglian people.

Edmund's reply is characteristic of Abbo's monastic context in two ways. In the first place, it is rhetorically elaborate, its three-fold reasoning running to 49 lines. Such ornateness befits Abbo's mission as a teacher to the Ramsey monks by using the saint's life as a model of Latin prose for his students (Grant 8). Secondly, Edmund's contrasting theology is a reflection of actual monastic advice to Anglo-Saxon kings. Susan J. Ridyard has noted that Anglo-Saxon royal martyrs frequently achieved sanctity by protecting Christendom and its inhabitants. The king provided an example of virtue for his people, led them in war, and administered justice. Moreover, Ridyard points to a distinction between Christian "sanctity" and pagan "sacrality." Edmund's behavior shows him striving for Christian sanctity by presenting a model of Christian opposition to the Danes even when the bishop will not. Hinguar's boasts that the elements obey him reflect a model of sacrality, or divine favor, as inherited by pagan kings (Ridyard 75-77). Thus, Abbo explicitly presents two contrasting views of kingship. His monastic audience would certainly be interested in and learn from these holiness distinctions.

The language of the messenger and the king also emphasizes the extreme wickedness of the Danes and the extreme holiness of Edmund. The bishop advises Edmund to submit, saying with Abbo's characteristic graphicness that the Danes' "axes are blunted with the slaughter of your subjects" (24-25). With piety equal to the extreme cruelty of the Danes, Edmund states that he wishes to die and "of my own free will surrender myself, for the loss of those dear to me has made light itself hateful" (Abbo 26-27). Abbo then clinches the contrast between Edmund and the Danes through Edmund's final condemnation of the Danish messenger: "Reeking as you are with the blood of my countrymen, you might justly be doomed to death; but to speak plainly, I would follow the example of Christ my Lord, and refrain from staining my pure hands" (28-29).

Edmund then finishes his invective by calling Hinguar “Son of the devil” (Abbo 30-31).

In contrast to Abbo’s highly rhetorical and theological passages, Ælfric reorients his translation to address the *comitatus* relationship between Anglo-Saxon kings and their warriors. This reorientation reflects Æthelweard and Æthelmær’s record of disappointment with Æthelred. For instance, Edmund’s response to the Danish messenger and bishop who encourages surrender is to say:

This I desire and wish in my mind,
 that I should not be left alone after my dear thanes,
 who even in their beds, with their bairns and their wives,
 have by these seamen been suddenly slain.
 It was never my custom to take to flight,
 but I would rather die, if I must,
 for my own land; and Almighty God knoweth
 that I will never turn aside from his worship,
 nor from his true love, whether I die or live. (Ælfric 66-67)

Edmund’s concern for his “thanes,” or *þegnum* in Old English, distinctly reflects the *comitatus* relationship. The word “thanes” is culturally distinctive and stands apart from Abbo’s Latin “*fidelibus karissimis*,” “faithful [and] most beloved [ones]” (Abbo 26-27).¹⁰ It also stands apart from the Old English word *folc*, “people,” used by the bishop as he counsels Edmund. The word “thanes” thus points to the *comitatus*, a code in Germanic cultures stating that lords and their warriors owed loyalty to death to one another and were bound to vow vengeance if the other was killed (Mitchell and Robinson 136). James Hurt’s study of Ælfric further clarifies the distinctiveness of the *comitatus* relationship:

The warrior-kings of the Germanic tribes were first among equals; they wielded their weapons alongside their men seeking fame in battle and accepting the obligation of giving protection to those who served them. To the Christian, the kingly office came to be equated with the priesthood; the king was God’s vicar, and he took oaths not only to his people but to God Himself. (Hurt 82)

The distinctiveness of the *comitatus* relationship thus strongly colors Ælfric’s redaction of Edmund’s life. Edmund’s response also has a

distinctly nationalistic edge to it. Accordingly, Edmund shows more a willingness for martyrdom—"I would rather die, if I must, for my own country"—than a desire for it. Indeed, the last sentence is the only part of Edmund's response that openly speaks to religious concerns apart from those tied to kingship. It is more a profession of faith than a theological argument.

Also contrasting with Abbo's depiction are the Danish messenger's demands. He does not express a right to conquest through a pagan theology; his concerns are wholly with Edmund's treasure and material submission to Hinguar:

Hingwar our king, keen and victorious
by sea and by land, hath rule over many peoples,
and has landed here suddenly even now with an army,
that he may take up his winter-quarters here with his host.
Now he commandeth thee to divide thy secret treasures
and thine ancestors' wealth quickly with him,
and thou shalt be his under-king, if thou desire to live,
because thou hast not the power that thou mayst withstand him.
(Ælfric 64-65)

The single reference to Hinguar's conquests at sea emphasizes the Danish leader's prowess, but it stands apart from any type of religious belief. Instead, Ælfric's focus falls on the integrity of Edmund's royal line and the treasures associated with it. Thus, by abbreviating the theological elements from Abbo's *Passio*, Ælfric addresses the proper relationship between Anglo-Saxon kings and their thanes as an overarching concern of his redaction.

EDMUND'S DEATH (ABBO 10.1-12.25; ÆLFRIC 81-121)

The heavy religious imagery in Abbo's description of Edmund's death is consistent with Edmund's speeches to his bishop and the Danish messenger. This imagery increases Edmund's holiness by elevating him to the level of Christ. Abbo writes that upon surrendering himself, Edmund was taken "pinioned and tightly bound" before Hinguar "like Christ before the governor Pilate" (32-33). Then the torture begins. Once again, graphic detail incriminates the Danes and sanctifies Edmund as he is shot full of arrows:

[The Danes] pierced his whole body with arrow-spikes, augmenting the severity of his torment by frequent discharges of their weapons, and inflicting wound upon wound, while one javelin made room for another. And thus all haggled over by the sharp points of their darts, and scarce able to draw breath, he actually bristled with them, like a prickly hedgehog. (Abbo 34-35)

This image of the hedgehog also appears as Ælfric's second animal image in his redaction. The arrows looking like bristles seems to be the chief reason for Abbo and Ælfric comparing Edmund to a hedgehog, but bestiary lore extends the depth of the image: "This creature has a kind of prudence, for when a bunch of grapes comes off the vine, it rolls itself upside down on top of the bunch, and thus delivers it to its babies" (White 94-95). This nurturing behavior attributed to the hedgehog also applies to Edmund as a saint, nurturing and interceding on the behalf of his devotees. Thus, the Danes' torture builds up Edmund's holiness through his suffering and transforms him into a saint. This mixture of violence and holiness imagery culminates in Abbo's comments on the manner of the death of Edmund:

Just as Christ, free from taint of sin, left on the column to which he was bound, not for himself, but for us, the blood which was the mark of his scourging, so Eadmund incurred a like penalty bound to the blood-stained tree, for the sake of gaining glory that fades not away. (Abbo 36-37)¹¹

The "blood-stained" tree is an image that unites Edmund with Christ in Abbo's redaction. It also inextricably intertwines the violence of the episode with the holiness of the martyr, making the overwhelming violence Edmund endures a reflection of his overwhelming sanctity. Edmund is to be praised but can never be emulated.

As Edmund is captured, led off, and killed by the Danes, Ælfric's language also becomes more religious, befitting the story of a martyr. However, the comparisons Ælfric draws are different from Abbo's. Whereas Abbo directly compares Edmund to Christ, Ælfric portrays Edmund as looking to Christ as a model for behavior, casting aside his weapons and "desiring to imitate / Christ's example, who forbade Peter / to fight against the bloodthirsty Jews" (Ælfric 68-69). This depiction of

Edmund as looking to Christ is in turn a much more attainable image for Ælfric's lay audience. Abbo's "Just as Christ. . . so Eadmund" (or more literally "That one. . . that other"; see the previous note for Abbo's Latin) suggests an equivalency between the two figures. In contrast, Ælfric's "desiring to imitate Christ's example" ["wolde geæfen-læcan cristes gebysnungum"] seems to imply Edmund's inferiority to Christ if all he can do is "imitate." The effect places the king, whether Edmund or Æthelred, in a position that emphasizes his status as intermediary between his subjects and Christ. Christ's example is something a worthy king can attempt to follow, but is not something automatically attainable through royal status. To be a good king like Edmund, Æthelred must actively stand up to the Danes.

Proceeding with the scene, Ælfric is again less graphic compared to Abbo when he describes Edmund's execution: "They shot at him with javelins as if for their amusement, / until he was all beset with their shots / as with a porcupine's bristles" (68-69). Although a hedgehog-like allusion still appears, perhaps suggesting Edmund's saintly role of intercessor, Ælfric provides no gory descriptions of Edmund's difficulty in breathing or of his blood staining the tree trunk.¹² This lesser emphasis on the violence that Edmund endures, although not diminishing his martyrdom, makes his example less superhuman. Edmund becomes a saint because he faces the Danes. He does not face the Danes because he is a saint. It leaves an expectation of confronting the Danes for which Æthelred too should prepare.

A final difference between the accounts of the execution emerges in Ælfric's description of Edmund's followers searching for their king's head. This shift may be consistent with the importance of the *comitatus*. Abbo explains how Edmund's followers took horns with them in their meticulous search for the severed head so that they might "by calling or by the noise of their instruments signal one to another, and so avoid going twice over the same ground, or missing some localities altogether" (40-41). Ælfric, however, leaves out this detail of the thanes' thorough method of searching, saying only that they called out "as is often the wont of those who go through the woods" (Ælfric 70-71). Ælfric might simply be taking the thanes' search method for granted, but the search's lack of precision seems more frantic. The personal *comitatus* relationship of the thanes and Edmund is consistent with such a manner of searching.

POSTHUMOUS MIRACLES (ABBO 12.26-END; ÆLFRIC 122-END)

The search for Edmund's head leads to the first of several posthumous miracles: the head responding to the cries of the searchers from the place where a wolf guards it. Other posthumous miracles also appear in both redactions. Despite the overlap, changes in the text shift the emphasis from the holy in Abbo to the promise of future help in Ælfric.

Edmund's head calling out is the first and most unusual of his posthumous miracles. For both Abbo and Ælfric the miraculousness of the incident illustrates Edmund's sanctity. The wolf also has important symbolic value for the episode. The wolf going against its nature and guarding instead of eating the head represents a miracle of Edmund's sanctity, but the explicit parallels it forms with the Danes and the Devil, as previously mentioned, are also important. The wolf's pacification certainly symbolizes the hope that the saint will subdue evil, be it in the form of the Devil or the Danes. Sainthood and divine subjection of evil is presented as a truth in Abbo's *Passio*, which calls the wolf "monstrous," adding an otherworldly aspect to it (42-43). Upon the wolf's departure, Abbo then adds, "never afterwards was there seen in that neighbourhood any wolf so terrible in appearance" (42-43). Such otherworldliness is consistent with the extreme idealizing of Edmund and extreme demonizing of the Danes that Abbo uses throughout the *Passio*.

Ælfric differs on the size of the wolf. He includes a statement on divine intervention forbidding the wolf from eating the head, but makes no reference to the wolf's abnormal size or mysterious disappearance: "There was eke a great wonder, that a wolf was sent, / by God's direction, to guard the head / against the other animals by day and night" (Ælfric 70-71). Although this is a relatively minor difference, it accords with Ælfric's earlier omission of the Devil as an overtly personal and active force against Edmund. It forms part of a larger tendency in his redaction to report the miraculous but not dwell upon holy, unseen agents who can no longer be verified as witnesses. Indeed, this tension between reporting miracles and providing verifiable accounts is a larger concern in Ælfric's corpus. Ælfric shows selectivity in which episodes he will include in his vita, sometimes even explicitly rejecting certain episodes. His primary criterion appears to be the authority of his source, followed by concerns for its historicity (Godden, "Ælfric's" 291-93, 305). This concern for paring away detail to leave only the most essential authority accords well with Ælfric's educative concern for emphasizing what is

most important to his lay audience. Within the context of Ælfric's *Life of St. Edmund*, omission of the wolf's extraordinary size refocuses the episode on the central idea of divine intervention apart from visible signs of the miraculous. For an Anglo-Saxon laity frustrated with Æthelred's rule, it could serve as a reminder of divine work in their lives by directing them to look for the holy in what otherwise appears ordinary, thereby fostering a sense of hope.

Abbo, for his part, is very concerned with witnesses as he recounts Edmund's posthumous miracles. After telling how Edmund's body was discovered incorrupt, Abbo moves to Edmund's miracle of the paralyzed thieves. Eight thieves attempt to break into the church where Edmund's relics lie and steal the treasure given to Edmund's memory. The saint, however, freezes them in place, and they are caught the next morning. Additionally, one of the shrine attendants awakes but is paralyzed in bed. The bishop Theodred executes the thieves, but he later regrets his actions as unbecoming a religious official. As penance, he washes and redresses Edmund's incorrupt body. Abbo places special emphasis on providing the attendant and Theodred as witnesses who can testify to Edmund's holiness. He says first of the shrine attendant:

One of the staff of attendants who was sleeping within the temple, though aroused from his slumbers, was kept a prisoner in his bed, restrained in his endeavour to rise by the martyr's power, so that no sound or noisy echo should reach the ears of the custodian within, and so impede the manifestation of the Saint's miraculous power. (Abbo 48-49)

Theodred becomes another individual who can attest to Edmund's holiness by witnessing his incorruption: "The bishop found the body of the most holy king, which before had been lacerated and mutilated, as I have already related, whole and incorrupt" (Abbo 52-53). The attendant and Theodred both are extraneous to the central miracle of the paralyzed thieves. Abbo's incorporation of these two characters instead seems to provide religious authorities who can attest to the greatness of Edmund's power.

A second miracle adds a voice of secular authority to prohibitions against dishonoring Edmund. It focuses on the rich man Leofstan who impiously demands to see Edmund's body and is driven mad as another testament to the body's sanctity. Leofstan's father Ælfgar is horrified by his son's action, expelling him from their house, and Leofstan dies of

worms. Abbo's inclusion at the end of the incident of Leofstan's father Ælfgar reinforces the holiness of the relics: "[Ælfgar] was appalled by the infamous crime of his son; and rendered thanks to the martyr, and turned his son out of doors" (52-53). As Leofstan's father, Ælfgar thus adds a voice of secular authority to admonitions against dishonoring St. Edmund. Abbo concludes these posthumous miracles and his entire *Passio* by stating that Edmund's incorrupt body "displays something of the glory of the resurrection," which speaks to Edmund's holiness as the overarching theme that he celebrates (54-57).

In Ælfric's versions of these posthumous miracles, he maintains a focus on Edmund's power without Abbo's concern for providing additional witnesses. Thus, when relating the incidents of the eight thieves at the church and Leofstan's impiety, he includes no shrine attendant, no washing of Edmund's body, and no Ælfgar. By eliminating these two characters and Theodred's final act of contrition, Ælfric is able to keep Edmund at the center of the miracles rather than shifting attention to additional witnesses whose total (in the case of the attendant) or relative (in the case of Ælfgar) anonymity makes their authority unverifiable. Ælfric's omission of Theodred washing Edmund's body creates a much more egalitarian image of the bishop. By not giving Theodred special privileges before the saint, Ælfric holds religious, secular, noble, and lay individuals to the same standard of conduct. It is a vision that coincides well with the *comitatus* code he illustrates elsewhere in his vita.

A third miracle precedes those of the paralyzed thieves and Leofstan's madness in both Abbo's and Ælfric's versions. It tells of the initial discovery of Edmund's incorrupt body and the annual trimming of its hair and nails by the widow Oswen. Abbo and Ælfric are in closer agreement on the details of this first miracle than in the subsequent two episodes, but Ælfric's apparent egalitarianism in the later miracles reflects back on this first incident, creating a different overall impression of the three miracles in his redaction as the social and religious elite are chastised and a lowly figure is elevated. In this way, equality before the saint becomes a theme in Ælfric that supplants Abbo's concerns for witnesses. The wealthy Leofstan is unquestionably punished for his impiety in both Abbo's and Ælfric's redactions, and Ælfric arguably chastens Theodred further by removing his reward of seeing the saint's incorrupt body. However, by naming Oswen, a widow without the powers and privileges of Theodred as a bishop and Leofstan as a wealthy man, Ælfric grants her an honor that no one else in this version of the

posthumous miracles earns. This elevation of Oswen further contributes to the sense of egalitarianism in Ælfric. By contrast, Abbo's presentation of both Oswen and Theodred as seeing Edmund's incorrupt body leaves a stronger emphasis on witnesses to that miracle.

Ælfric departs entirely from Abbo for the conclusion of his redaction by cataloguing a number of other Anglo-Saxon saints. This ending provides a clear emphasis on English experiences of saintly power:

The English nation is not deprived of the Lord's saints,
 since in English land lie such saints
 as this holy king, and the blessed Cuthbert,
 and Saint Æthelthryth in Ely, and also her sister,
 incorrupt in body, for the confirmation of the faith.
 There are also many other saints among the English,
 who work many miracles, as is widely known,
 to the praise of the Almighty in whom they believed. (Ælfric 78-79)

These lines emphasize English saints. Even with their turn toward the miraculous, they are very concerned with saints who are familiar and close to what Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon audience has experienced (Phelpstead 43). This interest in English saints here correlates with Ælfric's larger interest in the needs of the Anglo-Saxon laity because his corpus frequently eschews those saints who originated on the continent (Lapidge 120-22). Thus, in his redaction of St. Edmund, Ælfric emphasizes Anglo-Saxon codes of behavior, such as the *comitatus* relationship, and experiences that are closer to the everyday lives of the laity in order to show hope for a king who will display more leadership than Æthelred.¹³

ABBO, ÆLFRIC, AND THE BEGINNING OF A BENEDICTINE TRADITION

From comparing Ælfric's *Life of St. Edmund, King and Martyr* to Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, a coherent picture of why Ælfric redacted a vita that was only about ten years old emerges. Abbo wrote his *Passio* for a monastic audience for the purpose of preserving a story. With it he hoped to impress his readers and provide them with a model of Latin prose to study. Given this audience and these purposes, the otherworldliness of Abbo's work makes sense. Personal holiness, as

displayed by Edmund in the *Passio*, was central to monastic living, as was a focus on heavenly and demonic forces beyond the physical world.

In contrast, Ælfric writes for a lay audience. While holiness and the life to come are not unimportant to Ælfric, he reduces the number of holiness *topoi* in redacting Abbo's *Passio* in order to emphasize the possibility of temporal hope to his lay audience. His reasons for doing this come from the political situation of the time. The Danes had returned to Britain after being expelled and Æthelred the king was levying taxes on his people to pay tributes rather than taking a stand against the invaders. In this chaotic state, the Anglo-Saxons needed assurance of divine agency and the divine's agents in their land. Thus, Ælfric needed to make Edmund more than a figure of holiness; he needed him to embody the values of the *comitatus* code which Æthelred failed to display. In this way St. Edmund became an example of a positive leader, joining a host of other saints to remind Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon audience not to lose hope in a time of invasion and extended political turmoil.

Ælfric's commentary on Æthelred's reign also appears to begin a pattern among Benedictine redactors of the Edmund legend that stretches throughout the Middle Ages. The Edmund legend gained new episodes during that time, and Benedictine hagiographers were responsible for each of these additions (Edwards, Introduction 6-7). The timing of these later redactions is remarkable because each of them closely coincides with the accession of a new English king. Furthermore, each Benedictine redactor wrote from Suffolk, increasing the likelihood that he was familiar with his predecessors' works. Geoffrey of Wells wrote his *Liber de infantia sancti Eadmundi* from Thetford for the monks at nearby Bury St. Edmunds between 1150 and 1156, a period encompassing the transition between King Stephen of Blois' and Henry II's rules. The redaction in the *Flores Historiarum* by Roger of Wendover was begun at St. Albans around 1219, just three years after Henry III succeeded his father, King John. A compilation of Edmund legends now preserved in MS Bodley 240 was produced anonymously at Bury St. Edmunds around 1377, the same year Richard II succeeded his grandfather Edward III. Finally, the poet John Lydgate wrote the *Lives of Ss Edmund and Fremund* to commemorate a four-month-long visit by Henry VI to Bury St. Edmunds Abbey in 1433-34, an event that took place during Henry's minority. That each of the preceding kings in this list had a bad reputation makes this redaction history even more extraordinary. The reigns of Stephen and of John were plagued by civil war, Edward III had grown senile, and Henry IV's reputation as a usurper had rounded back

on his grandson. Finally, each of these successors was young at the age of his ascent, sometimes extremely so. Henry II was eighteen; Henry III, nine; Richard II, ten; and Henry VI, nine months.

As Ridyard has demonstrated, royal saints' lives like Edmund's frequently provided commentary on kings' rules (1-3, 78-82), and, as Clark has shown, Benedictine monasteries also had a lengthy and proud tradition of acting as regional historians (224). Thus, the pattern of new redactions emerging whenever a young king succeeded a particularly bad predecessor suggests that the Edmund legend may have become a traditional means for advising on holy kingship. Given the antagonism between Ælfric's lay patrons and Æthelred Unræd, Ælfric's redaction may deserve special note for beginning this Benedictine use of the Edmund legend. Thus, Ælfric's version of the Edmund legend is not merely an abbreviation of Abbo's redaction. Rather, it brings up its own set of issues for defining holy kingship as the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the laity. In doing this, Ælfric also provides a precedent for using St. Edmund to model the evolving requirements of kingship throughout medieval England.

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Notes

¹ Mary Clayton discusses how Ælfric emphasizes the pastoral work of St. Cuthbert over his eremitic life in the *Catholic Homilies II* (163). Malcolm Godden's "Experiments in Genre" from the *Holy Men and Holy Women* collection also discusses Ælfric's Cuthbert and his life of St. Paul as making substantial alterations to the source material (271-72, 276-77). Hugh Magennis explores Ælfric's alteration through abbreviation of the "Legend of the Seven Sleepers" in the *Catholic Homilies* (317). Finally, Ruth Waterhouse explains how Ælfric rearranges the life of St. Oswald in the *Lives of Saints* to emphasize proper religious practice to his lay audience (333-37). Outside of Szarmach's collection, Mechthild Gretsch's book *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England* makes reference to Ælfric using politics for selecting some of the vitae in the *Lives of Saints* and discusses briefly how the life of Gregory from the *Catholic Homilies II* also reflects contemporary politics (4, 54-55).

² I share the phrase "holy kingship" with P. A. Stafford (26-27). However, while Stafford suggests that Anglo-Saxon saint-kings like Edmund and Oswald act as mirrors for Æthelred Unræd, I also think that these holy kings were presented as models of hope for the laity.

³ The source of my translations of Abbo and Ælfric, Francis Hervey's *Corolla Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, does not include line numbers. In my sections headings, I have listed line numbers as given by Michael Winterbottom for Abbo's *Passio* and as given by Needham for Ælfric's *Life of St. Edmund*. Winterbottom uses MS Cotton Tiberius B.ii as his base text (8-9, 65). Needham draws on several manuscripts but expresses a preference for British Library MS, Cotton Julius E VII (1-2, 4-5). In my parenthetical notes, my page references encompass Hervey's facing pages of Latin or Old English and his modern English translation.

⁴ Also discussing the various influences on monastic reform are John Blair (295-320), Warren C. Hollister (in *Medieval Europe* 109), and P. A. Stafford (17-21). Early medieval practice had been for monasteries to employ various *regulae mixtae*, or mixed rules that drew equally upon Benedict's Rule and a number of other early monastic rules. It was not until the Carolingian reforms of the eighth and ninth centuries that Benedict's Rule became preeminent. Even then it was several centuries before it established its dominance (Clark 26-30). Mary Clayton provides

an overview of the different types of eremitic and coenobitic monasticism that existed throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, which helps to explain the existence of the various *regulae mixtae* (147-58).

⁵ Warren C. Hollister, Robert C. Stacey, and Robin Chapman Stacey briefly discuss the negative influence of noble patrons on monastic houses (86-87). Blair has shown that reformation of English minsters was not strictly along Benedictine lines, but Æthelwold, as one of the key figures of this reform, was particularly adamant that the reforms should be Benedictine (342-46, 350-54). Elizabeth Dachowski also describes the influence of French reforms on Æthelwold, Dunstan, and Oswald (70-71).

⁶ Latin literacy was important because it came to define the Benedictine order apart from eastern monastic orders. Latin literacy also became a political and cultural force because it gave the Benedictines greatly increased access to the Bible and to biblical traditions (Clark 191). While Dachowski's 2008 biography of Abbo provides a full description of his background and training, modern scholarship and medieval writings on Abbo have long stressed his impressive education, as illustrated by Patrizia Lendinara's survey of his works in 2001 (1).

⁷ This was the first payment of what has often been called the Danegeld, but Williams has pointed out that in most cases the word *gafol* was used for these tribute payments and that "Danegeld" was a post-Conquest term that referred to a more general tax levied annually (151).

⁸ In fact, Æthelmær was the only one of the deprived sons to eventually receive his father's title (Williams 66).

⁹ Hill provides an overview of types of symbolism in hagiography on pages 41-47.

¹⁰ Abbo's Latin *karissimis* is obscure; I take it to be the superlative of *carus*.

¹¹ Abbo's Latin reads: "Ille quidem, purus sceleris, in columna ad quam vinctus fuit sanguinem, non pro se sed pro nobis, flagellorum suorum signa reliquit; iste pro adipiscenda gloria immarcessibili cruento stipite similes poenas dedit" (36). The "Ille... iste" structure suggests a parallel between Christ and Edmund making them equals in holiness.

¹² Any discrepancy between a porcupine and a hedgehog likely originates with Hervey's translation. Ælfric's Old English is *igles*, which Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson translate as "hedgehog" in the glossary of *A Guide to Old English*.

¹³Abbo also mentions Cuthbert in the *Passio* but as part of his opening epistle to Dunstan. The context of Abbo's reference is to give Cuthbert as another instance of an incorrupt saint. Such usage fits with Abbo's interest in the holy and the miraculous. Ælfric's inclusion of Cuthbert in a catalogue of English saints instead invokes his name in support of Anglo-Saxon identity as it is threatened by the Danes.

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